



General Release to the Public and the Press:

Attorneys have very strict guidelines on what we are allowed to say to the press when cases are pending. So, I can't share much about the case. But I would like to take this opportunity to address some of the hateful phone calls and emails my office has been receiving since I've been appointed to be Mr. Eatherly's attorney. My entire firm is being called "racist". I am disappointed given my history and dedication to my clients, which includes people of all skin colors.

Our individual rights as secured by our Constitutions (both State and Federal) have endured relentless attacks from our government throughout the years. It is the Defense bar who holds that line. It seems that now that some of the people, who we have so fervently defended, now turn against one of its defenders because we are not afraid to stand up and represent someone who is unpopular.

To be called a racist is an awful thing for me. I was raised to do the right thing even if it isn't popular. My grandfather taught school and coached basketball during the height of racial integration in our country. He allowed his best athletes to play regardless of skin color and, because of his choices, was referred to as the "n\*\*\*\*r coach". I am proud of him for having the courage to do the right thing even to the detriment of his social status. I am just as proud of his actions in that regard as I am his military service in the Korean War.

My Father is an attorney, largely driven to do so through my Grandfather, his Father. He also instilled in me a sense of justice that is unshakable. He has consistently stood for those who couldn't stand up for themselves. He spent a significant portion of his career litigating against insurance companies. I carry on that proud tradition, but rather than fighting the corporate mobsters who hold so much power and influence over our lives and laws, I have elected to fight and defend our liberties from government overreach.

I have zealously represented clients from all walks of life, colors, religions, and affiliations. I will continue to do so. Representing a Baptist doesn't make me a Baptist. Representing a Crip doesn't make me a Crip. Anyone who assumes any one of my staff or I are racist because I am tasked to represent someone whose opinions and actions are controversial is simply ridiculous.

I came to represent Mr. Eatherly after the Public Defender of our District filed a Motion to Withdraw. In this Motion it was alleged that the private bar, of which I am a member, lacked the fortitude to represent Mr. Eatherly due to his unpopularity. I decided to prove him wrong.

The role of a criminal defense attorney is to represent people regardless of their race, religion, ideology, or allegations against them. To assume an attorney agrees with the actions of the accused is preposterous. There are good men and women defending people accused of heinous crimes against children every day and there is no assumption that the defense attorney endorses those crimes.

This entire case is disturbing. Racism is a terrible thing and it's a flawed method of thinking. We are all the same race, we just have different skin tones. To a very large extent, people of color in this country have had more challenges and difficulties to face than the vast majority of white folks. To accentuate that point, the United States Supreme Court has decided that law enforcement, particularly ICE, are allowed to make traffic stops based on skin tone. This is commonly referred to as a Kavanaugh stop – occupation, skin tone, and location is enough for a traffic stop to check if someone is a legal resident. The normal standard was there must be reasonable suspicion of unlawful activity. This is a major blow against the freedom that we cherish so dearly.

More recently, and just as disturbing, a new decision from the United States Supreme Court may usher in a new era of Gerrymandering. It's shameful that we've regressed so much as a nation that our leaders are allowing State governments to systematically silence minorities and render their votes meaningless.

Our leaders think this is acceptable. This is why our country is losing a lot of integrity both domestically and abroad.

If Dalton Eatherly is famous for being a racist, it is certainly a symptom of our country's crisis and not the crisis itself.

The anger you feel perhaps would be better directed towards the men and women in charge who continue to encourage and sanction behavior of this nature.

When I have been chosen to defend a fellow citizen, I will not back down. I will not cower in the face of adversity. I will not be silenced by popular opinion. It is a right entitled to each one of us by the Constitution. I will fight for the people of our nation until I cannot fight anymore.

Jake Fendley