

Re: Gerald Stanley Trial, January 29, 2018

In response to a barrage of media inquiries in anticipation of the trial, I confirm that Gerry has no intention to participate in any interviews or make any statements. We appreciate the media continuing to make requests for comment, if appropriate, to a member of the defence team. Further, we ask that the media and the general public respect Gerry's family during the trial.

Despite any online comments or media stories, Gerry's trial is not a referendum on racism. If jurors feel that they have to pick a "side", then it will be very difficult for there to be a fair trial.

Unfortunately, racial tensions existed in Saskatchewan, and across Canada, before the Boushie tragedy and they continue today. It will take a lot of time and effort to mitigate those tensions. It is dangerous to deny them, but it is perhaps equally dangerous to allege racism where it does not exist. Either way, race has nothing to do with the proper outcome of Gerry's trial.

From the perspective of the defence team, we have serious concerns about some of the media coverage, but we believe that Gerry can get a fair trial, and will continue to focus on ensuring that all the facts come out at trial. Having said that, the continued media coverage that ties the facts of Gerry's trial to issues of race is troubling and inaccurate.

It is important to keep in mind that being charged does not mean that you are guilty, while not being charged does not mean you are innocent. Although there may have been a rush to judgment by some, the defence team is confident that the jury will take the more balanced approach of waiting to hear the facts before making judgment.

It is truly unfortunate that the original narrative set off the vile exchange of uninformed comments, which in many instances were racist. Unfounded declarations of a hate crime and death threats are also serious.

Although discouraged by recent comments about potential violence and polarization, we believe that the people of the Battlefords, Saskatchewan, and most importantly the jurors selected, will be willing and able to put in the effort, because it takes a lot of effort, to keep an open mind. We hope that a proper verdict grounded on the evidence will be respected.

Finally, the facts are the facts and they will come out at trial where they should. One fact that should not be forgotten is that a young man lost his life. That was, and remains, a terrible tragedy. We must all feel for and support the Boushie/Baptiste family in this extremely difficult time.

Saskatchewan will not be judged by a handful of online trolls. Saskatchewan will not be judged by the verdict in Gerry's case. Saskatchewan will be judged by how we conduct ourselves under the extreme pressure of the next couple weeks. Let's conduct ourselves rationally, intelligently, and respectfully, and allow the Court process to proceed without interference or distraction.

Scott R. Spencer