

4:22-CR-00296-SRC

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CITIZEN AND ELECTED OFFICIAL PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Tishaura Jones, Mayor of the City of St. Louis:

“The troubling charges brought by the U.S. Attorney pull back the curtain to highlight how those elected may exploit our city for their own benefit and profit. St. Louisans deserve better, and I am committed to working alongside fellow leaders to begin the difficult process of restoring trust and integrity in our City Government.”

“The self-dealing and corruption outlined in federal indictments...is completely unacceptable. These serious charges prevented them from doing the jobs they were elected to do....The trust we hold as elected officials is fragile, and that confidence has been shattered by these troubling corruption charges against three former City leaders.”

“No one wins in this situation. When politicians break the law to serve themselves instead of the people they were elected to serve, everyone loses.”

Darlene Green, Comptroller, City of St. Louis:

“Comptroller Darlene Green is saddened and disappointed by the actions asserted in today’s Indictment. Comptroller Green believes St. Louis City residents deserve elected officials who look out for the peoples’ interests.”

Cara Spencer, Alderman of the 20th Ward, City of St. Louis:

“Like many St. Louisans, I read with disgust and horror the Indictment of three members of the Board of Aldermen....Serving in elected office is both an honor and a privilege and corruption is the ultimate betrayal of public trust – the foundation of a governed civilization. A society needs to be able to trust its elected government to succeed. And we must hold leaders to the highest account.”

GOVERNMENT
EXHIBIT

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Meghan Green, then Alderman of the 15th Ward, City of St. Louis:

“My first reaction was sadness, sadness for our City. ...the people who suffer most through issues like this are the residents.”

“Taken together, the charges and the conversations threaten the legitimacy of the entire legislative process.”

Anne Schweitzer, Alderman of the 13th Ward, City of St. Louis:

“We must rebuild public trust, and we can’t do it without acknowledging the gravity of the situation.”

“Regardless of the outcome of the case, their words show malice and contempt for our City, constituents, and colleagues. There is no place for that on our Board.”

Bill Stephens, Alderman of the 12th Ward, City of St. Louis:

“There has been real damage inflicted upon our legislative body since this news shook our City. This Indictment has given the citizens no reason to trust in their government....”

“There’s 66 pages of reasons why you should not trust your legislative branch of government at the moment” (referring to the Indictment against the three Defendants).

Dan Guenther, Alderman of the 9th Ward, City of St. Louis:

“...in light of the serious nature of the allegations filed against [Lewis Reed], and the distrust of local government that has followed, I am joining the call for your immediate resignation. These charges cast a dark shadow over every decision you have made as a leader of the Board of Alderman and rightfully call into question your ability to lead us now.”

Annie Rice, Alderman of the 8th Ward, City of St. Louis:

“The Court process will play out but the public trust is already gone.” “...the City deserves to be able to move forward as best as possible without the shadow of corruption over all of our financial and legislative actions.”

Jack Coatar, Alderman of the 7th Ward, City of St. Louis:

“Lewis Reed, Jeffrey Boyd, and John Collins-Muhammad abused their offices and violated the public trust. I share in the disgust and disappointment so many of us feel as a result of their abused behavior. St. Louisans deserve honest, ethical, effective leadership.

Rasheen Aldridge, Missouri District 78 Representative:

“Our City deserves to have trust and integrity restored.”

St. Louis Young Democrats:

“The people of St. Louis deserve leaders who are not indicted for corruption and bribes. Our communities demand clear and trustworthy public servants. Not self-servants.”

St. Louis City Democratic Central Committee:

“The St. Louis City Democratic Central Committee is saddened, shocked and disappointed to learn of the extremely troubling allegations resulting in federal indictments against former members of the St. Louis Board of Alderman. The criminal allegations have created a cloud of mistrust over our entire City and has further compromised the community’s faith in its governmental representation at all levels.”

28 October 2022

Ms. Teri L. Rose

██████████
██████████
St. Louis, MO 63107

The Thomas F. Eagleton Courthouse
Attn: The Honorable Judge Stephen Clark
111 South 10th Street
St. Louis, MO 63102

Subject: Victim Impact Statement – John Collins Muhammad Sentencing Hearing

Dear Judge Clark,

I am a 5th Generation resident of the College Hill Neighborhood. There has been a "Rose" living on East College Avenue since the 1850 Census. I also own ██████████, St. Louis, MO 63107 where my younger sister lives. ██████████ is directly across the alley from 5337 Von Phul, St. Louis, MO 63107, the site of the "John Doe" family gas station.

John Collins Muhammad's actions have destroyed a neighborhood. To give him a sentence of only 3 or 4 years would be a slap in the face to every resident negatively impacted by his criminal behavior. A sentence of 10 or 20 years is appropriate for the permanent damage he willingly inflicted on the College Hill and O'Fallon neighborhoods.

A gas station is a forever crime magnet. The gas station at Adelaide and West Florissant, a mere four blocks away from this gas station, has been a problem since it opened: Drugs, prostitution, and shootings. A nightmare for the neighborhood. The City closed it and the owner sued. The gas station is back open and will probably remain open since apparently the City isn't interested in pursuing closing the station since the owner sued the City. Then there was the virile video of the man getting out of his vehicle at the BP gas station at East Grand and North Broadway and firing an AR 15 into the air, at least the residents of College Hill had I-70 as a "buffer zone." There is no such buffer zone for this gas station. People will have bullets coming through their windows, roofs, and walls. The Love's Gas Station at North Broadway and Carrie had so many problems that they had to change operating hours and install gates and fences to block entrance ramps during closed hours.

The College Hill neighborhood is about 70 percent vacant: 70 percent of the 1,500 properties in College Hill are either a vacant lot, or a vacant building. The block where this gas station is being constructed was one of the last intact blocks in the neighborhood. The people who live here have owned their homes longer than John Collins Muhammad has been alive. As soon as one third generation family found out that the gas station was going in, they moved. Stability. That's what Collins-Muhammad's criminal actions destroyed.

Homeowners who had stunning views of the Mississippi River, all the way out to the I-270 bridge, will now have that view replaced with gas station pump canopies and a glaring gas station sign. Property values will fall, and insurance rates will go up for people who own property within 300 feet of this gas station. The additional crime will also have a chilling effect on both the College Hill and O'Fallon neighborhoods. However, the effect will be worse for the College Hill neighborhood because the crime statistics will be posted to the College Hill neighborhood, which is a Census tract.

The residents of both the College Hill and O'Fallon neighborhoods have been fighting a gas station at this location since the 1990's when then alderman, Freeman Bosley Senior, wanted to blight the entire block and put in a truck stop...directly across the street from the Mount Grace Convent (the Pink Sisters), O'Fallon Park, and the then Lowell Public School, now a Kipp Charter Academy.

The "John Doe" family tried putting in a gas station when Antonio French was the ward's alderman.

We had 43 people go to the hearing and stopped it, and thought we had "won." We were aware of the hearing because Alderman French had proponents of the gas station come to neighborhood meetings. So, we knew to be on the look out for postings about the hearing. The Building Division posted one notice, wrapped up like a scroll around the post of a street parking sign. It would have been missed if we had not been expecting it.

Unlike Alderman French, Alderman Collins Muhammad said NOTHING to ANY of his constituents about the proposed gas station. By the time we heard about it, it was too late. The Building Division did the same thing: Posted one notice wrapped up like a scroll around the post of a street parking sign. This time, it got by us because we thought we had "won" and stopped the gas station. It was also the month of December in the height of the pandemic. It gets dark early, and people were not going out, so we missed the posted notice about the hearing. We did, however, get a copy of what was said at the hearing:

They stated that there were only two gas stations on the north side of I-70. This is not true. There are two at the Carrie Avenue exit, and there are two at the East Grand Avenue exit from I-70. On the south side of I-70 there is a gas station at the Shreve exit, and two at the Salisbury/McKinley bridge exit. We did not need another gas station. The hearing document also showed that the gas station would be open 24/7 and have a packaged liquor store.

I sat in one of Collins-Muhammad neighborhood meetings and heard him say that there would be no new liquor licenses in the 21st ward. What he DIDN'T say was that this was only for a 5-year period. Additionally, people who live in these neighborhoods are not going to go to a gas station at Midnight or 1:00 or 2:00 am in the morning.

When people got word of the gas station and started calling him, he blamed Antonio French for not telling him that the people did not want a gas station at this location. Collins-Muhammad was given a neighborhood redevelopment plan that the College Hill Foundation got funded with at \$50,000 grant. This plan clearly showed that this lot was shown as green space. Also, Antonio French did not stop Collins-Muhammad from talking to his constituents prior to approving the gas station.

Collins-Muhammad told me that he would pull the board bill that gave the "John Doe" family tax abatement for the property, and maybe that would stop them from building the gas station. He told me that that was the only thing he could do to try and stop it. He pulled the board bill, but what he didn't say was that he was going to introduce another board bill for a larger portion of the College Hill neighborhood that would include 5337 Von Phul with tax abatement for 25 years.

When word got out about the gas station, we started a recall effort. To a person, everyone we talked to felt that Collins-Muhammad had to have taken a bribe. I and a resident of the O'Fallon Neighborhood felt so strongly about this, that we decided to go to the US Attorney's office with our concerns. We met with Mr. Hal Goldsmith. We did not know at the time of our meeting that there was already an on-going investigation. Unknown to us, we were able to provide information that helped with the indictment, a fact that delighted us to no end.

Give Collins-Muhammad the sentence he deserves for destroying a neighborhood and negatively impacting the lives, property value, and safety of hundreds of residents of the College Hill and O'Fallon neighborhoods. A sentence of 3 or 4 years is not nearly enough.

Sincerely,


Teri L. Rose

I agree with the information provided in this letter:

Ms. Barbara Lane


St. Louis, MO 63107



Amber Cole



Magistrate Judge
John M. Bodenhauser
Honorable Stephen Clark
Hal Goldsmith
Assistant United States Attorney
111 S. 10th Street, 15 South
Saint Louis Missouri 63102

RE: JOHN COLLINS MUHAMMAD - No. 4:22-GR-297 SRC

Dear Honorable Judge Bodenhauser and Honorable Stephen Clark:

I am writing you regarding Case Number: 4:22-G-297 SRC. Defendant John Collins-Muhammad (JCM) in which was indicted on and enter a Guilty Plea to three charges: **Theft or Bribery Concerning, Racketeering-Bribery, Wire Fraud.** (PUBLIC CORRUPTION) The defendant John Collins Muhammad represent the area in which I reside – 21st Ward.

JCM intently violated the trust of my community and fraudulent took advantage of the citizens of our ward. Making promises to our community and withheld services from others and threatening me personally. He attempted to blight our community. We advise him that we DID NOT want a gas station on Von Phul and Adelaide. We attended a number of meetings with the St Louis City Board of Adjustment requesting them to deny the owner the right to build and operate a business at that site. We also ask not to allow another gas station located on Shreve and Bircher to expand because they were refusing to provide a safety to their patronage. At that gas station a number of murders, car jacking's and drug deals were occurring. When the Six District Police Officers request footage they claim that their cameras were broken.

I believe JCM awarded a contract to a company to replace sidewalks on my street when we didn't need them. Again, I went to the city and told them what I suspected, of course I did not get any help.

There are a number of other incidents that he prevent that we literally begged him for his assistance. From giving favors by renaming streets to obtaining votes. He represented himself not the welfare of those constituents in our ward. The Natural Bridge Expansion Project, he verbally attack me when I called the name developer and question her about the project. I feel that he felt he was above the law. I believed in the potential of this young man. I had hope he would change, I even went to his "mentors" for help. They claim they would speak to him... however no change.

His behavior is a total disgrace to other young African Americans. We lost a "vote" in our community. We lost a leader. We lost tax dollars, just to name a few. And what we gain from his actions was further mistrust in our community, we gain more drugs and prostitution in our community.

So your Honor I request you hold him accountable for the trauma that he imposed onto our community.

Respectfully Submitted,
Amber Cole, Resident of the 21st Ward

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amber Cole".

Dear Judge Clark 8-19-22
after reading of all the corruption
that these perps are involved in I
hope the justice system prosecute
to the "Fullest extent" of the law!
NO PROBATION! They have all breached
the public's trust for personal gain!
Time to throw the book @ these
THIEVES!

Curt Buchholz