

The Virgin Islands Consortium

It Shocks The Conscience

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It shocks the conscience! The taking of a life, especially in youth, shocks the conscience.

Whether it's a young African American wearing a hoodie and carrying a bag of Skittles in Central Florida; or, one shot down in the suburbs of St. Louis; or one killed as a result of a rough ride in the back of a police van in Maryland; or one shot multiple time in front of his girlfriend and 4-year old daughter over a traffic stop in Minnesota; or the 25, or more, gunned down in the Virgin Islands over what is, for all intents and purposes, nonsense; or, the 5 Caucasian police officers sniped out while protecting participants of a peaceful protest rally in Dallas; or, my 18-year old cousin, gunned down in Southern California in 1997 for jaywalking while on his way to register for college: It shocks the conscience in ways unimaginable and traumatic.

When this taking of life occurs by those under the color of law, each situation becomes hypersensitive and nuanced, and underscores the hypersensitive and nuanced history of the difficult race relations in America, and, to a lesser degree, the Caribbean archipelago. Now is a good time for a community conversation about how we as a society, both in Virgin Islands and in the nation, intend to move forward on the matters of eliminating poverty, enhancing economic opportunity, and ensuring mutual progress.

May the Almighty grant mercy and grace on the families of those who have lost their lives senselessly to violence in the Virgin Islands. May the families of those abroad whose loved ones have been fatal victims of abuse under the color of law, find the justice and peace that only the Almighty can provide. May the Almighty grant wisdom, full discretion, prudence, protection and compassionate hearts to police officers whose sworn oath is the protect and serve our communities.

Above all else, may there be an awakening of conscience for our communities, wherever we reside, and those under color of law, to find ways to move forward together based on mutual respect.

Submitted by: Moleto A. Smith Jr.

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