



My narrative reads similar to so many of you. Many would think as an attorney we are afforded privileges and opportunities greater than others. Be assured that is not the case. I remember applying for a business loan after being a loyal bank customer with several accounts for 10 years and never asking for anything. The bank denied the loan and replied that I was a few points away from where they wanted my credit score to be. I asked if those 10 years and hundreds of thousands of dollars passing through my account could make up for the difference of those few points?

I also recall telling my wife when I was employed at one of the large financial institutions that I probably needed to start looking for a new job because I was getting a new boss...how accurate was I when the new boss arrived and he started calling me "bro"... I was laid off shortly thereafter by my new boss.

Before getting married I would travel to the ATL on the weekends to visit my girlfriend, now wife. Anytime I would travel down I-20 from Columbia to Atlanta, I did so with a shirt and tie on. I have always believed that the way you present yourself would impact the manner in which you were treated. As a black man I hoped that by taking this approach in some way would prevent or minimize any conflict with law enforcement that I might encounter on those trips down a lonely highway.

My clients are my best predictors and indicators. A few years back, before it hit newsstands, I had already gotten "wind" of the taxi cab driver situation at Charlotte Douglas Airport where they were in jeopardy of losing their jobs because a few individuals wanted a so-called better image of our airport and less cab companies. Rather than giving these mostly immigrants an opportunity to upgrade and bring their taxis up to a certain standard, they got rid of all of them with an exception of a few cab companies that still remain today.

I write this to give you an insight into my world and to let you know that like many of you I have experienced either through personal trials or my clients the many issues that have divided our nation. I invite you to join me in helping to change the direction of our community.

#OneCharlotte is a concept to bring about change. The purpose of #OneCharlotte is to reinforce and promote the idea that “the needs of the many, outweigh the needs of the few”. If we are going to make our city better, we need to focus on strategies that bring people together and develop solutions that benefit the majority of the citizens and not the privileged few. Real issues that we should focus on include the following:

1. **Ensuring that whenever financial incentives are provided to companies that they are required to ensure fair hiring practices;**
2. **Take steps to systemically raise the minimum wage rates to a living wage;**
3. **Create more affordable housing throughout the city in an equitable and evenly distributed way;**
4. **Create more opportunities for small business financing;**
5. **Make sure we elect leaders that have the best interest of the citizens, have the courage to make difficult decisions and hold them accountable;**
6. **Ensure that we put the right systems in place to hire and train the right people in law enforcement roles to enhance the integrity of one of the community’s most important functions;**
7. **Encourage and sponsor open forums where people of all backgrounds can discuss the issues in our communities in a meaningful way to foster change for our city;**
8. **Vote to ensure we put the right leaders and judges in place who can impact our criminal justice system to make it fair to all; and**
9. **Seek out the truth of any issue. The mainstream media has its own agenda when reporting matters. Make sure you learn the facts for yourself and make your own informed opinions. This will help to eliminate bias and stereotypes.**

We are at a pivotal time in our city's history. How we move ahead will determine our greatness. Let us promote #OneCharlotte! Not North, South, East or West Charlotte – #OneCharlotte! My prayers are with the Scott Family, the members of our law enforcement and the community as a whole. The healing has to start now...