

Greetings all. My name is Brian Potier and I represent the Alpha Panama Chapter Chartering Group. We are a part of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., the first intercollegiate Greek-lettered organization established for men of African descent in the United States. We soon anticipate the establishment of a chapter of our dear Fraternity in the Republic of Panama.

I say the following truths unapologetically:

The unenviable (I say this facetiously) and unforgiving (I say this earnestly) truths I reference is a certain skin color with which most of the world is familiar yet at the same time perplexed at the unmistakably ethereal features it incorporates. Black. Beautiful. Exquisite. Regal. There is certainly no harm in being birthed with such a winsome hue but harm, rather, in what comes along with possessing those distinctive attributes.

It reminds me that young Black bodies are one word or act away from harm; from injustice; from death, with no consequences for the murderer. It is well documented that the streaming red blood of Black people in streets, on apartment walkways, outside of convenience stores, in parks, in cars, in jails, and in schools is a part of the world's bloodstream. History clearly shows us that the experiences of the wronged are somehow diminished in the eyes of their oppressors as well as from those who side with the oppressor.

My attempt to convey the depth of such a realization may never be fully understood by the abuser. I do not fully expect it to be. After all, expectations do not always leave one fulfilled. It is indeed a prerequisite for a more advanced course – an instruction teaching that our Black bodies are nothing if they are not abused. Still, one must not forget that many of the laws we live by have been constructed upon disdain for Black lives. That contempt was borne of fear. That fear was birthed by the existence of white privilege, a privilege protected at all costs and emboldened by a fear that it might one day be gone. It is quite a bit to process for those who have never felt the sting of racism, discrimination, or injustice to come to grips with why justice is fervently demanded, why nonsensical excuses will no longer be tolerated, and why the actions (or inaction) of those in power are constantly proving that justice is either non-evident, embarrassingly slow, or non-existent altogether.

If you have studied the Civil War and why it was fought, you would know that it was not about the moral issue of slavery as so many like to believe. It was precisely about economics. Profits. Wealth was accumulated and compounded off the backs of the enslaved. That original sin will remain as long as the profits made from that original sin are not rightfully distributed.

Alpha Panama is here to help change that on a global scale. Together with you.

Tambien quisiera agradecer a la vicepresidenta Márquez y por todo lo que haces por Colombia. Queremos trabajar juntos con usted para eliminar racismo y discriminacion en nuestros paises. Vamos a establecer un capitulo de Alpha en Panama y en Colombia tambien pero mientras, los Hermanos de Alpha Panama estan aquí para usted y su misión. Junto somos mas fuerte.

Gracias.