



SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA RAPID TRANSIT DISTRICT

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2009

March 6, 2009

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Eric H. Holder, Jr.
Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20530-0001

Re: Request for Assistance

Dear Attorney General Holder:

The San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) Board of Directors requests your assistance in examining the incident that occurred at one of our stations on New Year's Day. As you are aware, a BART police officer shot and killed a 22 year old African American man in the early morning hours on January 1st. Since then, we have witnessed civil unrest in parts of our community and the BART organization has been criticized for its response to this incident.

The BART Board takes this matter very seriously and has been working towards getting to the bottom of what took place so we can identify the steps needed to prevent anything like this from happening again. BART has hired a private law firm to conduct an independent internal affairs investigation; a function usually performed by in-house BART investigators. We are also seeking to retain experts in law enforcement to conduct a comprehensive review of the overall practices, policies and procedures of our police department.

Many members of our community have raised the issue of civil rights violations being committed in connection with this incident and, that the actions by BART police officers on January 1st may be part of a larger pattern of civil rights violations by the BART Police Department. It is regarding this purpose that I write to request the assistance of your office.

As the criminal trial has yet to begin, there remain many unanswered questions about the events of that morning. We would welcome the assistance and expertise of your office in sorting out the details of these events. More specifically, we would welcome whatever help your office could provide in determining if civil rights violations occurred and if a pattern of such violations is evident within the BART Police Department.

Attorney General Eric Holder
March 6, 2009
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Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas M. Blalock". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "T".

Thomas M. Blalock, P.E.
President, BART Board of Directors

cc: Board of Directors