

Official Statement from the 2:23 Foundation

Recently, our team was made aware of a social media post that questioned our integrity and motives. So as not to respond directly, we thought it would be a good idea to be as transparent as possible about the truth surrounding those accusations. While we feel blindsided by unfounded accusations, we do feel the need now to ensure that we help you understand how troubling these accusations are.

On April 3, 2020, two of our team members conducted a Facebook Live that discussed a Brunswick News article that included slanted reporting around Ahmaud Arbery's murder.

Mind you, there was no national attention on this case. There was barely any local attention on this case. During the course of that Facebook Live, one of our team members, Jason Vaughn, who coached Arbery in high school uttered, "I Run With Maud." Over the next several weeks, our team (along with other local advocates) put together open records requests, calls, and emails to the District Attorney's Office, and helped galvanize a local community that was looking for answers.

Early in the process, on April 4th to be precise, we made Wanda Cooper-Jones aware of our intention to create a page to continue to pursue justice and discuss action steps for the local community. She said it was fine with her. In addition to this early communication, the following occurred (in no particular order):

1. Akeem Baker created a GoFundMe that initially asked for \$100,000 to support Ahmaud's family. Because of the attention the case garnered, that GoFundMe ballooned to nearly \$2 million dollars. Wanda Cooper-Jones is currently the SOLE beneficiary for those funds and has a bank account set up to withdraw funds from that account. NONE of our team members have ever had access to any of the monies generated by the GoFundMe campaign. Every last dime of that money has gone to Wanda Cooper-Jones.

2. Akeem Baker, Coach Vaughn, and other team members personally accompanied Wanda Cooper-Jones to several events in and around the Brunswick area to offer their support. She reached out to team members regularly, thanked them for the advocacy they were doing, and expressed gratitude for the work they had done to create awareness for her son. Several communications can confirm this.

3. The day after we set up the I Run With Maud page another individual in Camden County, Georgia, set up an [#IRunWithMaud](#) Group on Facebook (currently [#WeRunWithMaud](#) on Facebook). That individual also attempted to copyright the name I Run With Maud. Since one of our team members uttered the phrase, we trademarked the name with the intention of preserving it for Ahmaud Arbery's mother AND father, who are heirs to his estate. We have been asked to turn that trademark over to Wanda Cooper-Jones and we cannot do that in good conscience, given that Marcus Arbery is not listed as a beneficiary for the GoFundMe funds. Today, we spoke with Shaun King and Lee Merritt and told them both that we'd prefer if Marcus Arbery was included in the trademark transfer (which we always intended to transfer to the family). Currently, two of our team members are on the registration for the trademark and our intention is to still provide Mr. Arbery with something that we feel would honor the legacy of his son.

This is a succinct overview of our team's relationship with Wanda Cooper-Jones over the past several months. We have attempted countless times to reach out to her and counsel to discuss this privately. Today, she decided to make that conversation public.

Our intention from the beginning was simple: Pursue justice for Ahmaud. Our team has not benefited financially from any of the work we have done to do just that. In fact, we have spent our own money to help pursue justice. And we have gotten the support from Maud's family in the process.

We are saddened that someone would use a public space to spread



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organization. But pursuing justice for a person and for a community is something that Glynn County as a whole is committed to doing moving forward. We will continue to pursue [#JusticeForAhmaud](#) and pursue social justice advocacy and awareness for our community and across our state. Our movement has moved from a local one to one that could impact our entire state.

Again, this is unfortunate. But we wanted to make sure we shared some truth that you all needed to be aware of.

Thank you for your continued support,

The 2:23 Foundation

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