



Demanding a New Trial for Latarsha Sanders

Where there is no truth there is no justice

By: Monique Swift Muhammad, PsyD, CAPB
President of The Association of Black Psychologists, Inc (ABPsi)
December 4, 2025

The Appeal

The Association of Black Psychologists, Inc (ABPsi) expresses our profound sorrow for the deaths of eight-year-old, Marlon and five-year-old, La'Son Brito, whose lives were taken in February of 2018. We send our blessings and support for Latarsha Sanders and her family. Let me explain why we grieve with them and why we support Latarsha Sanders' appeal for a new trial.

Background Facts

In 2018, 43 y/o Latarsha Sanders lived in a Brockton, Mass apartment with her 15-year-old daughter (Tamia), and two sons, Marlon & La'Son. Ms. Sanders also had two grown children, Shalea (27), and Kadeem (17), who lived on their own. On the weekend of 2/03/18 Ms. Sanders and the two boys contracted the flu. Though there were earlier signs of concern, from that point onward Tamia observed her mother's mental state deteriorate. Tamia cites observing paranoid persecutory delusions, disheveled appearance, unusual breathing, and aggressive episodes, resulting in Ms. Sanders striking two family members. Tamia also reported her mother had become fixated on YouTube videos about the 'Illuminati'. According to Tamia, prior to this point, her mother had been consistently caring and affectionate to her young sons.

On Monday 2/05/18, in response to a report of a woman suffering a seizure, Latarsha Sanders was transported from the front of her home to a local hospital, by EMS. She was described as agitated and was given an intramuscular injection of Ativan in the emergency room. She was interrogated by the police at the hospital and later at a precinct. Through the interrogation she was repeatedly told to wake up. The state trooper noted her statements were "strange" and "bizarre" which led him to inquire about her psychiatric history. That day the deceased bodies of Marlon and La'Son were discovered in separate rooms in Ms. Sanders' apartment. Each child was wrapped in a blanket with severe knife wounds.

In 2022, Latarsha Sanders was convicted at trial, of 2 counts of first-degree murder, in connection with the death of her two sons.

The Trial & Testimony

The prosecution engaged their own expert psychologist to examine Ms. Sanders. This expert found Ms. Sanders was suffering with Paranoid Schizophrenia and likely psychotic at the time of the offense. Ordinarily this would be evidence supporting insanity. The prosecutor did not want the jury to hear this evidence and chose not to call her own expert to testify.

The defense expert examined Ms. Sanders and the extensive records from Ms. Sanders' emergency room, medical, and psychiatric treatment that followed her arrest. These records from treating physicians and nurse staff provided a full picture of the onset and course of Ms. Sanders severe mental illness, including paranoid persecutory delusions. The prosecutor did her best to conceal this record from the jury as well. Through a series of objections and appeals to the judge, the findings from the defense expert's review of the psychiatric and medical records were deemed inadmissible as 'hearsay', which critically limited the testimony the defense expert could present to the jury.

This resulted in an insanity trial presented before a jury with limited input from actual mental health experts. The prosecutor filled this void with her own peculiar and biased formulations. Remarks about 'voodoo' and 'ritual', Ms. Sanders made while psychotic, during interrogation, were selectively picked and combined with rambling notes from a notebook, to concoct a motive, the prosecution spun into a criminal intent narrative.

During the trial, the prosecutor repeatedly referred to Ms. Sanders, the distressed Black mother, as "evil" rather than mentally ill. This was the prosecutor's appeal to the all-white jury to convict Ms. Sanders of two counts of murder; a "legal lynching", as it were.

This family was ravaged by severe untreated mental illness, and, subsequently, an unspeakable tragedy that was the direct result of the mental illness. This family needed an informed and compassionate response from their neighbors and community. But instead, they were further traumatized by the legal/judicial system and dragged through a modern day 'Salem Witch Trial'.

Our Calling and Duty

ABPsi counts it a duty to be a voice for the voiceless and a protection for our people. We say this was a “legal lynching” because it informs and clarifies the ordeal our people have faced in the US 'criminal/legal' system. More than a hundred years ago, our ancestor, Ida B. Wells, led a movement to expose the white racist ‘mob lynching’ that terrorized our people for generations. Under her voice and guidance, we fought back against the lynchers and the apathy that discounted the value of Black life. Today, that same racial bias continues against our people in the form of disproportionate law enforcement surveillance, arrests, convictions, and sentencing - including wrongful convictions.

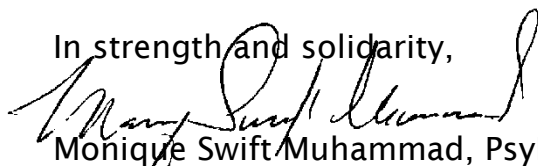
Stand with ABPsi in our advocacy for Latarsha Sanders and her surviving family. Let us rise up in support of the Sanders family, in a similar way as we demanded justice for George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Troy Davis, Sandra Blain, Trayvon Martin, Emmitt Till, Isaac Woodard, Tamir Rice, the Jena Six, and many others...

Latarsha Sanders was deprived of her right to a fair trial. That is, her right to present all the relevant evidence detailing the onset, nature, and course of her psychiatric condition. And because she was a Black woman, [with a deep ebony complexion], all the racial tropes, stereotypes, and cultural biases were at play before the all-white jury. ABPsi urges the court to honor her appeal, reverse her conviction, and grant a new, fair trial.

Anyone who wants to take action in support of Latarsha Sanders, or similar advocacy efforts, please contact Dr. Johnson at mjohnson@jjay.cuny.edu.

“When spiders unite, they can tie up an elephant” ~ African proverb

In strength and solidarity,


Monique Swift Muhammad, PsyD, CABP
ABPsi President 2025-2027



“By feeding you, I feed myself”

(301)449-3082 | ABPsi@Abpsi.org

ABPsi.org