

# In Response to the Shameful Not Guilty Verdict in Aarefah Mosavi's Lawsuit Against Rapist Chester Brown

To all the survivors of rape and sexual assault, to all the people who stand with us in action against misogyny and its proponents and defenders, the story of Aarefah Mosavi should be an example not of defeat but of the growth of our movement. From the beginning, we understood that the legal system and the sexism engrained in our society places an almost insurmountable burden on the survivor and in favor of the rapists. Despite today's shameful decision by the jury, the victory in this over 4-year ordeal lies in the fact that through this fight Aarefah has asserted her power and dignity through speaking publicly against Chester Brown, the man who raped her. Together with the help of Aarefah's supporters, we have exposed a predator and prevented him from preying on other women. We have warned other women and we have inspired other survivors to overcome the prejudice and sexism of our society to be unafraid to name their rapists and to build a movement to expose and stop rape and sexual assault through a collective fight.

We may have not won our trial today, but we have shown that we can take away the ability of the courts and school administrators to sweep rape under the rug, to bury the secrets, to blame and re-victimize survivors while providing safety and secrecy to the rapists. The truth must come to light. First Aarefah Mosavi, then the #metoo movement, have shown that rapists and sexual offenders can be held accountable publicly, scrutinized and isolated in the public eye, made to bear the shame and burden of their atrocious acts, and not their victims. Under the biggest misogynist president Donald Trump, it is more important than ever that we continue to speak out against rape and sexual assault and take action to hold them accountable. If we continue to build our movement in the streets and are successful to bring it into the courtrooms, we will start winning justice in the courts as well.

*"Chester Brown, the rapist, the Mt. SAC administration, and this court decision will not succeed in silencing me or the movement against rape and sexual assault. This trial was a charade of injustice. I was raped and sexually assaulted by Chester Brown on the Mt. SAC campus and the college administration failed to protect me or to provide me with justice. Once again, today the court system failed me and other rape survivors. This entire trial revealed the absurdity of the court which allows lies and blatant fiction to masquerade for the truth.*

*Chester Brown lied on the witness stand for almost 3 hours, obviously perjuring himself or pretending to have no memory when he knew very well what he had done to me. He denied every instance of discrimination, harassment, his assault and rape of me. Judge Phillips issued a gag order on me, my witnesses, and even my attorney from even saying the word "rape" during the trial. The judge issued a gag order on me, my witnesses, or even my attorney from placing my fight for justice against Chester Brown and Mt. SAC within the context of the #metoo movement. During the trial and closing arguments, the judge allowed Chester Brown's attorneys to reference evidence that had not been formally included in the trial, yet would not allow my attorneys to present or even reference similar evidence.*

*Justice will not be found in the courts alone, and relying solely on the courts is something I have never done, nor will I ever counsel any survivor to do. I didn't wait for the administration or the courts to give me justice, I went out and got justice through exposing Chester Brown's crimes against me to the campus community and to the public to ensure that he would not do what he did to me to anyone else. Despite today's decision, I forced rapist Chester Brown to have to come to court, take the witness stand, endure*

*cross examination, and to have to face me. My legal fight is not over, and our movement is only just getting started. The justice we as survivors can win is in the palm of our hands, our voice, and our defense of each other and our common humanity.” – Aarefah Mosavi, August 10, 2018*

*“It’s clear the jury did not consider the facts in this case. From before the trial even started, the judge issued rulings limiting what the jury could see or hear, unquestionably influencing the scope of the trial and the final verdict. Even without such limitations, the level of bias in favor of the rapist and against women who try to bring cases to court is so great that for a woman plaintiff to win a rape case against a man is almost impossible to win unless there are either a) a parade of victims who are able to bring a collective case against him, and/or 2) unless the woman has been violently beaten, bloodied, or otherwise severely physically injured or maimed and can show evidence to that. It is a set-up against the woman and a cycle that the rapists, the college administration, and the courts rely on to perpetuate the continued subordination of women. Aarefah courageously disrupted that cycle and stood against it. Aarefah Mosavi is a true hero.”*

---- Shanta Driver, lead attorney and national chair of the Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action, Integration, and Immigrant Rights and Fight for Equality By Any Means Necessary (BAMN)