



CHARLES BELK, FROM HANDCUFF CURBSIDE TO M.A.D. (MAKING A DIFFERENCE)

On August 22, 2014, Hollywood producer and entertainment marketing executive, Charles Belk, was wrongfully arrested in greater Los Angeles for mistaken identity. He was handcuffed and detained on a busy Los Angeles street for 45 minutes, taken to the police station, booked, denied a phone call, denied being told his charges, denied immediate access to his attorney, jailed for six hours for Armed Bank Robbery and Accessory to Armed Robbery and held under a \$100,000 bail. Although he was released later that night and given a Certificate of Detention which indicated he was detained and not arrested, an arrest record appeared on the Sheriff's website and a state legal process had to be followed to get the arrest record sealed and destroyed.

A year later, Charles Belk, has gone from handcuffed curbside to M.A.D. -- Making A Difference, by inspiring the implementation of new laws across the country as a result of his wrongful arrest. Since his arrest, Belk launched a nationwide effort, through the non-profit he founded (fittingthedescription.org) and his #AutoErase Initiative, which calls for the automatic erasing of an arrest record of an innocent person that was wrongfully arrested for mistaken identity or identity theft. In only a year and a half, he has successfully helped usher in two new state laws based on the #AutoErase Initiative, and currently has legislation (aka the "Belk Bill") that has been introduced in ten other states. Additionally, in 2015, both the NHCSL and the NBCSL passed Resolutions supporting the #AutoErase Initiative.

Fitting The Description (501.c.3 tax exempt non-profit organization) was established to help build awareness of wrongful detentions and arrests that occur each day because an individual "fit the description." The goal is to help educate and inform others about the perils of wrongful arrests records, and to advocate for alleviating the burden and costs incurred by the innocent to remove those arrest records.

Since its inception, Fitting The Description has participated in a nine-city awareness campaign during National Make A Difference Day, conducted cultural sensitivity discussions and training with local and state law enforcement agencies, and participated in presentations, workshop and panels for high-school and college age kids to help them understand how to successfully survive an encounter with law enforcement. Fitting The Description, #AutoErase and Charles Belk has been honored with a Resolution by the Rhode Island House of Representatives, and in a Proclamation by the Mayor of Durham, NC where he proclaimed Thursday, March 10, 2016 as "Charles Belk and Justified AutoErasure Day."



Fitting The Description future expanded programs will include a 10-city National Expungement Day, client intake and resource services, and a documentary.