



Former Police Officer Derek Chauvin is Found Guilty on All Charges in the High-Profile George Floyd Murder Trial

On Tuesday afternoon, the jury in the Derek Chauvin trial found the former police officer guilty on all three charges relating to the heinous murder of George Floyd back in May of 2020. Chauvin is now due to be sentenced in approximately two months' time around mid-late June. Jurors deliberated for a mere ten hours before rendering an overwhelming guilty verdict in the high-profile case which elicited outrage and sparked months of widespread nationwide demonstrations regarding the issue of police brutality. Analysts point to the video footage of the abhorrent incident as a watershed moment in much of the nation's perception towards the problem, with it helping to illustrate how African-American men and women are often mistreated at the hands of law enforcement. Social justice advocates are hopeful that the verdict in the landmark case will serve as a positive precedent for increased accountability towards perpetrators of police brutality and the lethal use of force against unarmed civilians, particularly people of color who have fallen victim to these crimes at disturbing levels.

The critical piece of evidence in the case was the powerful bystander video of onlookers pleading for Chauvin to stop as he pressed his knee on Floyd's neck for what was determined to be a deplorable nine-and-a-half minutes, including several minutes after the victim's breathing had stopped and he had no pulse. Chauvin and the three other officers who were involved in the killing initially released a factually inaccurate report claiming that Floyd "appeared to be suffering medical distress after he resisted arrest and was handcuffed." However, once the cell phone video of the incident surfaced, a Minneapolis police department spokesperson stated that it was clear the statement was false. During the course of the case proceedings, police-procedure experts and law enforcement veterans from inside and outside the local police department – including the chief – testified for the prosecution that Chauvin used excessive force which was not consistent with his training. Overall, the video recording coupled with the compelling testimony against Chauvin from his peers helped lead to a guilty verdict on all three charges of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder, and second-degree manslaughter.

The jury's decision was hailed across the country as an important step forward for justice and accountability regarding policing in the United States. President Joe Biden praised the verdict, commenting that Floyd's death was "a murder in full light of day, and it ripped the blinders off for the whole world" to see the issues with police brutality towards minorities in America. It is uncommon for law enforcement members to be convicted for killing someone while on the job, and therefore many are optimistic that the ruling sets an example that the unwarranted use of force will not be tolerated moving forward and will be rightly punished accordingly. It also sets a precedent for future cases involving police officers using lethal force.

The public outrage surrounding the killing of George Floyd and the subsequent trial of Derek Chauvin was well documented. Street protests over racial inequality and police brutality engulfed much of the United States, and indeed cities across the world. Public leaders have roundly praised the guilty verdict delivered to Derek Chauvin, although there is an acknowledgement that there is more work to be done on the issue of minority treatment by police in the United States.