

April 22, 2021

The Institute's Reflections on the Derek Chauvin Verdict

This week's verdict in the Derek Chauvin trial stirred up many emotions for our staff and community, and we hope everyone is doing what they need to process this development. While the guilty verdict is a small victory for police accountability and we hope it provides some relief for George Floyd's family, the verdict should not be equated with justice. Justice would be George Floyd still being alive today. Justice would be fixing a policing system that disproportionately kills Black and Brown people. Justice would be investing in under-served communities.

In the United States **nearly 1,000 people are shot and killed by the police every year. Less than 1% of officers are convicted of a crime, and when a conviction is issued, it's often for a lesser crime, such as manslaughter or negligent homicide.** Derek Chauvin's trial was held 10 miles from where a police officer shot Daunte Wright, an unarmed Black man, in a routine traffic stop just 9 days earlier. On the same afternoon Chauvin's verdict was announced, a Black teenager named Ma'Khia Bryant was fatally shot by police in Columbus, Ohio.

Police are 3x more likely to kill Black people than white people, even though Black people 1.3x more likely to be unarmed. Additionally, there have only been three days this year when police did not kill someone.

The verdict in the Derek Chauvin trial should not be hailed as a victory, but rather as a small step in undoing the systemic racism and white supremacy deeply engrained in this country.

Sincerely,
The John Jay College Institute for Justice and Opportunity