



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on May 28, 2020

Fallout Over Floyd Death in Minneapolis Continues

Violent protests have rocked Minneapolis for a second day and night, following the death of George Floyd, a black man, while being arrested by the local police. Thirty fires along East Lake Street have been reported by the Minneapolis Fire Department, and looters have used Floyd's death as an excuse to steal from fellow citizens who had nothing to do with the incident that took place on Monday of this week.



Nineteen-year police veteran Derek Chauvin and three other officers involved in arresting Floyd, all white, were fired Tuesday. Chauvin was recorded on a mobile phone with his knee on Floyd's neck while three other officers assisted in pinning Floyd down. Video indicated that Chauvin had his knee on Floyd's neck for more than seven minutes, all while spectators could be heard called for the officer to get off Floyd's neck, with one heard shouting, "You're f*****g stopping his breathing there, bro."

Mahmoud Abumayyaleh, the co-owner of Cup Foods in Minneapolis, told reporters that one of his employees called the police, alleging that Floyd had tried to use a counterfeit \$20 bill. Abumayyaleh's surveillance video is among the visual recordings of the event, and he told reporters that the video confirmed what he himself observed — that Floyd offered no resistance, yet Chauvin continued to press his knee into Floyd's neck, while both Floyd and spectators pleaded with the officers that Floyd could not breathe. Floyd can be heard saying, "I can't breathe," several times until he could no longer speak at all.

Floyd eventually passed out, and his listless body was placed in an ambulance. Medics who worked on Floyd said that they could detect no pulse, and the man was later pronounced dead at the hospital. Floyd's sister, Bridgett Floyd, told NBC's *Today* show, "They murdered my brother. He was crying for help."

The police union in Minneapolis, on the other hand, which represents more than 800 uniformed officers, pleaded with the public not to rush to judgment until all the video can be reviewed. They also said that the public should wait to form a judgment until after the medical examiner's office has released its report.

In 2006, Chauvin was among several officers who were named in a federal lawsuit filed by an inmate at a correctional facility in Minnesota. The case was eventually dismissed. The police department has not responded to requests for details of Chauvin's disciplinary record.

The incident could have national political ramifications, as Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-Minnesota), who has been considered on former Vice President Joe Biden's "short list" of potential running mates, served as the chief prosecutor in the state between 1999 and 2007. During her tenure, she refused to bring charges against more than two dozen police officers who had killed Minnesotans in the line of duty — including Chauvin when he shot and killed Wayne Reyes in 2006.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey has said that Chauvin "murdered" Floyd, but declined to specify a "precise charge" that should be filed against the veteran policeman. Representative Justin Amash (I-



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Michigan) tweeted, “We witnessed the murder of George Floyd on video in broad daylight. Why have the perpetrators not been arrested and charged? Where is the justice?”

Conservative commentator Ben Shapiro tweeted similar sentiments, saying, “The officers in that video should be prosecuted to the full extent of their lawbreaking,” although Shapiro also condemned the damage to private property and looting going on in reaction to the incident. “You’re not stealing that TV to honor George Floyd or protest police brutality. You’re stealing that TV because you’re a POS.”

Of course, all persons, including police officers, deserve to be afforded due process. Many conservatives have been proven correct in recent years in defending officers in incidents such as the killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri, or the death of Freddie Gray while in police custody in Baltimore. Many no doubt expected that the incident in Minnesota would lead to the exoneration of the police officers there, as well.

But the video is very disturbing, even for those who are ordinarily supportive of the police.

Trying to gain some perspective on this unfortunate incident, *The New American* contacted James Fitzgerald, a former police officer and detective in Newark, New Jersey. “The sad part is that what the police officer did was inappropriate. When the man said he couldn’t breathe, the officer should have given relief.” Fitzgerald added that he had never seen such a method — driving one’s knee into the neck of a man being arrested — used. It was especially “not acceptable” by any police agency he knew of, considering that the man was in handcuffs, and there three other police officers assisting him in holding the man down.

Fitzgerald also noted, however, that the mayor’s remarks were also inappropriate, as there is a due process that should be followed, and that the mayor is not part of that due process.

“I don’t want to condemn” the officer, Fitzgerald added, without all the facts being in, but he could say that the particular method used to restrain Floyd was inappropriate. Fitzgerald cautioned that there may some relevant facts about the case that could not be captured on video. He also was concerned that race was being interjected into the incident, noting that during the same time period, whites had been shot in Chicago by the police.

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden lost little time in interjecting race into the incident, as well, arguing that it was “part of an ingrained, systemic cycle of injustice that still exists in this country,” and that it “sends a very clear message to the black community and black lives that are under threat every single day.” It is certainly part of Biden’s message to stoke understandable black outrage for his own political gain, even while violent riots rock the city. Only a few days earlier, Biden had insisted that a black person even *thinking* about voting for President Donald Trump “ain’t black.”

For his part, President Trump was much more restrained in his response to the incident, as all public officials should be, while the case is still under investigation, and a possible trial could loom in the future. Speaking to reporters in Florida, Trump called the death of Floyd, “a very, very sad event,” and that his administration planned to “look at it.”

It is indeed a very “sad event,” and not only for Floyd and the city of Minneapolis, but for all Americans. Police officers who carry out their duties in an appropriate manner will no doubt be smeared by this one tragic episode, regardless of where due process takes it.

Photo of Minneapolis apartment building burned during protests: AP Images

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