

Chicago, Police Repression Capital of America: Cop Convicted of Second Degree Murder

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Police in America nearly always have virtual carte blanche authority to operate with impunity.

Chicago long ago earned a reputation as the police repression capital of America. A Gitmo-type operation on the city's west side is Exhibit A – operating off-the-books in a nondescript Homan Square warehouse, the domestic equivalent of a CIA or Pentagon black site.

Inner city communities across America are battlegrounds. Blacks in Chicago and elsewhere nationwide are unlawfully arrested, detained, brutally treated, and too often lethally shot unaccountably – a shocking indictment of a racist society.

An Illinois Better Government Association study, covering the period 2010 – 2014, called Chicago tops among America's largest cities in fatal shootings by police, most often targeting defenseless Black males.

The right-wing Chicago Tribune earlier said

"it's common knowledge that Chicago's system of investigating shootings by officers is flawed...at so many levels...by design..."

On October 14, 2014, Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke lethally shot 17-year-old Laquan McDonald – even though he committed no crime and threatened no one.

He was shot twice in the back, another 14 times as he lay dying on the ground. Coverup and denial followed. Police authorities at first called the brutal execution justifiable self-defense.

In November 2015, a seven-minute dashcam video surfaced, showing Van Dyke extrajudicially executed McDonald. City authorities lost a 13-month Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit battle to prevent release of the video – indictable evidence of what happened.

A knife planted on McDonald's body was exposed as a Big Lie. Video evidence showed him moving away from Van Dyke unarmed when lethally shot from behind.

Police chief Garry McCarthy was sacked over the incident. So was chief of detectives Dean Andrews. Three Chicago police officers were indicted for involvement in covering up

McDonald's murder.

They lied to investigators in the aftermath of the shooting, withheld damning information, filed false police reports, failed to interview eyewitnesses, and destroyed evidence.

America's criminal justice system nationwide is shamefully racist. So is the nation's gulag prison system. Two-thirds of inmates are Blacks and Latinos – mostly for nonviolent offenses, over half on illicit drug charges.

A badge in America is a license for anything goes, especially in exerting authority over people of color by any means. Jim Crow never died. It evolved to its present form.

Nearly always nationwide, when cops lethally shoot Blacks or Latinos, victims are blamed for state-sponsored criminality.

Rare exceptions prove the rule. On Friday October 4, after a month-long trial, justice delayed was served for McDonald's family members.

Jurors convicted Van Dyke on 2nd degree murder and 16 aggravated battery counts for each shot fired. Damning video evidence proved guilt.

An overflow Cook County courtroom heard the verdict – after which Van Dyke was handcuffed and taken into custody, awaiting sentence by what one prominent Chicago attorney called “tough but fair” Judge Vincent Gaughan, saying he faces 15 – 30 years imprisonment.

The Chicago Tribune believes a six-year sentence is likely, calling court proceedings “one of the most closely watched trials in Chicago's history.”

Downtown city streets were heavily patrolled before and after the verdict, continuing all night in case protests erupted and turned disruptive.

Van Dyke was the first city cop in half a century to be convicted of murder for an off-duty shooting. He was acquitted of a single count of official misconduct.

Juror speaking to reporters said they were split over whether to convict him for first or second-degree murder. After deliberating for over seven hours, they agreed on the latter verdict.

Once announced, crowds around City Hall cheered. City organizer Keena Carson said she was overwhelmed by emotion, adding:

“It just felt like all those years of work from the time the video came out was worth it. Like all the organizing and being out in the streets, it was worth it. It was worth it — for once.”

Prosecutor Joseph McMahon said Van Dyke “now stands before this court a convicted felon,” adding:

“This is a difficult day for Tina Hunter,” McDonald's mother. “She has to continue to relive the worst moment of her life over and over...I don't think

Tina will ever heal from this wound.”

Sentencing is scheduled for October 31. Van Dyke’s lawyers said they’ll appeal over Judge Gaughan refusal to move the trial outside Cook County because of pre-trial publicity, adversely affecting Van Dyke.

The landmark case will long be remembered in city history, the final chapter yet to be written.

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