

Black History Month eBook

Black Lives Matter: A Movement for Racial Justice



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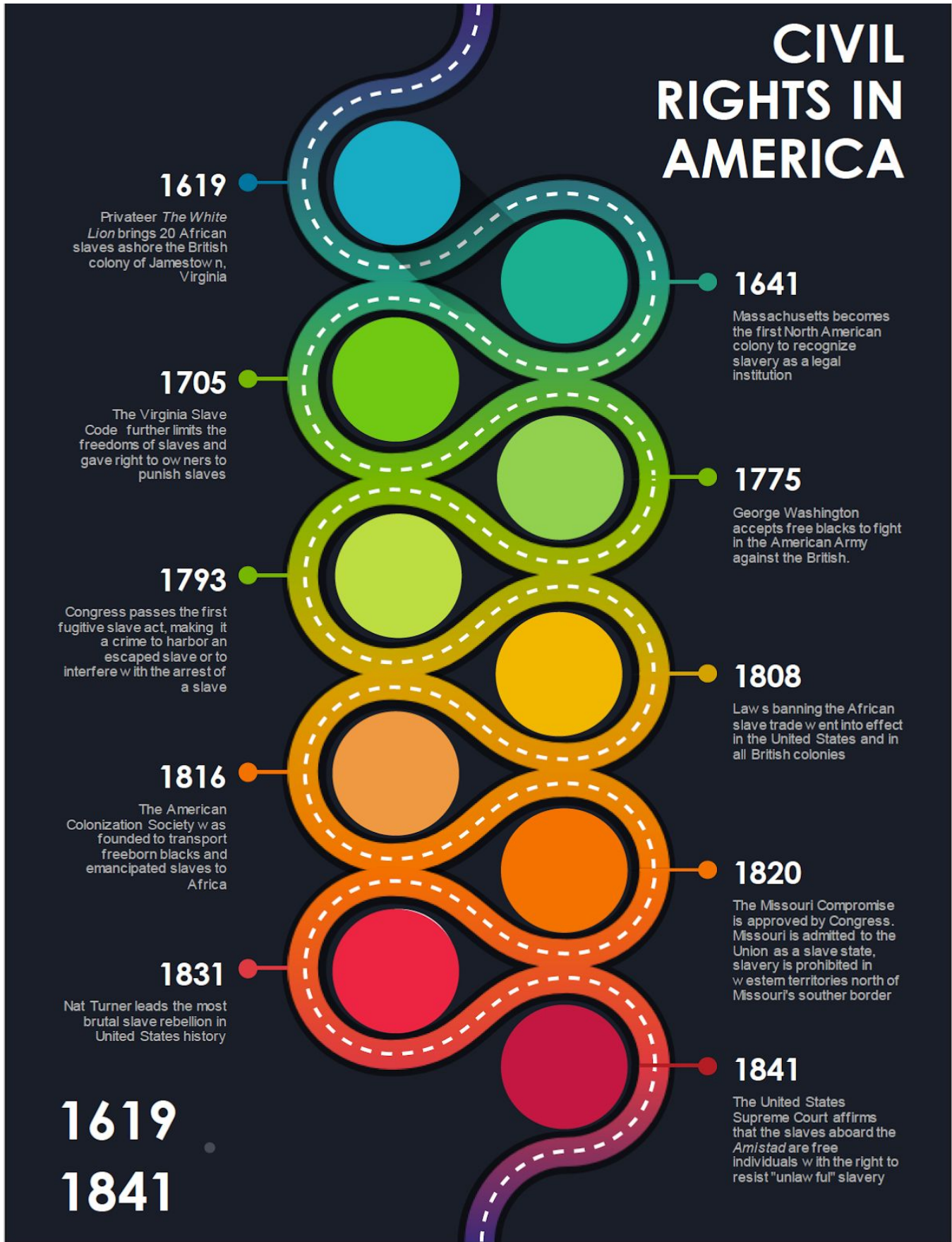
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Introduction

In the past almost 250 years, the United States has seen countless events of historical significance that have shaped where we stand today. While one can recount the better known movements from history class, there is so much more to learn about seemingly smaller events that had a hand in impacting the future. For example, the Emancipation Proclamation was signed on September 22nd, 1862 by Abraham Lincoln, declaring that as of January 1st, 1863, all enslaved people in the states currently engaged in rebellion against the Union “shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free.” Many may consider this to be the historical moment that brought an end to slavery, though that is far from the case. In reality, the official end of slavery did not end until the ratification of the 13th amendment on December 6, 1865, and the fight for equality and racial justice did not end there. Though enslaved people were freed, it did not necessarily result in true freedom. Prejudice, segregation, and life threatening instances were a daily occurrence in the life of a black man or woman 200 years ago, and it is something that is still present today. Black Americans have long been fighting for equal treatment, rights, and opportunities, from segregated schools to police brutality, the Black Lives Matter movement was born. This is not something that took place from one major event, but rather through decades of oppression, suffering, and death. The #BlackLivesMatter movement is a culmination of injustice across the nation, and understanding its history is just as important as paving its future.

Civil Rights in America: A Timeline of Events



CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA

1850
The Compromise of 1850 brings California into the United States as a free state, bans the public sale of slaves in the District of Colombia

1857
The United States Supreme Court rules that blacks are not citizens of the United States and deny Congress the ability to prohibit slavery in any federal territory

1865
The 13th Amendment to the United States Constitution is ratified, outlawing slavery

1870
The 15th Amendment to the Constitution states that the right of citizens to vote "shall not be denied...on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude"

1875
Congress passes the Civil Rights Act of 1875, prohibiting discrimination in public accommodations

1850

1883

1854

The Kansas-Nebraska Act mandates that a popular vote of the settlers determines if territories become free or slave states

1863

President Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, claiming that a Union victory meant the end of slavery

1868

The 14th Amendment to the Constitution affirms that black Americans are citizens of the United States and are entitled to due process and equal protection under the law

1870

A Virginia law makes it illegal for black and white children to attend the same schools

1883

The United States Supreme Court rules that the Civil Rights Act of 1875 is unconstitutional, ruling that the 14th Amendment prohibited states, but not citizens, from discriminating

CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA

1890-1908

Southern states adopt new constitutions and voting laws designed to disenfranchise black voters

1914

Every southern state and many northern cities have Jim Crow laws that discriminate against black Americans

1919

The Red Summer—outbreaks of whites, resentful of black demands for equality, attack blacks throughout the United States

1920-1935

The Harlem Renaissance—a major artistic awakening among African-Americans

1928

Oscar DePriest is the first African American elected to Congress from a district north of the Mason-Dixon Line

1890

1936

1896

The United States Supreme Court establishes the "Separate but Equal Doctrine," that legal racial segregation does not violate the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment

1917

At least forty blacks are attacked and killed during a race riot in East St. Louis, Illinois, resulting in the Silent March down Fifth Avenue in NYC to protest racial oppression

1920

The 19th Amendment to the United States Constitution is ratified, giving women the right to vote

1925

Ku Klux Klan has around 3 million members during the early 1920s,

1936

Jesse Owens becomes the first American to win four gold medals in one Olympics

CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA

1941

President Franklin D. Roosevelt issues Executive Order 8802, eliminating hiring discrimination and establishing the Fair Employment Practices Commission

1944

The United States Supreme Court rules that excluding blacks from voting is unconstitutional

1948

Executive Order 9981 is signed, stating that there is to be equal treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services

1954

Segregation in public schools is outlawed in the United States

1955

Rosa Parks is arrested for refusing to give up her seat on the bus, leading to a citywide bus boycott

1957

MLK Jr. becomes first president of The Southern Christian Leadership Conference, an organization founded on the principles of nonviolence and civil disobedience

1960

Ruby Bridges becomes the first African American student to integrate an elementary school in the South

Spring 1963

Martin Luther King, Jr. is arrested in Birmingham, sparking him to write *Letter From Birmingham Jail*

August 1963

250,000 blacks and whites gather at the Lincoln Memorial for the March on Washington. MLK, Jr. Delivers his *I Have a Dream* speech

Sept. 1963

Four young girls are killed in a bombing at Sixteenth Street Baptist Church while attending Sunday School

1941

1963

CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA

Nov. 1963

President John F. Kennedy is assassinated

Jan. 1964

The 24th Amendment to the Constitution abolishes the poll tax, which was instituted in southern states to make it difficult for poor blacks to vote

July 1964

President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Civil Rights Act of 1964, making segregation in public facilities and discrimination in employment illegal

March 1965

Black voting-rights activists begin the fifty-mile march from Selma to Montgomery

1967

The United States Supreme Court rules that prohibiting interracial marriages is unconstitutional

1968

MLK Jr. is assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, where King was speaking in support of striking sanitation workers

1970

Mississippi law enforcement officers kill two young black Americans at Jackson State College

Oct. 1970

Violent race-fueled engagements connected with desegregation of public schools occurs in Michigan

1971

The United States Supreme Court upholds busing as a way of achieving integration of public schools

1972

The 40 year experiment on 399 black men with untreated syphilis ends

1963

1972

CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA

1978

The United States Supreme Court ruled against fixed racial quotas, or "affirmative action"

1992

Rodney King is brutally beat by LAPD officers on camera as he is being arrested. When a jury failed to convict the involved officers of assault using excessive force, violent protests took the streets of LA

2003

The United States Supreme Court rules that race can be one of many factors considered by colleges when selecting their students

2008

Senator Barack Obama becomes the first African American to be elected president of the United States

2013

George Zimmerman is acquitted, sparking the beginning of The Black Lives Matter movement

1991

The Civil Rights Act of 1991 is signed to strengthen the rights of those who experienced intentional discrimination

1996

Proposition 209 is approved in California, banning all forms of affirmative action

2007

The United States Supreme Court rules that considering race when assigning students to schools is unconstitutional

2012

Trayvon Martin is fatally shot by George Zimmerman despite being unarmed

July 2014

Eric Garner dies after Daniel Pantaleo, an NYPD officer, puts him in a prohibited chokehold during the arrest

1978
2014

CIVIL RIGHTS IN AMERICA

Aug. 2014

Michael Brown Jr. is fatally shot by Darren Wilson, a Ferguson police officer. This sparked the "hands up, don't shoot" slogan used in protests

Sept. 2016

Colin Kaepernick first kneels during the national anthem as a peaceful protest

March 2020

Breonna Taylor is fatally shot in her apartment when officers of the Louisville Metro Police Department forced entry as part of an investigation into her boyfriend

May 2020

George Floyd is killed by a white police officer after the officer knelt on Floyd's neck for about 9 and a half minutes, despite being handcuffed and stating that he could not breathe

May 2020

A white woman calls the police on a black man birdwatching in Central Park after she refuses to leash her dog and he beckons the dog towards him with a treat

Summer 2020

Riots and protests for the Black Lives Matter movement takes place across the United States

June 2020

Rayshard Brooks is fatally shot by an Atlanta Police Officer after fleeing from officers and firing a taser towards the officer

Aug. 2020

Jacob S. Blake is shot and seriously injured by a police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin when he leaned into the driver's door of his SUV

Jan. 2021

Kamala Harris is sworn in as Vice President of the United States. She is the first African American and Asian-American vice president, as well as the first female vice-president

2014
2021

Rodney King

Rodney King was an African American man who became a symbol of racial injustice in America after he was videotaped being beaten by Los Angeles police officers in 1991. Rodney Glen King was born on April 2, 1965 in Sacramento, California. He grew up with his four siblings in Altadena, California, and attended John Muir High School. On November 3, 1989, Rodney King robbed a store in Monterey Park, California, threatening the owner with an iron bar and hitting him before fleeing the scene with two hundred dollars in cash. He was caught and sentenced to two years in prison, but was released after serving one year on December 27, 1990.

In the early morning of March 3, 1991, Rodney King and his friends, Bryant Allen and Freddie Helms, were driving on the Foothill Freeway in the San Fernando Valley of Los Angeles after spending the evening watching basketball at a friend's house in Los Angeles. At 12:30 am, two members of the California Highway Patrol, Tim and Melanie Singer, identified King's car speeding on the freeway. They pursued King in his car using lights and sirens, reaching 117 mph as King refused to pull over. He left the freeway and then continued to speed between 55 to 80 miles per hour through residential streets, going through at least one red light. At this point in the chase, several police cars, as well as a police helicopter, had joined and after about 8 miles, officers were able to corner King in his car.

There were five Los Angeles Police Department officers to arrive first at the scene: Stacey Koon, Laurence Powell, Timothy Wind, Theodore Briseno, and Rolando Solano. Officer Tim Singer, one of the initial involved in the chase, ordered King and the other two passengers to exit the vehicle and lie face down on the ground. According to Allen, one of the friends in the car, he was manhandled, kicked, stomped, taunted, and threatened. The other friend, Helms, was hit in the head while lying on the ground and required treatment for a head laceration. During this time, King remained in his car until he emerged—reportedly giggling, patting the ground, and waving to the police helicopter that was overhead. King then grabbed onto his backside, which Officer Melanie Singer thought was him reaching for a weapon (though he was found later to be unarmed). Singer pointed her pistol at King, ordered him to lie on the ground, and approached him with her gun drawn, preparing to make the arrest. At this time, Officer Koon told Singer that the LAPD was taking over command and ordered all officers to holster their weapons.

The official LAPD report states that officer Koon ordered the four other LAPD officers to subdue and handcuff King using the swarm technique. The “swarm technique” is when multiple officers grab a suspect from different angles so as to overcome or evade any potential resistance. Since King stood to remove two of the officers from his back, the four officers claimed that King resisted arrest; though King, as well as other witnesses, all claimed that he did not resist. During this time, a man named George Holliday began recording the beating from his Lake View Terrace apartment balcony, calling the LAPD and later the local news station. The recording shows King having been tasered by Koon while laying on the ground and then rising to rush toward Powell—though it was not clear whether it was to attack or to flee. Officer Powell continually struck King with his baton, knocking him to the ground, with Powell striking him several more times. Officer Briseno attempted to stop Powell from striking again, and Koon reportedly shouted for them to stop, though as soon as King rose to his knees, Powell and Wind began hitting him again with their batons. When King once again tries to stand, Koon ordered the officers to “hit his joints, hit the wrists, hit his elbows, hit his knees, hit his ankles.” Despite several misses, the officers administered a total of 33 blows and seven kicks, and then a

Rodney King (cont.)

total of eight officers began to “swarm” King again. He was placed in handcuffs, as well as cord cuffs meant to restrain his arms and legs, and was then dragged onto his abdomen to the side of the road.

King was taken to Pacifica Hospital, where he was diagnosed with a fractured facial bone, a broken right ankle, and multiple bruises and lacerations. In King’s negligence claim filed with the city of Los Angeles, he alleged that he sustained 11 skull fractures, permanent brain damage, broken bones and teeth, kidney failure, and emotional and physical trauma. Blood and urine samples taken at the hospital deemed that he would have been intoxicated at the time of his arrest, and showed traces of marijuana. It is reported that the officers who accompanied King to Pacifica Hospital openly joked about how many times they had hit King during the arrest.

Four police officers involved in the arrest were charged with assault and use of excessive force. The trial took place in Ventura County, with a jury of ten whites, one biracial male, one Latino, and one Asian American. On April 29, 1992, after seven days of jury deliberations, the jury acquitted all four officers of assault and acquitted three of the four for using excessive force, unable to agree on a verdict for the fourth officer. Despite the videotape contrasting claims made by the accused officers that King attacked them, King was beaten continuously for one minute and 19 seconds, with the officers testifying they tried to physically restrain him prior to the start of the recording. It was suggested after the acquittal that the jurors became desensitized to the violence of the beating given the repeated slow-motion replay and broken-down, frame-by-frame dissection of the recording.

Mere hours after the acquittals, the 1992 Los Angeles riots began, lasting six days. African Americans and Latino communities began rioting the streets, outraged by the verdicts of the trial. Law enforcement, the California Army National Guard, the United States Army, and the United States Marine Corps had to intervene to restore order. Throughout the six days, there were 63 deaths, 2,383 injuries, more than 7,000 fires, damage to 3,100 businesses, and almost one billion dollars in financial losses. During the riots, Rodney King made an appearance on television to plead with the public to bring an end to the riots and violence, though they continued for almost three more days.

At the end of the riots, the United States Department of Justice sought indictments of the police officers in regards to violations of King’s civil rights. Federal prosecutors began presenting evidence to the federal grand jury in Los Angeles on May 7, 1992 and a trial of the four officers began on February 25, 1993. Indictments were made against three of the officers for “willfully and intentionally using unreasonable force,” as well as against Sergeant Koon for “willfully permitting and failing to take action to stop the unlawful assault.” The jury acquitted Officers Timothy Wind and Theodore Briseno of all charges, and found Officer Laurence Powell and Sergeant Stacey Koon guilty, sentencing them to 30 months in prison. Tom Bradley, the Los Angeles Mayor at the time, offered King \$200,000 and a four-year college education, but King refused and sued the city, winning \$3.8 million in damages. Bryant Allen, one of the passengers from the night of the incident, received \$35,000 in his lawsuit against the city of Los Angeles, and the other passenger, Freddie Helms, settled for \$20,000.

Amadou Diallo

Amadou Diallo was born in Liberia on September 2, 1975 while his father was working there. He and his three siblings moved to Thailand and then to Guinea, finally settling in New York City in September of 1996 to start a business with his cousin. Diallo was seeking to stay in the United States by filing a political asylum application where he claimed he was from Mauritania and his parents had been killed in fighting.

On the early morning of February 4, 1999, Diallo had just returned from a meal and was standing close to his building. Around 12:40 am, four police officers in plain clothes—Edward McMellon, Sean Carroll, Kenneth Boss, and Richard Murphy—drove by. According to the officers, when they approached, Diallo ran up the outside steps towards his apartment doorway, ignoring their orders to stop and ‘show his hands.’ Only Diallo’s silhouette was shown as the porch light was out and he was backlit by the inside light. At this time, Diallo reportedly reached into his jacket and withdrew his wallet. Carroll saw him holding a small square object and yelled ‘gun’ to his colleagues. Believing he was holding a gun, the officers opened fire on Diallo, firing 41 shots with semi-automatic pistols, and striking Diallo 19 times. Officer McMellon tripped during the shooting, causing him to fall backward off the front stairs and leading other officers to believe he had been shot. A witness later testified that the officers shot with no warning.

Diallo had applied for political asylum before the assault but had lied on his application, and therefore was potentially fearful of the possibility that the police were from the immigration department instead. Additionally, it has been suggested that due to Diallo’s minimal English, he may not have understood that the officers were police in plainclothes, and rather thought he was being robbed. No weapons were found on or near Diallo, and it was determined that he had pulled his wallet out of his jacket. The ruling by the internal NYPD investigation stated that the officers had acted within policy based on the circumstances. Regardless, the shooting led to a review of police training policy, as well as the use of full metal jacket bullets, which can lead to less severe wounding.

A Bronx grand jury indicted the four officers on charges of second-degree murder and reckless endangerment on March 25, 1999. After two days of deliberation on February 25th, 2000, a jury in Albany acquitted the officers of all charges. Diallo’s mother and father had filed a lawsuit against the City of New York and the officers in April 2000, charging gross negligence, wrongful death, racial profiling, and other violations of civil rights. Despite filing for \$61 million, the Diallos accepted a \$3 million settlement in March 2004, one of the largest in the City of New York for a single man with no dependents.

Breonna Taylor

Breonna Taylor was born on June 5, 1993, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She was raised in Louisville, Kentucky by her mother, Tamika Palmer, and her boyfriend, Trory Herrod. She went to local schools and graduated from Western High School in Louisville in 2011. After briefly attending the University of Kentucky, Taylor became an Emergency Medical Technician for the city of Louisville and worked for Jewish East Medical Center in the emergency room as a technician, as well as a Practicing Registered Nurse.

On March 13, 2020, white plainclothes officers—Jonathan Mattingly, Brett Hankison, and Myles Cosgrove—of the Louisville Metro Police Department forced entry into Taylor’s apartment. The entry was part of an investigation into Taylor’s boyfriend, Kenneth Walker, in regards to drug-dealing operations. A “no-knock” search warrant was obtained for Taylor’s apartment because it was suspected that Jamarcus Glover, a former boyfriend of Taylor’s, might have been keeping narcotics and/or proceeds from the sale of narcotics there. The officers stated that they announced themselves as police prior to forcing entry, but Kenneth Walker said he did not hear an announcement and fired a warning shot, thinking the officers were intruders. The shot was said to have struck Mattingly in the leg, though forensic photography and ballistics reports provide contrasting theories as to whose gun shot Mattingly.

After the warning shot, police then fired 32 rounds into the apartment in two waves. Mattingly fired six shots upon entering the residence, Cosgrove fired 16 shots from the doorway, and Hankison fired 10 times from outside through a sliding glass door and bedroom window. The officers’ shots hit various objects within the apartments and Breonna Taylor was struck by five or six bullets in the hallway, the shot by Cosgrove being the one that killed her. During this exchange, Walker was uninjured, and the warrant was never executed, nor was Taylor’s apartment searched for drugs or money after the shooting.

An investigation began into the three officers involved in the shooting, all of whom were placed on administrative reassignment pending the outcome. On May 20, 2020, the findings of the investigation were given to the Attorney General, Daniel Cameron, of Kentucky’s office to determine whether any officer should be criminally charged. The FBI and U.S. Attorney’s Office were also asked to review the findings. In mid-June, Hankinson was sent a letter notifying him that termination proceedings had begun against him. Within the letter were accusations that Hankinson violated departmental policies on the use of deadly force by firing into Taylor’s apartment without determining whether any person presented an immediate threat or whether there were any innocent persons present. There were also past citations of disciplinary actions against Hankinson over his tenure, including for reckless conduct. Four days later, Hankinson was fired, with an appeal to his termination being delayed until the criminal investigation was finished.

Hankinson was indicted by a state grand jury on September 23, 2020 on three counts of “wanton endangerment” for endangering a neighboring white family of three when shots he fired penetrated their apartment. None of the three officers involved in the raid were indicted for Taylor’s death, and questions were brought to the forefront about whether the grand jury was given the opportunity to decide if charges should be pressed against Mattingly and Cosgrove. Two grand jurors criticized Cameron, how the grand jury was operated, and how he presented the grand jury’s conclusion. The grand jurors indicated that Cameron did not use the proceedings honestly in regards to accountability and responsibility for making charges against the officers, as well as how he intentionally steered the panels away from considering homicide charges. The FBI

Breonna Taylor (cont.)

is currently conducting its own independent investigation into the death of Breonna Taylor as announced by the Louisville field office on May 21, 2020.

Taylor's family filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the officers and the city of Louisville. The lawsuit states that both Taylor and Walker were sleeping in the bedroom prior to the incident, the police officers were in unmarked vehicles, and Taylor and Walker believed they were in significant, imminent danger from criminals. This lawsuit was resolved by mid-September with the Louisville Metro Government agreeing to pay Taylor's estate \$12 million. In addition, the Louisville Metro Police Department announced that it will now require all sworn officers to wear body cameras, and Louisville Mayor Greg Fischer suspended the use of no-knock warrants indefinitely.

George Floyd

George Perry Floyd was born in Fayetteville, North Carolina, on October 14, 1973 and raised in Houston, Texas. In 2014, he moved to Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he worked as a truck driver and bouncer. On May 25, 2020 around 8 pm, Floyd purchased cigarettes from a grocery store in the Powderhorn Park neighborhood of Minneapolis. Believing that Floyd had paid with a counterfeit \$20 bill, employees of the store approached Floyd in his vehicle and demanded that he return the cigarettes, which he refused. An employee of the store called the police and reported that Floyd had used fake bills, was intoxicated, and as a result, not in control of himself. Two officers arrived shortly after, tapping on the window of Floyd's SUV with a flashlight, asking him to show his hands. Floyd did not obey at first, but after a second tap of the window, he opened his door and apologized. Floyd was instructed to show his hands three more times, and after six seconds, Officer Lane drew his gun, again asking him to show his hands. Once Floyd complied, the gun was holstered and following a brief struggle, he was pulled from the SUV and handcuffed. He was then pushed onto the sidewalk against the wall in front of a restaurant, and asked if he was "on something." Despite replying that he was not on anything, the officers stated that Floyd was acting "real erratic" to which he replied was because he was scared.

Shortly after, the officers told Floyd that he was under arrest and walked him across the street to their police car. Floyd fell next to the car, and the officers picked him up and placed him against the car's door. Prosecutors stated that Floyd told the officers that he was not resisting, but rather that he was recovering from COVID-19, was claustrophobic and suffered from anxiety, and did not want to sit in the car. The officers attempted to put him in the car, with Floyd repeatedly asking them not to, offering to lie on the ground instead. Five minutes later, two more officers arrived, one of which, Chauvin, assumed command. When imploring if Floyd was going to jail, one of the officers replied that he was arrested for forgery. Twice Floyd told officers that he couldn't breathe, and security footage from the store shows one of the officers struggling with Floyd in the backseat of the car. A minute later, Officer Chauvin pulled Floyd across the backseat and Floyd fell to the pavement, still handcuffed.

Floyd lay on his chest with his cheek to the ground while Officer Chauvin knelt on his back. About one minute later, Floyd stopped moving though was still conscious, and multiple witnesses began filming the encounter. During this time, Officer Chauvin was kneeling on Floyd's neck, Officer Kueng was applying pressure to his torso, at the same time that Lane was applying pressure to his legs. In the recordings by several witnesses, Floyd can be heard repeatedly saying, "I can't breathe"; "please"; and "Mama." Despite repeating at least 16 times that he could not breathe, as well as saying, "I'm about to die...", Officer Chauvin told him to "relax." Floyd was asked what he wanted by an officer to which he answered, "I can't breathe. Please, the knee in my neck, I can't breathe."

An ambulance was called by the officers on a non-emergency basis, and was then escalated to emergency status a minute later. Officer Chauvin continued to kneel on Floyd's neck as Floyd requested water, begged not to be killed, and stated that everything hurt. Many witnesses pointed out that Floyd was not resisting arrest, and that he was not okay, but the officers continued to restrain him, making apparent jokes out of his distress as he cried out for help. Three minutes after the ambulance was called, Floyd appeared unconscious, and bystanders continued to urge officers to check for his pulse. Officer Keung checked and found no pulse,

George Floyd (cont.)

but the officers did not attempt to provide medical assistance, and Officer Chauvin denied the suggestion to move Floyd onto his side. Officer Chauvin continued to pin Floyd's neck for almost a minute after the ambulance arrived, even though he was silent and motionless. Floyd was lifted by paramedics onto a stretcher and was taken to the Hennepin County Medical Center. The ambulance requested assistance from the fire department, but after receiving no information from the police officers at the scene, five minutes passed until the Minneapolis Fire Department was able to reach the ambulance after it was reported that Floyd was going into cardiac arrest. Two fire department medics boarded the ambulance and found Floyd unresponsive and pulseless, and was pronounced dead at 9:25 pm at the Hennepin County emergency room.

Initially, the Minneapolis Police Department did not address the incident in regards to the officer's gross misconduct, and made a statement in support of the officers the next day. Within hours of witness and security camera videos going viral, the department updated their statement, temporarily placing the officers on paid administrative leave until they were later fired that same day. The FBI announced the day after the incident that it would be reviewing the findings, and two days later, the United States Department of Justice joined forces with the FBI, stating that they would be working together throughout the investigation to determine if there was any violation of federal law. State and federal prosecutors attempted to negotiate a plea deal with former Officer Chauvin, but the U.S. Attorney General, William Barr, rejected the bargain, believing that it would be viewed as too lenient before a full investigation was completed. Less than a week after the incident on May 29, 2020, Chauvin was charged with third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter, and a few days later, the charge was upgraded to second-degree murder with the other three officers additionally receiving charges for aiding and abetting second-degree murder.

Two autopsies were performed, one by the Hennepin County Medical Examiner, and the other by Michael Baden, a pathologist and former New York City Chief Medical Examiner, who was commissioned by Floyd's family. The Hennepin County Medical Examiner's findings were that Floyd's heart stopped while he was being restrained, and that his death was considered a homicide caused by multiple factors. In addition, it was found that Floyd suffered from two significant forms of heart disease, as well as having tested positive for the COVID-19 virus on April 3rd. Michael Baden's findings were that Floyd's death was a homicide caused by asphyxia due to neck and back compression affecting blood flow to the brain with no underlying medical problem contributing to his death. Despite the two autopsy reports concluding different material findings, both came to the ultimate conclusion of homicide, which is an important distinction for legal proceedings.

After several months at Oak Park Heights state prison, Chauvin was released on conditional bail in early October under heavy supervision, with the knowledge that he waives this agreement if he violates a number of stipulations. Officer Derek Chauvin's attorney filed a motion at the end of August 2020, attempting to dismiss the charges against him, claiming that Floyd likely died as a result of drug use and pre-existing medical conditions. The presiding judge dismissed the third-degree murder charge, but did not grant the dismissal of the more serious second-degree unintentional murder and manslaughter charges. As of right now, Chauvin's trial is set to begin on March 8, 2021 in Hennepin County, presided by District Judge Peter Cahill. Judge Cahill ruled in January 2021 that Chauvin's case would be separate from that of former Officers Kueng, Lane, and Thao due to limitations of physical space with the COVID-19 pandemic. Thomas Lane was released on bail on June 10th; James Alexander Kueng on June 19th; and Tou Thao on July 4th; with their trial set to begin on August 23, 2021.

George Floyd (cont.)

In July 2020, George Floyd's family filed a lawsuit in federal court against the City of Minneapolis and the four former police officers involved in the killing. The lawsuit stated that Floyd's Fourth Amendment rights (regarding prohibiting unreasonable searches and seizures) were violated by "excessive use of unjustified, excessive, illegal, and deadly force."

Black Lives Matter Movement

The year 2020 saw a drastic resurgence of support for the Black Lives Matter movement due to a multitude of instances, but this movement was born long before social media took hold. It can be said that it began with the fight for freedom from slavery in the 1600s, civil rights in the 1900s, or after the widespread awareness of the police beating of Rodney King just before the turn of the millennium. The movement that started with #BlackLivesMatter on social media came after Officer George Zimmerman was acquitted in the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin in 2013, as a group advocating for racial justice. Many events and demonstrations have taken place since the movement began, oftentimes coming after a death by the hands of the police, such as George Floyd and Breonna Taylor. With this movement has come protests both peaceful and violent in nature, but the goal has remained the same—advocating against police violence towards black people, as well as policy changes in regards to freedoms and civil liberties.

While many of these protests have taken place in the United States, there has been an outpouring of support from across the world on multiple platforms. From professional sporting events in the United States, such as the NBA, NFL and MLS, to demonstrations in front of U.S. embassies in foreign countries, people have made their stance abundantly clear—that it's time to see real change and a concerted move away from police brutality, white privilege, and inherent racism.

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