



**"THE CURSE OF POVERTY HAS NO JUSTIFICATION IN OUR AGE"**

**-MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.**



**FORMER WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN WEINER: 'CHAUVIN TRIAL SHOULD BE SLAM DUNK AGAINST POLICE BUT IS NOT'**

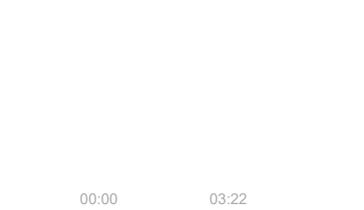
**UN UNDER-SECRETARY GENERAL DR. NATALIA KANEM ADDRESSES PULSE INSTITUTE ON COVID-19, WOMEN AND POVERTY**



**I AM POVERTY**



**CEO FORUM ON POVERTY- MARK SCHLISSSEL**



*Editor's Note: Robert Weiner, a PuLSE Institute National Advisory Panel member, is a former Clinton White House spokesman, communications director for Cong. John Conyers' Government Operations and Judiciary committees, and aide to Congressmen Charles Rangel, Ed Koch, Claude Pepper, and Sen. Ted Kennedy. Now a national columnist and radio-TV commentator, he recently won the National Press Club President's Award for his program recruiting young journalists to co-write over 900 op-eds in top papers. Ramos is policy analyst, research specialist, and a writer for Weiner Public News and Solutions for Change. For submission inquiries contact Bankole Thompson, the editor-in-chief of The PuLSE Institute at [info@thepulseinstitute.org](mailto:info@thepulseinstitute.org)*

By Robert Weiner and Adjanni Ramos

The Derek Chauvin trial should be a slam dunk against the George Floyd murder, but is not, if just one juror maintains an unstated racial or police-can-do-no-wrong bias.

The trial of Chauvin for allegedly murdering Floyd is only half over after 35 witnesses including medical examiners, doctors, and even the Minneapolis Police Chief confirming it wasn't the bystanders yelling "Don't kill him, let him breathe." It wasn't the observing firefighter asking to "test his pulse" and "give him CPR" who was ignored. It wasn't any drugs or underlying heart issues. It wasn't crowd noise. And it wasn't any police training in force that was the "direct cause" killing George Floyd—it was policeman Derek Chauvin's knee on Floyd's neck for than nine minutes and twenty-nine seconds, including three after he stopped breathing.

Still, one racially biased of the twelve voting jurors, or one not admitting it earlier but believing the police can do no wrong, could block a unanimous-required guilty verdict for Murder 2, Murder 3, or even Manslaughter.



Adjanni Ramos

The blue wall of silence by fellow police officers has been broken. Chauvin's supervisors, his police teachers, and colleagues say he exceeded any needed force and broke "protocols." Yet the case could go awry if the psychological tricks of the defense give one juror an excuse to claim doubt.

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Detroit's Congressman, the late John Conyers, for decades made "police brutality" an issue. Both as Government Operations and Judiciary Committees' Chairman, and even when Republicans were in power, as the committees' minority leader, he brought Democrats and Republicans together to investigate and call for reforms—no chokeholds, no immunity from prosecution as the current House-passed "George Floyd" bill would do. Now is the time for that, but it is also time for the law as it already exists to be enforced. There would be even less debate if the Floyd bill became law, but murder is already illegal regardless.

A founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus, Conyers' civil rights origins were crucial to his career. He served as Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Criminal Justice in 1983, and even back then he helped lead a hearing where civil rights groups presented evidence on Police Brutality against blacks in New York City. From that hearing to other hearings on police brutality against minorities in Harlem to hearings in Detroit on the issue by his bipartisan caucus he created shortly before he died, Conyers made the issue front and center. CNN reported that in July, 2016, "House Judiciary Chairman Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and the committee's top Democrat, Michigan Rep. John Conyers, released a joint statement Wednesday indicating they would lead the effort, which is focused on 'policing strategies.'"

"It's clear that more must be done to end excessive use of force, strengthen police accountability, prevent violent attacks on law enforcement and improve the relationship between police officers and the communities they are sworn to protect and serve," Goodlatte and Conyers said.

The Floyd case looks the most promising of any in recent history. It will send a message heard around the world, almost as loudly as the viral videotape of the more than nine minutes of unresisted torture and murder.

Or it could send the message that our criminal justice system is so broken that even the jury requirement of unanimity must be fixed and amended.

We've gone through the two weeks of the prosecution case and defense cross-examination. Now we will be having the defense case and their shenanigans to lull the jury into complacency and ignoring the prosecution's case. We will see tapes, witnesses, and ad nauseam questions on everything other than who and what killed Floyd. Let's hope the jury members don't have short memories.

It is shocking that another killing of an African American happened this week in Brooklyn Center, MN, just ten miles from the Chauvin trial – with a 26-year police officer claiming that she mistook her gun for a laser.

In 2020, there were 1021 fatal police shootings in the United States, including 241 African Americans—meaning that for the Black 13.4% of the American population, they were 23.6% of the killings—almost double. Since African Americans have the greatest poverty, police are killing not only disproportionately a minority but the poorest in the country – matching the discrimination in all areas of the criminal justice system.

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**Bankole Thompson**

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A nation's greatness is measured by how it treats its weakest members.

**-Mahatma Gandhi**

Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made.

**-Nelson Mandela**

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*The PuLSE Institute (Institute for Public Leadership and Social Equity) is a Detroit based independent non-partisan anti-poverty think tank, committed to deep analysis of the broad spectrum of inequality issues affecting people.*

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