

Former Minneapolis police officer charged with murder of George Floyd released on bail

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On Wednesday morning, former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin posted a \$1 million bond for bail and was released from a Minnesota state prison.

Chauvin, who is white, has been charged with second degree murder and third degree manslaughter and murder for kneeling on the neck of George Floyd, a 46-year-old unarmed African American man, in May.

Mass opposition erupted following the release of cellphone footage of Floyd's grotesque execution, in which Chauvin kneeled on the neck of Floyd for 8 minutes and 46 seconds while the latter begged for his life as his body went limp. Floyd had been suspected of using a counterfeit \$20 bill at a local convenience store when he was confronted by police.

Chauvin aggressively assaulted Floyd while police officers J. Alexander Keung, Thomas Lane and Tou Thao held back the crowd of onlookers that had gathered. All of the officers have been fired from the Minneapolis Police Department and face criminal charges related to the killing.

Floyd's death, along with the vigilante murder of Ahmaud Arbery and Louisville Metro Police Department's slaying of Breonna Taylor, fueled mass demonstrations against police brutality and racism internationally, including the most widespread protests ever throughout the United States. In response, police and military repression was dealt out to protesters by Democratic and Republican state and federal governments alike.

This culminated in President Donald Trump initiating a coup attempt in Washington, DC. On June 1, the Republican president seized on mass demonstrations outside of the White House to summon National Guard units from throughout the United States to repress protesters. This aggressive response was in de facto violation of the Posse Comitatus Act and the Insurrection Act.

Trump's coup attempt has only months since. Trump has declared he will refuse to recognize a loss at the polls in the November presidential election against Democratic Party nominee Joe Biden and has summoned federal police and local law enforcement officers to attack, kidnap and murder protesters at ongoing anti-police violence demonstrations throughout the US.

Since the protests in June, police murder has not abated, with police killing hundreds in the months following Floyd's death. According to statistics published on killedbypolice.net, 742 people have been killed at the hands of law enforcement in 2020. Over 1,000 people die in this fashion every year in the US.

While also brutalizing protesters, Democratic Party representatives have sought to confine the mass opposition to police brutality using racist appeals. Instead of correctly characterizing the rising tide of police repression as a symptom of the diseased capitalist order, presided over by both Democrats and Republicans, Democratic officials and media pundits have sought to blame police murder on "bad apples" among the police or "white people" in general.

A measure of the nervousness of the ruling capitalist establishment over the mass opposition that still exists in abundance was shown Wednesday when it was reported that Wisconsin Governor Tony Evers, a Democrat, had activated the state's National Guard in preparation for protests after the state failed to bring charges against officer Joseph Mensah.

Mensah, who is African American, shot and killed 17-year-old Alvin Cole in February in the Milwaukee suburb of Wauwatosa.

Evers also activated the National Guard in August in Kenosha, where mass civil unrest broke out after Kenosha Police Department officers shot Jacob Blake in the back in front of his children. Blake was paralyzed. Two protesters were later killed by a right-wing vigilante in the

city.

Democratic elected officials in Minneapolis are also preparing to suppress protests following the release of Chauvin.

As of this writing it is not clear how Chauvin was able to cover his bail. According to the *Washington Post*, a bail fund for Chauvin, launched by “unidentified relatives” in September, had only raised just over \$4,000 as of Wednesday.

Chauvin had 18 official complaints filed against him during his 19-year career at the Minneapolis Police Department. He had participated in several police shootings prior to his murder of Floyd.

As in cities across the country, Chauvin’s lawless behavior was formed and encouraged by the political establishment, including the supposedly “left-liberal” establishment in Minneapolis. In the weeks following the massive protests against the MPD, Democratic Party lawmakers in the city council had sought to posture as opponents of the police and defenders of social justice. Some even endorsed the call to “defund” the police department.

The *New York Times* reported last month in an article titled “How a Pledge to Dismantle the Minneapolis Police Collapsed” that in the months since the mass protests, Democratic lawmakers have sought to quietly slither away from their promises.

The article mentions a June 7 rally in the city, where “nine councilors stood with activists at Powderhorn Park during an event that was neither ambiguous nor done in spirit. The stage was adorned with ‘Defund the Police’ lettering and, after the pledge was read, the crowd cheered the councilors with chants of ‘Defund M-P-D.’” The *Times* paraphrases Democratic city councilor Andrew Johnson, who explained that “some councilors at the park were already devising ways to clean up the political mess they created.”

“Technically, if we rename the department, we’d end M.P.D.,” Johnson recalled one colleague suggesting to him.



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