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The Feds Are Trying To Use George Floyd's Death To End Local Policing

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Last month, when Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was convicted of second- and third-degree murder, most Americans believed his sentencing would end a year-long national ordeal. Footage of Chauvin restraining George Floyd as he died was widely publicized last summer, with a predictable—and memorable—result.

Although Chauvin was convicted by a jury, that decision was pre-empted by the constant menace of burning cities, gruesome threats of violence, massive corporate marketing campaigns, public statements by members of Congress and the president, and in at least one case, the jurors' political activism.

Let's not be naïve. Chauvin's conviction did not end anything. The monetary and emotional investment that followed Floyd's death can only signify the beginning of a crusade that will always need new scapegoats for its ongoing show trial.

The antiracism movement's never-ending quest to remake society, or at least get rich by pretending to do so, is purposefully engineered as a perpetual motion machine. After Chauvin's conviction, PR firms coached clients to respond with the foreboding catchphrase "more work to be done."

The first of the “more work” being done is the indictment just announced by a federal grand jury, accusing the other three officers present at Floyd’s arrest of violating his civil rights.

Specifically, the grand jury charges the officers as accomplices who brutalized Floyd and denied his Fourth Amendment protection from unreasonable search and seizure. To convict, the Justice Department prosecutor would have to prove that the three officers caused or could have prevented Floyd’s death.

The announcement comes just days after it was revealed by the Minneapolis Star Tribune that federal officers had a secret plan to arrest Chauvin in court for these same civil rights crimes, were he acquitted by the jury. This raises two questions: why indict Chauvin and his fellow officers in spite of the jury’s decision on Chauvin? Further, why would the Justice Department involve itself in a local police matter at all—even convening a grand jury to bring charges?

The trial’s evidence shows that whatever Chauvin and his fellow officers may be, they are not violent racists. Just ask the notorious Democrat operative and Antifa supporter Keith Ellison, the attorney general of Minnesota, who stated he feels sorry for Chauvin and does not believe he acted out of racial bias.

Yes, the officers failed to adequately diagnose a pre-existing heart condition, compounded by a fentanyl overdose, and applied a restraint that followed Minneapolis Police Department policy.

But even if Chauvin and his fellow officers were dirty cops who set out each day to oppress minorities, why not directly investigate them on those grounds? Why should the DOJ convene a grand jury over one cherry-picked instance of alleged excessive force?

This is not blind justice at work, but Attorney General Merrick Garland’s latest sortie in the culture war. The DOJ is abusing civil rights activism to undermine the rule of law, and getting away with it because Americans—even many conservatives—are afraid to speak out.

Libertarians and classical liberals used to defend local jurisdictions against federal overreach, but now line up obediently with the feds’ narrative. The Cato Institute, for example, published a whitepaper in 2004 entitled “A Grand Façade: How the Grand Jury Was Captured by

Government,” arguing that grand juries are little more than a rubber stamp for federal prosecutors. So why will Cato not stand up for the civil rights of the Minneapolis officers being railroaded by the DOJ and its grand jury?

Instead, they’ve spent the entire last year helping to prematurely convict Chauvin in the court of public opinion. They want ever-greater powers for DOJ prosecutors to attack local police officers stripped of their last legal defenses. In their haste to comply with corporate media’s narrative about police, the “small government” libertarians at Cato have abandoned their roots to attack local communities at the feds’ behest.

It’s not like this federal power grab over local law enforcement is some new trend. This has been the *modus operandi* for the DOJ’s civil rights division since the 1960s: vague social justice concerns undermining due process and other constitutional rights.

To accomplish leftists’ utopian goals, federal law enforcement has undergone a dystopian expansion of manpower and authority. Now, along with the military and intelligence agencies’ surveillance of Americans, the FBI, DOJ, and other federal police services devote massive resources to monitoring, prosecuting, and “reforming” local police using tools like consent decrees in service of the latest leftist pursuits.

Sometimes local police are accused of racism; sometimes of gender inequity in hiring; sometimes of misgendering detainees. These are not plaintive tweets by woke journalists, they are official DOJ reports and memos.

This matters because local police are the last obstacle to federal hegemony. This is the unspoken and unsettling agenda behind the leftist mob’s “defund the police” slogan. It is not, as National Review’s Andrew McCarthy believes, simply a misguided replacement of police by gentle, albeit ill-equipped, social workers. It is another step toward federal anarcho-tyranny: the ruthless suppression of politically disfavored activity by federal law enforcement while violent crime is tolerated or endorsed.

Americans have already dealt with anarcho-tyranny in cities like Philadelphia, where COVID restrictions were brutally enforced while the cops pulled back from “peaceful protests” that set the city ablaze. That’s what all of America could look like when local police’s hands are tied and only Washington makes the arrests. The feds don’t do “community-oriented policing.”

Plenty of Americans were disgusted by last year’s riots and especially the weak, politically correct response that left dozens dead, including children. Those same Americans are perturbed that riots and other scare tactics politicized a trial by jury and pushed a conviction despite ambiguous evidence.

But this latest DOJ indictment goes beyond dubious social justice jurisprudence. It’s a bleak reminder that our own federal government is ideologically targeting local police and average citizens more intensely than ever.