



Attorneys For Ex-Cop Who Killed PwC Accountant Want Her Murder Trial Moved Out of Dallas, Obviously

Jason Bramwell

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Citing “prejudicial” and “inflammatory” media coverage as the reason, the attorneys for Amber Guyger, the former Dallas police officer who killed PwC accountant Botham Jean in his apartment last September, recently filed a change of venue motion to move her murder trial out of Dallas County, saying she can’t get a fair trial there.

But c’mon, the REAL reason, as the *Dallas Morning News* points out, is they want the trial to be held where the rednecks are so their white client will have a puncher’s chance of not being convicted of murder in the death of an unarmed black man.

[T]he populations of the six counties that her attorneys suggest as alternatives are less diverse and more suburban and rural.

That shift could affect the outcome of the trial and make a jury less likely to convict Guyger, said Patrick Bayer, a Duke economics professor who has studied links between the racial makeup of juries and trial outcomes. He found that less diversity in the jury room does a disservice to justice.

“If you move a trial from a more racially and ethnically diverse community, you’re going to increase the chance for acquittal, which is why they are making the motion in the first place,” said Bayer. “The legal argument, of course, is pretrial publicity.”

But you don’t have to be a Duke economics professor to figure out that Guyger has a better chance at freedom if the trial is moved to a county where Toby Keith music blares out of car stereos and Dale Earnhardt “3” flags are seen just as much as American flags.

According to the *Dallas Morning News*, Dallas County’s population was 29% white in 2017, the most recent estimate available, and voted primarily Democrat in the past three presidential elections. But the six counties where the defense is recommending the trial be moved to—Collin, Ellis, Fannin, Grayson, Kaufman, and Rockwall—are predominately white and Republican.

For example, Grayson and Fannin counties have the least diverse populations with white majorities of 76% and 78%, respectively, while the other four counties have white majorities between 58% and 72%.

The *Dallas Morning News* also cited a 2016 survey by the Cato Institute which found that Republicans have a more favorable view of police (81%) than Democrats (59%) and independents (59%), although none of the three political groups were found to be anti-cop.

We still don't know when State District Judge Tammy Kemp will rule on the motion to change the trial's venue. She could choose to hold a hearing or make a decision without hearing arguments, according to the *Dallas Morning News*.

But the likelihood that the change of venue request will be granted is pretty small, as the recent murder trials of two other Dallas County police officers who are now serving jail time were held in that county.

Jury selection in Guyger's murder trial is scheduled to begin on Sept. 6, the one-year anniversary of when Guyger came home to the South Side Flats apartment complex after a shift just before 10 p.m., still in uniform, went to Jean's apartment on the fourth floor believing it was hers (she lived on the third floor one unit directly below Jean), opened the front door which was ajar, saw Jean who was watching a football game on his couch and thought he was an intruder, and fatally shot the PwC Dallas accountant in the chest.

In the 911 call she made after shooting Jean, Guyger repeatedly told the dispatcher that she thought she had entered her apartment, not Jean's, and that she was going to lose her job.

Guyger did get fired from her job on Sept. 24, about two weeks after she was arrested and charged with manslaughter in Jean's death. Guyger had worked for the Dallas Police Department for nearly five years.

After two days of hearing evidence in late November, a Dallas County grand jury on Nov. 30 upgraded Guyger's charge from manslaughter to murder. She turned herself in to authorities that afternoon and was released on \$200,000 bond.

Her murder trial is expected to begin on Sept. 23.