



April 7, 2021

The Murder of George Floyd

We are in the middle of the trial of Derek Chauvin, the former Minneapolis police officer who is charged with the murder of George Floyd.

According to the New York Times, during his testimony, Medaria Arradondo, the Minneapolis police chief, said that he learned about the widely seen bystander video when a community member called him close to midnight after George Floyd's death and said, "Chief, have you seen the video of your officer choking and killing that man at 38th and Chicago?"

That man. That Man George Floyd. What is often lost in all of this is that George Floyd was a Man, a human being. And he was murdered by another man, who had taken an oath to follow these guidelines:

"As a Minnesota Law Enforcement Officer, my fundamental duty is to serve mankind; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation, and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the Constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality and justice."

Christopher J. Lebron writes compelling and relevant words in [Four Hundred Souls, A Community History of African American America, 1619-2019](#), edited by Ibram X. Kendi and Keisha N. Blain. Lebron states, "white Americans [need] the uncompromising belief that what is wrong with racism is not that it inhibits full access to American goods and treasures but that it is an affront to the human standing of Black Americans."

Lebron makes the point that "A humanitarian argument is different from an argument based on inclusion and exclusion...Blacks do not need allies who fight for our inclusion; rather we need people who are possessed of the basic belief that we are human and that any arguments that depend on rejecting that proposition are tyrannical, unjust and to be fought."

I am not arguing against efforts for diversity, inclusion, and equity that are so often touted in companies and organizations. However, America needs to recognize the basic humanity of Black people and honor what rights and responsibilities flow from that basic recognition.

This time also reminds me of how other races, including Whites, came together during the Civil Rights movement, even to the point of losing their lives. Some people, regardless of their race, realize that it will take all of us to make progress for a better society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'LSK', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District