

Norm Pattis Expects a Riot: Lawyer Asks Jurors to Acquit Chauvin for Killing George Floyd

by Robert Storace



New Haven-based defense attorney Norm Pattis.

A Connecticut lawyer not involved in the case went online to advocate on behalf of the police officer charged with killing George Floyd outside a store in May.

Norm Pattis believes Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin should be acquitted in the death of George Floyd, whose killing led to protests nationwide and globally.

And he's advising jurors to be ready for rioting if they "do your duty."

In a Facebook post and a 30-minute podcast, both of which appeared on Pattis' social media pages last week, the attorney offered his input on why the Minneapolis jury should acquit the officer. He also offered his take on what might happen if they didn't.

In his April 15 Facebook post, Pattis said that if he were the attorney giving closing arguments, he'd tell jurors to "rise above your fear. Do justice."

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duty,” Pattis wrote. “I fear you will compromise on your oath out of fear. Do not compromise. Rise above your fear. Do justice. Long after the smoke clears, America will regain her footing. The pandemic will pass. Hysteria is a mad energy we cannot sustain.”

Pattis, whose social media posts have caused ire with some in the legal profession in the past for its take on race and privilege, continued on his Facebook post to say that “Derek Chauvin is not a murderer. He is not a racist. He is your servant, pressed into hard places to deal with impossibly difficult situations. Abandon Mr. Chauvin now, and you abandon the community to a reign of terror, real terror, the likes of which you saw last summer.” He closed his post writing: “Be honest. Do your duty. Follow the law. Vote not guilty.”

In his April 16 podcast titled “A closing argument

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for Derek Chauvin,” Pattis deplored what he saw as media hype and misinformation about the case; said Chauvin did what he was trained to do; said Chauvin’s police superiors “threw Chauvin under the bus” during the trial; and said Floyd should have followed police orders.

Closing arguments in the case of Chauvin, who is charged with second-degree murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter, began April 19.

In his podcast, Pattis, who has represented such high-profile individuals as right-wing radio host Alex Jones in his defamation battle with Sandy Hook family members and the late Fotis Dulos, charged in the disappearance of his wife Jennifer, said the Chauvin trial was the most significant criminal trial in the United States since John Adams’ defense of British soldiers in the 1770



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Boston Massacre trial.

Expanding on his Facebook post, Pattis said on his podcast, "This was not the case of a black man randomly selected by a white officer."

The attorney repeatedly said "the whole world is watching" what the jurors do in the case, which he said has nothing to do with race.

"This isn't a case about race," Pattis said. "This isn't a case about showing reckoning. This isn't a case about social justice. This isn't a case about reforming police. This is an ordinary case about what happens when the man you call in response to a 911 call arrives and uses his best

judgment. ... Derek Chauvin did not make perfect decisions, but he made defensible decisions."

Pattis tried to make the case during his podcast that Floyd resisted arrest and was acting incoherently and that officers did what they were trained to do when they subdued him on May 25, 2020. Floyd was wanted for allegedly passing counterfeit money.

"Here was a man who was behaving in ways that did not make sense," Pattis said. "Mr. Floyd had an obligation to comply with their orders, to show us your hands and put them on the wheel."

While Pattis noted that the 9-plus minutes of video showing Chauvin's knee on Floyd's neck got a lot of play, he said the entire 45-minute video didn't, and should have.

"You never saw that on the national news. Every effort to talk to him was met with an hysterical response," the attorney said.

Pattis raised the issue of whether Chauvin should have "turned him on his side" when Floyd was gasping for air. "Maybe, maybe," he said. "But there is no evidence that would have kept him alive, because there is no evidence that neck compression killed him."

While the use of force has been a primary issue at trial, Pattis countered that during his podcast.

“There is no requirement that the force be perfect to be applied,” he offered. “Officers are permitted to use reasonable force and the law and the judge will tell you they are not required to use the least restrictive use of force or the best application of force. They simply have to make a reasonable explanation of what is necessary to bring a person into custody to ensure their safety and the safety of those around them.”

Pattis said Floyd had underlying medical conditions, and “there is no evidence to show that Derek Chauvin was totally indifferent to human life.”

Pattis closed his podcast by asking the jurors to “be brave, be resolute and vote not guilty.” ■