
United States: Is it the same country?

By: Nicanor León Cotayo
26/04/2021



On the eve of the final verdict of the trial against the killer of African descendant George Floyd, a BBC Mundo journalist, Gerardo Lissardy interviewed, last Wednesday, the Head of the Department of African American Studies at Princeton University, Mercer County, New Jersey.

That is the case of Eddie Glaude, renowned intellectual and author of several books of the likes of **Democracy in Black: How Race Still Enslaves the American Soul**.

This British media remarks that George Floyd's death sparked a wave of protests against racism and police brutality worldwide and asked him about the consequences of this case.

Glaude warned that the verdict is a turning point and this situation could be very dangerous.

According to Lissardy, the trial to former police officer Derek Chauvin was seen as something exceptional even for President Joe Biden as police officer are rarely convicted of murder.

What is, therefore, the historical significance for the United States?

It is a case where the judicial system really cared for the life of a black victim at the hands of the police, as if it actually matters.

Thus, it somehow shows signs of an eventual change in the way police officers are monitored in the country. But that is still to be seen, Glaude pointed out.

Did you expect a verdict of guilty of all charges against Derek Chauvin?

I was not sure, honestly. I did not know what the court was going to do.

We have a long record of cases where police is not found guilty. There was a sort of skepticism on what the court would do.

Actually, I was quite anxious about the final decision, he answered.

And what are your feelings now?

A feeling where relief, exhaustion, and anxiety converge for I am living this time of transition, crisis, and opportunity.

Why are you worried and believe this may be a dangerous time?

Because the nation is dealing with its identity, cultural and demographic changes. We know we have a profound crisis in the law enforcement department.

And one of them has just been convicted of three charges. Therefore, I am nervous for our communities.

Do you think there would be a negative reaction in the police department after such verdict?

I do not know. I do not know how police unions will respond.

I am pretty sure there may be some hesitation about the police watch. There may be some work stoppages. Who knows?

So, the BBC reiterated: Can you imagine how communities that are overpoliced or unprotected may feel right now?

I am conveying my concern as this case is just one instance, an opening moment. But there is a need for a constant systemic change. And that is going to be painful.

Do you see Biden's administration supporting this change now?

Glaude said that President Biden has voiced out his commitment with the justice bill in the police.

From my viewpoint, the framing of the law must be changed in order to have a much more solid conversation about security and protection.

All communities have the right to be safe, but it is not about putting people in jail or the potential abuse of deadly force by police officers. And finally, he added:

"Then we will know what the President has to say after the verdict."

Translated by Sergio A. Paneque Díaz / CubaSí Translated Staff