

George Floyd memorials vandalised in New York and New Jersey

Statues daubed with reference to far-right hate group Attacks come on eve of sentencing of Derek Chauvin for murder



The George Floyd statue by artist Chris Carnabuci was unveiled as part of Juneteenth celebration in Brooklyn, New York, on 19 June and vandalised within days.

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Supporters of a white nationalist hate group defaced brand-new memorials to George Floyd in New York and New Jersey this week, even as the nation awaits a sentence for Floyd's murderer.

Vandals painted the statues' faces black, and used white markings to reference Patriot Front, a hate group that sprang from a neo-Nazi organization after the deadly "Unite the Right" Charlottesville rally, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center.

"It's at the epitome of not only anti-Blackness and racism, but it is also about the lack of even basic human decency about the life of George Floyd," Imani Henry, a lead organizer with Equality for Flatbush, told the New York Times.

"For someone to desecrate an innocent person's tribute is just beyond the pale."

Floyd died last year after Derek Chauvin, then a Minneapolis police officer, knelt on his neck for more than nine minutes, for which Chauvin was convicted of murder and manslaughter. The graphic killing, which was captured on video, reinvigorated

impassioned criticism of police brutality and racism in America, inspiring nationwide protests.

Chauvin is scheduled to be sentenced for second-degree murder on Friday and faces up to 40 years in prison.

The statues in Newark and Brooklyn were unveiled last week in connection with Juneteenth, a federal holiday commemorating slavery's end.

"It's only been five days, and it's very disheartening," said Courtney Nelson, the Floyd family's spokesperson. "And it's disgusting and it's sad and it's cowardly. And they did it like a thief in the night. But you can't stop us."

No arrests have been made, according to WABC-TV. Investigators have identified four suspects and released surveillance footage relating to the Brooklyn attack, which is being investigated as a hate crime.

Another Floyd memorial was vandalized in Philadelphia earlier this month, with "Patriot Front" spray-painted over the mural.

The hate group's stencils have been present around New York for years, and its allies have used banners to promote slogans and other information locally, the New York Times reported.

"To the group of neo-Nazis who did this, I want to be absolutely clear: get the hell out of our state," said New York's Governor Andrew Cuomo.