

Michael Dunn verdict the beginning of justice in the killing of Jordan Davis

Written by Statement from Advancement Project
Wednesday, 26 February 2014 15:12



Washington – Today a jury found Michael Dunn guilty of three counts of attempted murder and one count of firing a deadly weapon in a November 2012 shooting which left 17-year-old Jordan Davis dead. The judge declared a mistrial on the charge of first degree murder and a retrial may be scheduled for later this year. Advancement Project Co-Director Judith Browne Dianis issued the following statement in response:

"There is no right more fundamental than the right to live. As the prosecution proved, Michael Dunn needlessly fired one shot after another into an SUV filled with unarmed teenagers whose only crime was having the audacity to challenge a stranger's demand to turn down their music.

"Today's decision is the beginning of the dispensation of justice, but the fact that jurors could not convict Dunn of first degree murder -- when his killing of Davis was not a matter of debate -- is a travesty that must be rectified in a second trial. It is also further evidence that laws such as "Stand Your Ground" muddy the boundaries of self-defense so much, that the imagination of the shooter is given the same weight as the reality of his victim's intractable death.

"The painful reality is Jordan Davis' parents will never get to see their son graduate from high school, pursue his dreams, or grow into a man.

"When Dunn unloaded his gun on Jordan and his friends, it's clear he didn't see youth at the dawn of life. He didn't see the humanity of teenagers enjoying music. He saw race. He saw Blackness. His bias, as evidenced by his remarks about 'thug music,' triggered a chain of events that led to the death of another innocent young Black man.

"While many of us are tempted to believe the dark days of racial intolerance and hatred have passed, this case suggests otherwise. Racism may not always be as blatant, but it still operates. Today, 'thug' is the new code word for the 'N' word. Innocent African Americans are still 'suspect' on our streets, in our schools and in stores.

"While Dunn's Stand Your Ground defense failed in this instance, it is successfully invoked far too often for us to claim lasting victory. To ensure all children are able to grow up and reach their full potential, we must continue to pressure legislators in states across the country to repeal Stand Your Ground laws and other laws with racially discriminatory impacts. We simply

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cannot continue giving a legal cover for people who combine racial bias and a ready weapon. As a nation, we cannot grow weary of grappling with issues of race, racism and negative perceptions about Black men and boys. This decision should be viewed as a catalyst for continuing to build a movement to challenge inequity and racism."

For more information, please contact Jennifer Farmer at 202-487-0967 or via email at jfarmer@advancementproject.org

Advancement Project is a multiracial civil rights organization. Founded by a team of veteran civil rights lawyers in 1999, Advancement Project was created to develop and inspire community-based solutions based on the same high quality legal analysis and public education campaigns that produced the landmark civil rights victories of earlier eras.