



**For Immediate Release**  
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### **NAACP Legal Defense Fund Statement on Acquittal of NYPD Officer Wayne Isaacs for Delrawn Small's Death**

Today, a jury acquitted New York City Police (NYPD) Officer Wayne Isaacs of second-degree murder and manslaughter in the first degree for fatally shooting Delrawn Small in July 2016. NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) President and Director-Counsel [Sherrilyn Ifill](#) issued the following statement in response:

“Another trial for police violence, another officer acquittal. Even as someone with great faith in the legal system’s ability to hold wrongdoers accountable, it is agonizing to watch officer after officer evade accountability. This acquittal, on top of the countless others that have come before it, makes clear that the legal standards governing these cases of police violence must be corrected. As it stands, the law has afforded officers almost blanket immunity for taking the life of unarmed citizens.

“We know that Black men and women are far more likely to be victimized by police violence than individuals of any other race. Regardless of the race of the officer, we must confront the systemic issues that allow law enforcement to kill unarmed Black people with impunity.

“While we’re extremely disappointed by the verdict, we thank New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman’s office for prosecuting this case. This was the first trial for a police-involved shooting prosecuted by the New York State Attorney General’s Special Investigations and Prosecutions Unit since Governor Cuomo issued an [executive order](#), and while the result is far from what we had hoped for, we still believe in the value of empowering special prosecutors to bring these cases. Authorizing special prosecutors will not guarantee convictions, but it will help ensure that political considerations and conflicts of interest do not stymie efforts to hold individual law enforcement officers accountable for criminal wrongdoing. We urge leaders across the country to follow Governor Cuomo’s example and allow special prosecutors to handle police misconduct cases.

“We call on the NYPD to conduct a thorough investigation and impose appropriate discipline, including the termination of Officer Isaacs. Delrawn Small should be alive today, and there must be consequences for the grave misconduct preventing that.

“At this time, our thoughts remain with Mr. Small’s loved ones as they continue to process his loss and this painful acquittal. We will continue to fight for policing reform throughout

the country to ensure that all Americans get the safe and responsible law enforcement services they deserve.”

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*Founded in 1940, the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) is the nation’s first civil and human rights law organization and has been completely separate from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) since 1957—although LDF was originally founded by the NAACP and shares its commitment to equal rights. LDF’s Thurgood Marshall Institute is a multi-disciplinary and collaborative hub within LDF that launches targeted campaigns and undertakes innovative research to shape the civil rights narrative. In media attributions, please refer to us as the NAACP Legal Defense Fund or LDF.*