



**For Immediate Release**  
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### **LDF Issues Statement on the Acquittal of Kyle Rittenhouse**

Today, Kyle Rittenhouse was acquitted on three counts of first-degree reckless homicide, use of a dangerous weapon, and two counts of first-degree recklessly endangering safety, use of a dangerous weapon for the respective killings of Joseph Rosenbaum and Anthony Huber, as well as the shooting of Gaige Grosskreutz in August 2020.

In response, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc. (LDF) President and Director-Counsel Sherrilyn Ifill issued the following statement:

“Kyle Rittenhouse traveled to Kenosha, Wisconsin, in response to protests over the unjust police shooting of Jacob Blake and armed himself with a semi-automatic rifle he believed was unlawful for him to own. Rittenhouse lied about being a medical professional, then shot and killed two people while injuring a third. Despite numerous confrontations in the streets on Kenosha and the presence of other armed individuals, Rittenhouse was the only person who shot and killed someone that night. After Rittenhouse shot multiple people and called his friend stating, ‘I just killed someone,’ he then approached law enforcement officers and apparently disobeyed their commands; but was still able to walk away without being arrested.

“Fifteen days prior to that deadly evening, Rittenhouse was recorded saying that he wished he had his rifle in order to shoot some men he believed were shoplifters. Months after the shootings in Kenosha, Rittenhouse was seen at a bar flashing a white power sign as men reportedly sang the anthem of the white nationalist Proud Boys group to him. Wisconsin's guns laws have been repeatedly loosened, strengthening the ability to carry openly in 2011, and loosening other protections in 2015, opening the door for people to brazenly transport and carry weapons, including semi-automatic rifles, with substantial protections.

“Rittenhouse’s actions before, after, and during that night in Kenosha, and the impunity afforded to his actions do not exist in isolation from the larger context of racism, lax gun laws, and the deep flaws in our criminal justice system that so powerfully shape public life in this country.

“We should not forget that these killings took place amid protests in Kenosha. The history of protest is integral to the fight for racial justice in this country and there remains a concerted attack to encroach on this right. Rittenhouse’s conduct must be understood within an environment in which armed militias and vigilantes are acting to silence protesters, and where state legislatures have advanced anti-protest bills in the aftermath of demonstrations calling for racial justice.

“While the actions of all parties during the trial will be scrutinized over time, the acquittal of Rittenhouse on all charges, and the lauding of him as a hero, by right-wing elected leaders and others will embolden would-be vigilantes who intimidate protestors demanding racial justice to believe that they can escape accountability for their violence.”

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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. LDF 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.*

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