



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 22, 2015

## Officer Darren Wilson to be Acquitted of Civil Rights Violations

Former Ferguson Police Officer Darren Wilson [will not be charged](#) with violating Michael Brown's civil rights in last August's shooting. Officials with the Department of Justice are said to be drafting a memorandum outlining the DOJ's position with final approval expected to be granted without fanfare in the next couple of months by Attorney General Eric Holder.



The FBI's investigation into the shooting of Michael Brown by Officer Wilson revealed nothing different from what already turned up in the investigation by the grand jury, which exonerated Wilson completely last November. FBI investigators interviewed more than 200 people, analyzed cellphone audio and video surrounding the shooting along with Wilson's gun, clothing, and other evidence from the scene. The results of three separate autopsies of Brown were also scrutinized during the FBI's investigation.

It was unlikely from the first that charges would be brought by the DOJ against Wilson for civil rights violations as the standard required to indict is so high. To bring those charges, the department would have had to show that Wilson deliberately and intentionally shot Brown unprovoked, knowing that he was in the wrong but shooting him anyway. As Ron Hosko, president of the Law Enforcement Legal Defense Fund, said, "DOJ has known from the very beginning that no violation of civil rights occurred when Officer Darren Wilson shot an aggressor, Michael Brown, in self-defense.... Instead of deliberating immediately and issuing their conclusion in the fall, the Obama Administration let the embers of unrest burn, fanned by the rhetoric of opportunistic race dividers."

The DOJ is continuing its broader investigation into whether the Ferguson Police Department is guilty of a pattern of civil rights violations. At present, the DOJ has 20 separate investigations into other police departments around the country, with some of them already resulting in changes demanded by the department. For instance, the DOJ has forced sweeping changes to the internal policies of the Cleveland, Ohio, police department while it has "negotiated" with the police department in Albuquerque, New Mexico, to install a so-called "independent monitor" to oversee its internal affairs.

Immediately after the shooting in August, Wilson was put on paid administrative leave and moved out of a home that he and another Ferguson police officer, Barbara Spradling, owned together in Crestwood, Missouri, about a half-hour drive from Ferguson. On October 24, Wilson and Spradling were married in a civil ceremony witnessed by one of Wilson's attorneys.



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On Saturday, November 29, Wilson resigned from the Ferguson Police Department, after having been “told that my continued employment may put the residents and police officers of the City of Ferguson at risk, which is a circumstance I cannot allow.... It was my hope to continue in police work, but the safety of other police officers and the community is of paramount importance to me.”

This made perfect sense to CNN legal analyst Mark O’Mara, who has been following the case since the shooting: “It would be senseless for him to go back to Ferguson. And I don’t even think he can go back [into] law enforcement, for the same reason. He is ... now going to carry with him this mantle that he was the cop who killed the young black kid that sparked the controversy nationwide.”

Another CNN analyst, Paul Callan, agreed: “If I’m the mayor of Ferguson, believe me, [I] would want that cop out because you know that he will be controversial. He will be distrusted by the citizenry and maybe subjected to abuse when he’s out on the street. It’s just going to be nothing but trouble.”

George Zimmerman’s life hasn’t been the same since he was exonerated in the 2012 shooting death of Trayvon Martin. Although acquitted of charges of second-degree murder and manslaughter, Zimmerman has had a hard time adjusting to life since then. After the jury found him innocent in July of 2013, Zimmerman was detained by police in an incident two months later in September involving his estranged wife and her father. She said Zimmerman had threatened them both with a gun but after no gun was found and his former wife recanted, Zimmerman avoided any charges in the incident.

Scarcely two months later, in November, Zimmerman’s girlfriend called the police, alleging that after she demanded that he leave her home, he pointed a shotgun at her and began damaging her household. When the police arrived, Zimmerman barricaded himself in one of the rooms. He was charged with aggravated assault, domestic violence, and criminal mischief, all of which were dropped at the request of his girlfriend.

A year later Zimmerman was involved in a road-rage incident, during which Zimmerman was alleged to have threatened another driver, shouting “Do you know who I am? I’ll ... kill you!” Again, charges weren’t filed when the other driver relented.

Just last month Zimmerman was arrested and charged with aggravated assault after allegedly throwing a bottle at his ex-girlfriend. He remains out on bond.

Zimmerman has also taken up painting, with one of his scenes of an American flag selling on eBay for more than \$100,000. Zimmerman said his painting has allowed him to express himself in less damaging ways: “I found a creative way to express myself, my emotions and the symbols that represent my experiences. My art work allows me to reflect, providing a therapeutic outlet.”

Still facing a potential wrongful death suit from Michael Brown’s family, Wilson isn’t done with his ordeal. It’s clear that he won’t ever be working in law enforcement again, and it’s hoped that he can avoid the self-destructive behavior evidenced by Zimmerman as he attempts to start his new life after Ferguson.

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