

# HIS LIFE MATTERED

Global protests have emerged in the U.S.A. after the death of an African American man in police custody\*.

George Floyd, 46, was arrested in Minneapolis, Minnesota on 25 May on suspicion of passing fake money. During his arrest, a police officer knelt on his neck for more than eight minutes. Mr Floyd protested that he couldn't breathe.

Videos of the incident provoked protests across the country. The police officer, Derek Chauvin, has been accused of third-degree murder and three other police officers have been dismissed\*.



## “I Can’t Breathe”

Floyd's plea\* that he was being asphyxiated was an echo to another case\*. In 2014, in Staten Island, New York, Eric Garner was strangled by a police officer after protesting 11 times that he couldn't breathe. The incident started Black Lives Matter protests in the USA. The officer responsible was never charged\*, but he was dismissed from the NYPD (New York Police Department) in 2019.

Protesters about the George Floyd murder use the slogan and hashtag “*I can’t breathe*” in demonstrations.

## Police system

Black Lives Matter and other organizations support the protests. They see Floyd's death as an example of racism in the American police and justice system. African Americans only represent 13.4% of the population but they represent 23.4% of incidents (fatal shootings\* by the police) according to the U.S. Census Bureau. There is a more general problem with police violence. According to the Mapping Police Violence database, “between 2013 and 2019, 99% of killings by police have not resulted in police officers being charged with a crime”.

## More Than Statistics

In the USA there are protests and a context of economic tension during the Covid-19 epidemic. Covid-19 has affected poorer\* Americans much harder than richer Americans. African Americans are statistically more likely to\* live in poverty. They have low-paid\* jobs and they don't have health\* insurance, so they are more likely to be infected. In the state of Minnesota, African American residents represent 7% of the state's population, but they account for 22% of Covid patients.

**custody\*** : garde à vue **dismissed\*** : renvoyé

**plea\*** : demande **case\*** : affaire **charged\*** : inculpé

**a shooting\*** : fusillade, coup de feu **poorer\*** : plus pauvre

**health\*** : santé

*From: Speakeasy News, June 2020  
Adapted by Marion Guépin Le Ridant*

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