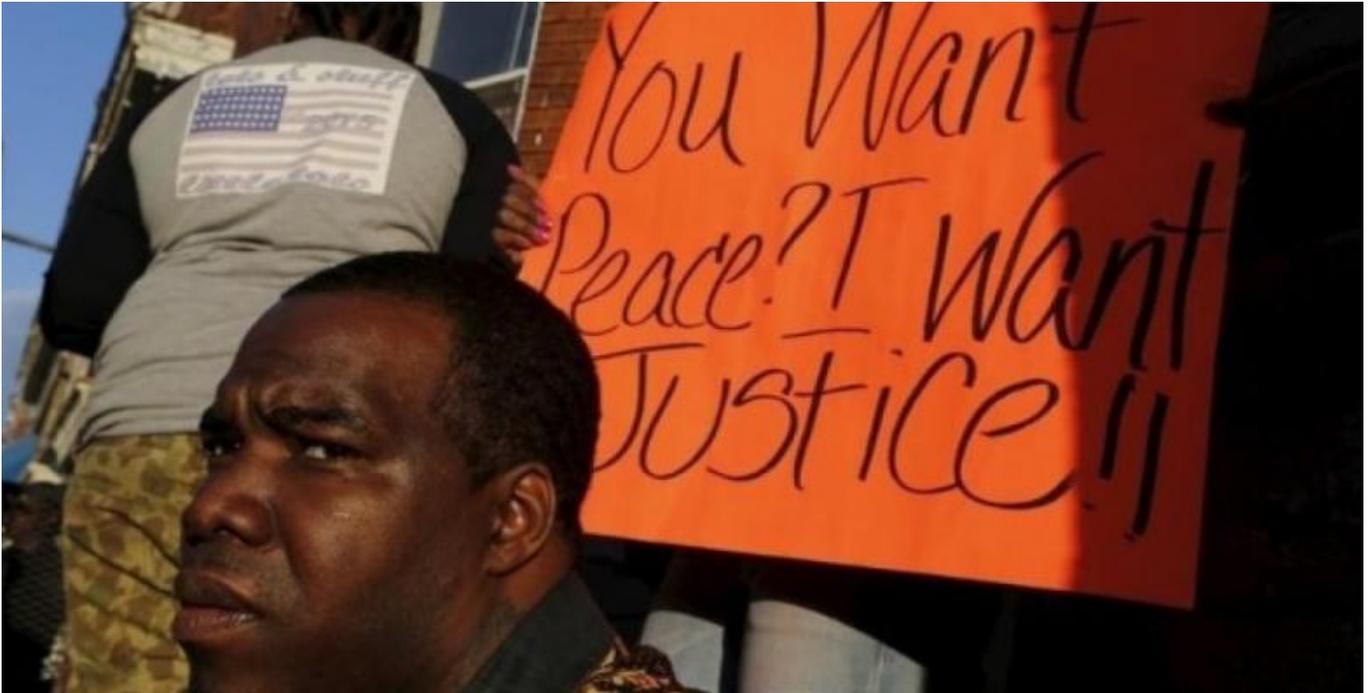


US: Second Freddie Gray Death Trial Postponed

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The driver of a police vehicle that transported Freddie Gray shortly before his death was about to face trial, before a last minute postponement.

The trial of the police officer facing the most serious charge in connection with the death of Baltimore man Freddie Gray was put off Monday, shortly before the case was set to begin.

Caesar Goodson Jr could face as many as 30 years behind bars if found guilty of the most severe charge against him, second-degree depraved-heart murder. The officer was the driver of a police vehicle that transported Gray shortly before his death.

The offense is a notch above negligence, and the most serious charge faced by any officer accused of involvement in Gray's death.

Goodson is also facing lesser charges including including involuntary manslaughter, second-degree negligent assault, misconduct in office, reckless endangerment and two charges of manslaughter by vehicle (gross negligence and criminal negligence).

In an unexpected move Monday morning, Maryland's Court of Special Appeals intervened in the case, postponing the trial that was expected to start within hours.

The last minute decision was made after one of the witnesses spent last week in legal wrangling over whether another accused police officer should be forced to testify at the trial.

Goodson is one of five officers facing charges related to Gray's death, and the second to go to court.

The first officer to go to trial, William Porter, is set to face a retrial in June. His case had led to a mistrial in

December.

Porter had initially been ordered to testify under immunity at Goodson's trial. It's unusual for a co-defendant to testify at the trial of another accused in Maryland, though prosecutors and a circuit judge agreed such a demand is lawful.

However, on Friday, an appellate court temporarily barred Porter from being forced to testify, arguing it needed more time to consider the issue.

Gray sustained a fatal spine injury while being transported in a police van, after being arrested in Baltimore April 12, 2015. He died a week later, prompting Baltimore residents to take to the streets demanding the police officers involved face trials.

The initial arrest has been slammed by Baltimore's prosecutor as illegal, while his placement in the van without a seat belt has also been deemed a breach of police procedure.

The death sparked a wave of public outrage in Baltimore.

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