Stacey Koon Biography

Stacey Koon

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Biography

Sgt. Stacey Koon was the supervising police officer at the scene of the brutal beating of Rodney King by four Los Angles police officers. On March 3, 1991 an unobserved civilian filmed four LAPD officers' attempt to subdue Rodney King after a high-speed car chase. King was belligerent and uncooperative. Subsequently the officers beat King with their batons striking him numerous times about the head and body. Koon and his fellow officers felt it was necessary to use nearly deadly force in order to protect themselves. The videotape, which brought the whole matter to light, seemed to show otherwise. It showed King was already on the ground and subdued when numerous blows were struck. It also showed that the officers struck King in the head, an action in direct conflict with LAPD policy.

On April 29, 1992, Sgt. Koon and his fellow officers were acquitted on all State criminal charges. This verdict unleashed massive riots and looting throughout the Los Angeles community. Subsequently federal prosecutors moved in and re-indicted the officers on federal civil rights charges. Sgt. Koon was the only officer to take the stand in the second trial. He took full responsibility for King's injuries stating he gave the orders to strike King in the hopes that his officers would "cripple" him and thereby prevent him from standing. The trial started on August 4, 1992, and ended in April of 1993, with the conviction of Sgt. Koon and one other officer. Both men were sentenced to 30 months in prison after appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court.