

Lawyer Found Guilty for Spitting in the Direction of Black Lives Matter Protester, Faces Another Trial



A 67-year-old Wisconsin lawyer, Stephanie Rapkin, was found guilty of misdemeanor disorderly conduct on Wednesday for spitting in the direction of a 17-year-old Black Lives Matter protester, Eric Lucas III, during a protest in June 2020. Although Rapkin testified that she only spit towards Lucas and not on him, the incident was captured on video, and Lucas testified that Rapkin had spit in his face. The incident had initially carried a hate crime enhancement, but a judge ruled in favor of a defense motion to drop it.

During her testimony, Rapkin claimed that she acted in self-defense and only wanted to get Lucas away from her. She said she felt unsafe when the protesters ran towards her and that she was receiving cancer treatment and did not want to get sick. Lucas was not wearing a mask. Rapkin said she wanted to put a mark on the ground by spitting towards Lucas, who had told her to move her car.

The prosecutor cross-examined Rapkin and asked why she did not tell the police that she spat towards the ground. Rapkin responded that her statement was "inartful" and that her statement to the police was inaccurate.

Lucas has filed a lawsuit against Rapkin over the incident. Rapkin is also awaiting trial on a battery charge for allegedly kneeling a police officer in the groin during an altercation outside her home the day after the spitting incident. The officer tried to arrest Rapkin after she confronted a 21-year-old college student writing in chalk on her sidewalk. The messages written in chalk included, "I spit on a child," and "Be better than this."

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After the verdict, Rapkin's lawyer, Anthony Cotton, said that Rapkin was remorseful for her actions and that the incident had ruined her career. Rapkin faces potential legal consequences for the battery charge and potential professional and personal consequences as a result of the incident.

Several publications have covered the case, including the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, CBS 58, WISN 12, and TMJ 4. The incident has drawn attention to the ongoing protests against police brutality and racial injustice, as well as the legal and social consequences of actions taken during such protests.

The case highlights the importance of peaceful protest and the need for individuals to act responsibly and lawfully during protests. It also raises questions about the appropriate legal and social consequences for individuals who act unlawfully during protests, particularly those involving social justice and racial equity issues.

The verdict in Rapkin's case may serve as a precedent for similar cases in Wisconsin and other states. It remains to be seen how the case will impact the ongoing protests against police brutality and racial injustice and whether it will lead to further legal or social action. Regardless, the case serves as a reminder of the ongoing struggle for social justice and the importance of individual responsibility and accountability in promoting change.