

The trial of the three NYPD cops indicted for the November 2006 shooting death of Sean Bell and the serious wounding of his two friends is coming to a close. The judge has said he will deliver his verdict on April 25. During the trial, testimony by survivors of the attack and others brought back the horrors of that night when the police unleashed a 50-bullet barrage against the three young men. And the arguments by the cops' lawyers in defense of their clients made clear that murderous violence against Black and Latino youth are what the armed enforcers of this system are supposed to do and trained to do.

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Two Weddings... Two Dreams...

They had come to the small Iraqi desert village of Mogr el-Deeb to celebrate the wedding of Azhad Nayef and Rutbah Sabah. There was a cameraman, musicians, even a popular Baghdad wedding singer. They sang and danced until night came with its cooling darkness. It was a happy occasion.

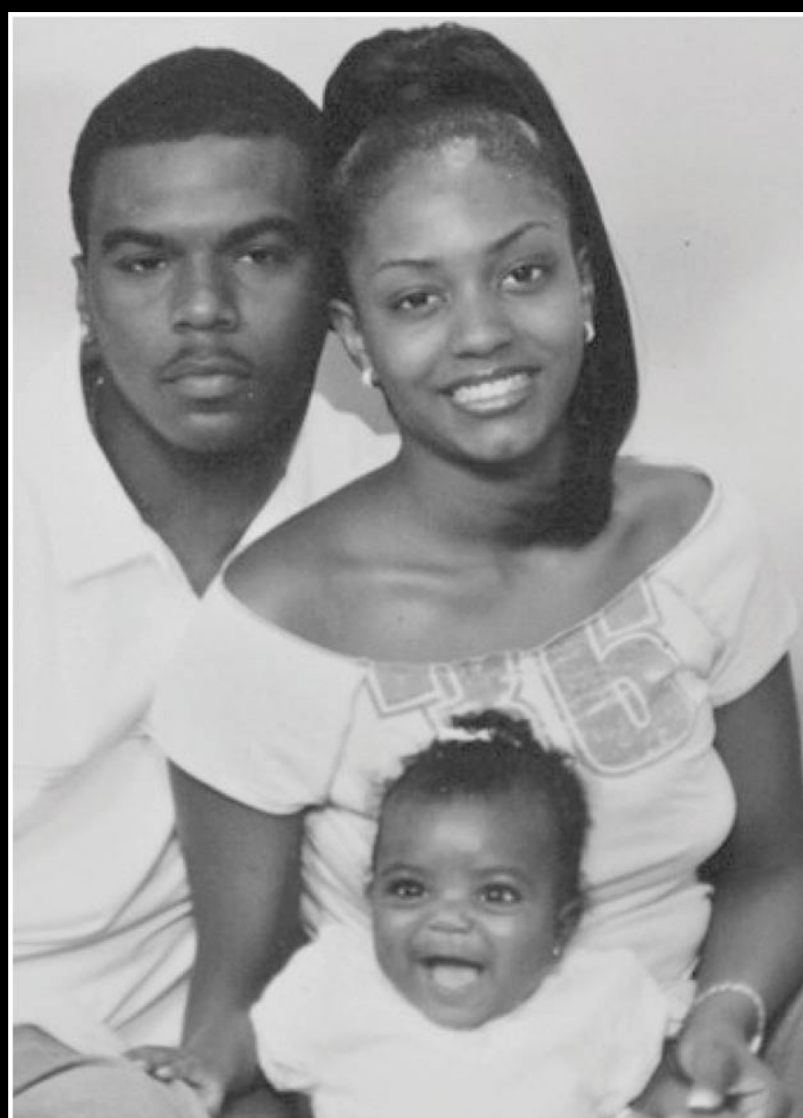


Children and adults laughing at wedding party in the village of Mogr el-Deeb.

By the next day, over 40 people lay dead in the wreckage of the wedding party. Most were women and children, killed by a U.S. airstrike and military assault on the small village. The U.S. military insisted they fired on a house of terrorist insurgents and refuse to acknowledge the murderous carnage they left in their wake. "I don't have to apologize for the conduct of my men," said Major General James Mattis, commander of the 1st Marine Division.

all photos AP

Sean Bell's friends had thrown him a bachelor party at a Queens, NYC club on the eve of his wedding to high-school sweetheart Nicole Paultre. The couple had made plans together, maybe a move down to Atlanta with their two kids. When it came time to leave, Sean was only a few hours away from the wedding.



Sean Bell and his fiancée Nicole Paultre, with one of their two children.

Sean never made it to the wedding. A block from the club, an undercover cop approached his car. Fearing a robbery or carjacking, Sean attempted to quickly drive away. He clipped the cop, backed into a store gate, and hit an unmarked police minivan. The cops unloaded at least 50 rounds into Sean's car, killing Sean and wounding his two friends. Police claimed that one of the young men had a gun in his waistband. No guns were found. To justify the murder, police now insist there was a "fourth" person with a gun—and have carried out raids and arrests of young Black men in an ongoing effort to cover up their crime.

Two Nightmares

One Criminal System