

U.S. court upholds death sentence for white supremacist who killed nine Blacks at church

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White supremacist Dylann Roof is staring down a death sentence?

Charleston, August 27 (RHC)-- A U.S. appeals court has upheld the conviction and death sentence of white supremacist Dylann Roof. Roof was convicted of gunning down nine Black people inside Emanuel

AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, during a Bible study on June 17, 2015.

In 2017, Roof became the first person in the U.S. sentenced to death for a federal hate crime. Authorities have said Roof opened fire during the closing prayer of a Bible study at the church, raining down dozens of bullets on those assembled. He was 21 at the time.

The 4th Circuit found that the trial judge did not commit an error when he found Roof was competent to stand trial and issued a scathing rebuke of Roof's crimes.

The ruling also stated that when he was arrested, "he frankly confessed, with barely a hint of remorse."

"Dylann Roof murdered African Americans at their church, during their Bible-study and worship," the court's decision states. "They had welcomed him. He slaughtered them. He did so with the express intent of terrorizing not just his immediate victims at the historically important Mother Emanuel Church, but as many similar people as would hear of the mass murder. He used the internet to plan his attack and, using his crimes as a catalyst, intended to foment racial division and strife across America. He wanted the widest possible publicity for his atrocities, and, to that end, he purposefully left one person alive in the church "to tell the story."

"No cold record or careful parsing of statutes and precedents can capture the full horror of what Roof did," the opinion states. "His crimes qualify him for the harshest penalty that a just society can impose."

Emanuel AME in Charleston is the oldest Black church in the South. During his federal trial, prosecutors said Roof told FBI agents he wanted the shootings to to bring back segregation or start a race war.

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