

August 4, 2017 Case Update

On August 4, 2017, the appellate court for the D.C. Circuit issued a written opinion affirming the criminal convictions of three of the four Blackwater contractors convicted at trial of participating in the September 16, 2007 shooting at Nisour Square in Baghdad, Iraq that killed at least 14 Iraqi civilians and wounded 18 others. The guilty verdicts against defendant Paul Slough were upheld on all 21 counts; the guilty verdicts against defendant Dustin Heard were upheld on all 18 counts, and the guilty verdicts against defendant Evan Liberty were upheld on 20 out of 21 counts.

The court found the evidence sufficient to convict the fourth defendant (Nicholas Slatten) of First Degree Murder but nonetheless ordered that he receive a new trial so that jurors at a new trial could consider certain out-of-court statements.

The appellate court also ordered that defendants Slough, Heard and Liberty be resentenced by the trial judge. No date has been set for that resentencing hearing, but all three defendants are still facing very lengthy prison terms under the Sentencing Guidelines.

The Department of Justice is still reviewing the lengthy opinion and assessing its options.