



Black Women Denounce Killing of Charleena Lyles by Seattle police

Statement of In Our Own Voice Founder and Executive Director Marcela Howell

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On Sunday, June 18, 2017, Charleena Lyles was shot dead, in her own home, by two white, Seattle police officers, who responded to her report of a burglary. Lyles was a 30-year-old Black woman. Her four children were in the apartment and may have witnessed the shooting and her death. The officers report that Lyles, after calling them for help, threatened them with a knife. Marcela Howell, founder and executive director of In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda, issued the following statement:

“Charleena Lyles called the police for help and ended up murdered by the very people she looked to for protection. Her name is added to the seemingly endless list of Black women and men killed by police violence. Like always, Black communities will await the results of an investigation to determine whether anyone will be charged with her death.

“As Black women, we know that these Seattle officers like many before them, will likely not face criminal charges. We know that, even if charges are made, they will likely get off. That's how things work when police officers murder Black women.

“Police violence against Black people may be the worst civil rights abuse in this country. But it is also one of the biggest reproductive justice challenges we face. Reproductive freedom and justice demand that we have the resources and ability to raise our families with dignity. Yet, each day Black women are forced to raise our children in fear because we know that our sons and daughters can be slain — for any reason or no reason — at any time. All Black women know that if their child is killed by a cop, they not only will suffer immeasurable grief and an unspeakable loss, but there is almost no chance of bringing their child's killer to justice.

“Sandra Bland, Aiyana Jones, Rekia Boyd and Charleena Lyles are among the Black women and girls who have been killed by police officers and whose killers were never convicted. We not only need to say their names, we need for the women's and reproductive rights movements to join hands with Black women in demanding justice and an end to the wholesale slaughter of Black people.”