



Wednesday July 24, 2024

Black Lives Matter Grassroots Joins Springfield Activists and Atty Ben Crump in Calling for Justice and Legislative Changes in the Name of Sonya Massey

An End to Qualified Immunity and the Passage of The Breathe Act Along with the Conviction of Deputy Sean Grayson Are Among Activists Demands. Sonya Massey Was Murdered by Police After She Called 9-1-1 for Help.

Springfield, Illinois - Black Lives Matter Grassroots is demanding the passage of meaningful legislation and is standing with her family in calling for justice for Sonya Massey. Massey, a 36-year old Black mother of two had her life stolen by Sangamon County sheriff's deputies after she called 911 for help when she believed a prowler was stalking her home. She was shot in the face by Deputy Sean Grayson who seemingly tried to claim that Sonya threatened to scald him when she followed his command to remove a pot of boiling water from her stove. And in another apparent attempt at a coverup initial police radio communications called Ms. Massey's fatal bullet wound "self inflicted." Bodycam footage released Monday shows the deputies aggressively questioning Sonya Massey, searching her home and threatening her life even though she had called them for assistance.

Deputy Sean Grayson was fired and indicted by a grand jury on July 17th on charges of first-degree murder, aggravated battery with a firearm and official misconduct. Grayson has bounced around to 6 different law enforcement agencies in the last 4 years and is suspected to have white-supremacist ties. The name of the second deputy on the scene has not been made public. While BLM Grassroots applauds the small measure of accountability by way of the swift indictment and arrest of one of the deputies, much more must be done to ensure this never happens again. Sonya Massey's family is suffering the stinging irony in the fact that Sonya is the descendant of William Donnegan, a Black man who survived being lynched by a white mob during Springfield's 1908 race riots that took 17 Black lives and led to the founding of the NAACP. And she was taken to St. John's hospital, the same place where her ancestor, Donnegan, died after that lynching. It is time to end the cycle of state-sponsored violence.

Comprehensive reimagining of public safety by means of impactful legislation like the Breathe Act and the passage of Rep. Ayanna Pressley's Ending Qualified Immunity bill is a bare minimum. These changes will not bring back Sonya Massey, nor will they relieve the pain of the two teenage children and loving parents who grieve her, but they will move us beyond "thoughts and prayers" and performative responses and honor the life of Sonya Massey with lasting and meaningful laws that could make a difference for thousands of families seeking justice.



“Just like George Floyd was a catalyst for the 2020 election, we believe this will be similarly impactful on the 2024 presidential election, especially for our Black community,” Said Ben Crump, who is representing the family of Sonya Massey.

2023 saw the largest number of police murders of civilians on record. 2024 is on track to match that deadly and shameful statistic. “As we pledge to support Black women we must lift up #SonyaMassey and stand with her family in their calls for justice,” said Dr. Melina Abdullah, Director of Black Lives Matter Grassroots.

Black Lives Matter Grassroots

The mission of Black Lives Matter Grassroots (BLMGR) is to support, sustain, and uplift the necessary agitations, mobilizations, community organizing, and initiatives of Black Lives Matter chapters to fulfill our sacred duty to advance Black liberation. #BlackLivesMatter was birthed to end state-sanctioned violence against Black people. Black Lives Matter Grassroots is a collective of 33 chartered chapters globally working on the ground since 2013.

Press Contact: Email: press@blmgrassroots.com