

## **Press Statement - June 8, 2010**

### **Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform**

The Albina Ministerial Alliance Coalition for Justice and Police Reform believes that the death of Keaton Otis at the hands of members of the Portland Police Bureau and the shooting of Officer Christopher Burley were both preventable and unnecessary.

The last words of Keaton Otis to a citizen who was nearby were: "Ma'am, please don't leave - if you leave they will kill me!"

Keaton Otis, a 25-year-old African-American reported to have mental health issues, did not have to die on May 12, 2010 at the hands of members of the Portland Police Bureau. Keaton Otis, a citizen of this community, was pursued on an erroneous assumption that he was a gang member on the basis of his racial identity and attire. The initial aggressiveness of officers: from the drawing of tasers for a normal traffic stop, to the use of tasers, to the attempts to pull Keaton Otis out of the car, to the firing of shots, led to the death of Keaton Otis and the shooting of the officer Christopher Burley.

Keaton Otis did not have to die and Officer Christopher Burley did not have to be shot.

The lessons learned from the Kendra James and Jahar Perez officer involved shootings at traffic stops and the implementation of previously made policy and training recommendations could have possibly prevented the death of Keaton Otis.

Although new Police Chief Mike Reese presented a technical re-creation of the Portland Police Bureau's point of view, using limited facts of the case - it still raises more questions than he answered - especially as pertaining to the views of eyewitnesses. Questions that emerge without a detailed analysis of the very recently released Grand Jury transcript are as follows:

What specifically happened prior to the traffic stop? What specifically happened when the officer reached through the window to pull Keaton Otis out of the car? What motivated the stop in the first place? Why were 32 shots fired by officers in close proximity to a residential complex? Who was in charge? Did the officers have a plan? Did they communicate the plan to others? At what point did the Emergency Medical Technicians arrive, and at what point were they allowed to administer medical attention/treatment? At what point was Mr. Otis pronounced dead, and by whom? Why did the body lay uncovered on the street for four hours?

We want to build a new trust relationship between the Portland Police and the community, especially racial ethnic communities; however, we must be open, transparent and truthful by presenting all of the facts of the case.

The AMA Coalition for Justice and Police Reform continues to fight for police accountability, true community policing, and justice and truth in the recent Aaron Campbell, Keaton Otis and other cases.

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