

Breonna Taylor grand jury was never given option to indict killer cops

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An anonymous grand juror in the Breonna Taylor case released a letter through their attorney on Tuesday accusing Republican Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron of not allowing the jury to consider whether homicide charges could and should be brought against any of the police responsible for her death.

The killing of Taylor, along with the police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25, was the catalyst for thousands of multiracial and multiethnic protests against police violence in the US and internationally. In cities such as Portland, Oregon and Louisville, demonstrations were held for over 120 consecutive days despite relentless police terror and intimidation, the imposition of unconstitutional curfews and the disappearing of peaceful protesters.

In Louisville, and hundreds of other cities with Democratic leadership, police have allowed fascists sympathizers and white supremacists gangs such as Oath Keepers and III Percenters to violate curfew and “patrol” the protests with police in their attempts to silence peaceful demonstrators.

The letter was allowed to be disseminated to the public after Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Annie O’Connell ruled on Tuesday morning that all 12 jurors in the case would be allowed to speak publicly on the proceedings if they choose. This is a rare exception in the normally secretive grand jury process, usually imposed in order to protect the police and shield evidence from the public.

In explaining her decision to allow the jurors to speak if they choose, O’Connell wrote that “justice requires disclosure of the grand jury proceedings in this case.” Cameron’s office had requested a stay of any court order, arguing that by allowing anyone to speak out may compromise the right to a fair trial of fired officer Brett Hankison, the only cop charged with a crime.

O’Connell objected, writing that Cameron’s argument had “no basis in reality.”

In the letter, released through attorney Kevin Glogower and attributed to “Anonymous Grand Juror #1,” the juror wrote that: “After hearing the Attorney General Daniel Cameron’s press conference, and with my duty as a grand juror being over, my duty as a citizen compelled action. The grand jury was not presented any charges other than the three Wanton Endangerment charges against Detective Hankison.”

It continues: “The grand jury did not have homicide offenses explained to them. The grand jury never heard anything about those laws. Self defense or justification was never explained either. Questions were asked about additional charges and the grand jury was told there would be none because the prosecutors didn’t feel they could make them stick.”

The letter was released nearly a month after Cameron, in a widely viewed September 23 press conference, claimed that state prosecutors had “walked the grand jury through every homicide offense.” After Cameron, who is African-American, announced his decision, which only included the three counts of wanton endangerment against Hankison for shooting into the neighboring apartments, Trump praised Cameron for doing “a fantastic job. I think he’s a star.”

The letter concludes that the “grand jury didn’t agree that certain actions were justified, nor did it decide the indictment should be the only charges in the Breonna Taylor case. The grand jury was not given the opportunity to deliberate on those charges and deliberated only on what was presented to them. I cannot speak for other jurors but I can help the truth be told.”

A second anonymous grand juror also wrote that they were “pleased with this result and will be discussing

possible next steps with counsel.”

Cameron, lying through his teeth during the September 23 press conference, said that “the grand jury agreed” that former Louisville police officer Brett Hankison, and current officers John Mattingly and Myles Cosgrove were “justified” in their actions, which resulted in the death of Taylor. The police, serving a “no-knock warrant,” broke into Taylor’s apartment after midnight on March 13 and fired 32 rounds into her apartment.

Taylor was shot six times while Mattingly was also struck by a bullet, which according to an FBI ballistics report was fired by Taylor’s boyfriend, Kenneth Walker. However, Walker’s attorney, Steve Romines, has cited a Kentucky State Police ballistics report released after Cameron’s press conference that does not conclude that Mattingly was necessarily struck by the single round Walker fired, and could have been a case of “friendly fire.”

Sam Aguiar, one of the attorneys for the Taylor family, wrote in a statement following the release of the letter that Cameron “tried to hide behind secrecy rules and now his lies got exposed.” Aguiar and Benjamin Crump, another attorney for the family, reiterated their calls for the appointment of a new “independent prosecutor.”

Cameron has acknowledged that prosecutors under him did not offer the grand jury the option of charging any of the officers with homicide. In a statement released Tuesday night, Cameron justified his decision, saying that he would not bring charges against the officers “if they could not be proven under Kentucky law,” and that “indictments obtained in the absence of sufficient proof under the law do not stand up and are not fundamentally fair to anyone.”

As is the case in every single country, the question of “fairness under the law” is a class question. The bourgeois courts and police are instruments of class rule, created not to enforce “fairness” but to uphold class exploitation. Justice will continue to elude the thousands of victims of police violence as long as the system they are sworn to protect remains. The fact is police, as special armed bodies, are granted enormous power by the capitalist state to kill whenever they “feel threatened,” including when breaking into someone’s home regardless of whether they have actually committed a crime.



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