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## The Forgotten Black Female Victims of Police Brutality

#SayHerName is a hashtag that is often said on the Internet, but seems to be hidden from the rest of the world. We all know about black male victims of police brutality and what their names are. The most well-known names are Eric Garner, Freddie Gray, Tamir Rice and more. Black women are usually the ones to be at the front lines of fighting police brutality. What about Rekia Boyd, Sandra Bland, Aiyana Stanley-Jones and other female victims? There are many names that are not publicized. Sandra Bland was arrested on July 10th of 2015 and found dead in police custody three days later in Waller County, Texas.

Black women are killed, raped and brutalized by police on an almost regular basis. However, it is usually black male murders of police that are most talked about in media. Black women face



racism as well as misogyny in our everyday lives. According to the NAACP's Legal Defense fund, women make up 20% of unarmed people of color killed by police between 1999 and 2014.

It is rare for black female murders to be in the media. According to the 2010 Cato Institute's study of police misconduct, sexual assault is the

second most common complaint made against police after brutality and excessive force.

In New York City, 16,000 women were stopped in 2011. Male officers wrongly searched most of the women because the policy did not require women officers to do the search. In 2012, Rekia Boyd was shot in the head by Dante Servin, who shot into a crowd over his shoulder. While he was on trial for manslaughter, he served no jail time for Rekia's murder. On April 20, 2015, Servin was cleared of all charges. On May 16, 2010, Aiyana Stanley-Jones was a 7-year-old girl who was shot in the head during a police raid while she was sleeping. Officer Joseph Weekly was charged with Aiyana's death but his two trials resulted in a mistrial. Weekly was only charged with recklessly discharging a firearm.

Daniel Holtzclaw, a police officer, raped 13 black women and was sentenced in January to 263 years in prison. But it's not often that the police perpetrators of violence are charged. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, black females are between 1.6 and 4.1 times more likely to be imprisoned than white females. Twitter and Facebook hashtags #SayHerName,

#BlackGirlsMatter and #BlackWomensLivesMatter were created to bring awareness and to remember black females of police violence. In fact, #three black queer women created BlackLivesMatter: Alicia Garza, Opal Tometi and Patrisse Cullors. Whenever police kill a black man, black women are always there to protest and do other acts of activism. However, when police kill a black woman, many black men are absent when it comes to standing up for black women.

When black women fight back against their attackers, we usually don't get justice. Marissa Alexander and CeCe McDonald are just two examples of this. In May 2012, Marissa Alexander shot her gun as a warning, intending to get her abusive husband away from her. He was threatening to kill Marissa. Marissa was charged with aggravated assault with a deadly weapon. She was sentenced to do a minimum of 20 years in a "Stand Your Ground" state. In June of 2012, trans black woman CeCe McDonald was sentenced to do 41 months in prison for second-degree manslaughter. CeCe and her friends were being attacked outside of a bar near closing time. CeCe had to get stitches due to a glass being thrown at her face. She stabbed one of the attackers with scissors and the man died from his wounds. Thankfully, both women are now out of prison and are at home with their friends and families.

We must stand up for black women and pay attention to the abuse and injustice that we face on a regular basis. Hopefully things will change and black women are given the respect and love that we deserve. It is my hope that the community will stand up for us as well.

### **By Shevonda Chenelle**



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