Left
Wondering
Why

July 19, 2017

In Minneapolis’s Fulton neighborhood a makeshift memorial has sprung up. Amidst flowers, a handwritten sign reads, “Why did you shoot and kill our neighbor?”

Police have yet to offer public comment on the police shooting of Justine Damond, the Australian woman killed in the alley behind her home last Saturday night.

“Sadly, her family and I have been provided with almost no additional information from law enforcement,” Justine’s fiancé, Don Damond,* told reporters, “regarding what happened after police arrived.”

Local media identified Mohammed Noor, a Somali-American, as the police officer who fired the bullet that killed Damond. Noor has been on the force since March 2015 and has two previous complaints pending.

Most frustrating, the Washington Post reports that “the officers’ body cameras were not turned on” and . . . “It’s not clear why . . .”

Cameras do not work when turned off; public anger and angst are not ameliorated when we cannot see the body cam footage.

That’s why, back in April, we worked to pass a ballot initiative in Ferguson, Missouri: (a) mandating that police must actually turn on the body cameras they were “using” (after similar incidents, wherein Ferguson police claimed their cameras hadn’t been activated) and (b) setting rules for public access to the video.

The people of Minneapolis, likewise, deserve a more professional police force. Making that happen means taking the initiative: citizens reforming criminal justice policies at the ballot box.

This is Common Sense. I’m Paul Jacob.

* Justine had already taken her fiancé’s last name, even though they were set to marry next month. Her legal name remains Justine Ruszczyk.