

Black Man Killed by Police in Alabama Was Shot From Behind, Autopsy Shows

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ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

Emantic Fitzgerald Bradford Jr. was directing panicked shoppers to safety when the police shot him, witnesses said. His family wants video of the shooting released.

FULL TEXT

A black man killed by the police in an Alabama mall in November was shot three times from behind, according to a forensic examination commissioned by the man's family.

The finding, announced in a news conference on Monday, was seen by the man's family and lawyers as evidence he was running away and posed no threat to the officer who shot him.

Emantic Fitzgerald Bradford Jr., 21, was fatally shot in the middle of a panicked crowd at the Riverchase Galleria in Hoover, Ala., on Nov. 22, as officers responded to reports of gunshots on Thanksgiving night. Witnesses said Mr. Bradford, who was legally carrying a handgun, was directing shoppers to safety.

But the authorities publicly identified him as the gunman, an initial misidentification they retracted a day later. The shooting and its aftermath have ignited protests in Hoover, a predominantly white suburb about 10 miles south of Birmingham.

The Rev. Jesse Jackson opened the Monday news conference with a prayer. Mr. Bradford's father, Emantic Bradford Sr., said the officer should be charged with homicide.

"You're a coward," the elder Mr. Bradford said, addressing the unnamed police officer. "What you have done is destroy my family."

The forensic examination indicated Mr. Bradford was shot in his back, the back of his head and the back of his neck.

"All of these shots were potentially kill shots," said Ben Crump, the Bradford family's lawyer.

The police have not released video of the shooting. In a statement on Monday, Nick Derzis, the Hoover police chief, said the law enforcement authorities had advised them that releasing the video too early could compromise the investigation.

"While we maintain our commitment to be fully transparent during this process, we must respect the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's request for full cooperation and continue to have faith in the judicial process," he said. "We want the whole truth, unimpeded and not delayed."

Patience may be wearing thin. A Hoover City Council meeting was adjourned Monday night after protesters repeatedly shouted "E.J.," the name Mr. Bradford was commonly known by, and "no justice, no peace," according to The Associated Press.

Mr. Crump said the family found it difficult to trust the authorities about waiting to release the video "after they were lied to before." Mr. Jackson suggested that any delay in publicly airing the footage would not serve justice.

"Until the tapes are released, it's a cover-up," Mr. Jackson said on Monday.

Days after the shooting, the police arrested the man who they said fired the initial shots that caused the panic in the mall: Erron Martez Dequan Brown, 20. They charged him with attempted murder.

"The Council wants to formally express their regret for the misinformation provided to the public that later

implicated E.J. Bradford, Jr. as the shooter in the November 22nd incident of violence," the council said in a statement on Monday.

Credit: Daniel Victor

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