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**POLITICS** 11/15/2018 02:07 pm ET | Updated Nov 15, 2018

# Police Suggest Security Guard Jemel Roberson Was To Blame For His Own Death

Illinois state police say Roberson refused to put down his gun. Witnesses say otherwise.



By Andy Campbell



There's no question that the death of security guard Jemel Roberson was in grave error.

He was shot dead by a police officer on Sunday but should be taking a victory lap today: He was killed while subduing a suspect in a shooting at the bar where he worked, Manny's Blue



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One of the drunken patrons he told to leave earlier had re-entered with a gun and shot multiple people, and Roberson — who was also armed — tried to pin one of the men involved until police arrived.

“He had somebody on the ground with his knee in back, with his gun in his back like, ‘Don’t move,’” witness [Adam Harris told WGN-TV](#).

What happened next is still being debated between the Illinois State Police, witnesses and Roberson’s friends and family.

A responding Midlothian police officer shot Roberson, 26, who later died at a hospital. On Tuesday state police, tasked with independently investigating the shooting by the officer, [stated in a press release](#) that Roberson didn’t identify himself as a security guard and ignored the officer’s demands to drop his gun:

*Upon his arrival, a Midlothian Police Officer encountered a subject in plain black clothing with no markings readily identifying him as a Security Guard, armed with a gun in the west parking lot. According to witness statements, the Midlothian Officer gave the armed subject multiple verbal commands to drop the gun and get on the ground before ultimately discharging his weapon and striking the subject.*

On Wednesday, however, a witness had a different story. Dorian Myrickes told The Associated Press that nobody ordered Roberson to put down his gun before he was shot and that he was wearing at the time a knit hat and black sweatshirt, both emblazoned with the word “security.”

Myrickes was shot in the initial incident. From his hospital room, [he spoke to the AP](#), which reported, “Myrickes says he had just been shot in the shoulder by a gunman inside Manny’s Blue Room in Robbins early Sunday when he saw the officer point his gun at the 26-year-old Roberson. He says he could hear people yelling that Roberson was a security guard. The officer then fired multiple shots.”

One of Roberson’s friends from high school, Citlali Arroyo, told HuffPost that she was sad — but not surprised — to see police cast blame onto her “gentle giant” of a friend for his own death.



“We all know how these things go. I know that we’re all scared for what’s going to come next,” she said. “Generally, in the aftermath comes destruction of the person’s character, and we want to stop this from happening.”

Arroyo helped plan a vigil in Chicago on Friday for those who can’t make a family event for Roberson outside the city. [It will be a peaceful affair at their high school](#), Lane Tech, to honor Roberson as they remember him: the father of a 9-month-old boy, Tristan, for whom Roberson was [working extra shifts to buy presents](#); a hero whose girlfriend is pregnant with their second child; a musician at several local churches he attended; a lawful man with dreams of becoming a police officer; a hard worker who helped his friends get through school.

“We both almost didn’t graduate, so we worked really hard to make it through together,” Arroyo said over the phone, through tears. “His character is just a warm, friendly, gentle giant. He was always so goofy. Friendly, kind and funny — those are the top three for anyone who knew him. He was always laughing or joking around.”

A [GoFundMe campaign](#) set up on behalf of Roberson’s family for his funeral costs reached \$140,000 by Thursday.

**Correction:** An earlier version of this story erroneously stated that Tristan is 9 years old. He is 9 months old.

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**Andy Campbell** 

Senior Reporter, HuffPost

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