

# Police chief praises security guard killed by his cop: 'Jemel Roberson was a brave man'

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## ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

Police in suburban Chicago Tuesday called the controversial shooting death of a black security guard by a white police officer a "tragic incident."

## FULL TEXT

ROBBINS, Ill. —Police in suburban Chicago on Tuesday called the controversial shooting death of a black security guard by a police officer a "tragic incident," and praised the guard for exhibiting bravery for subduing a suspect moments before the officer fired on him.

Jemel Roberson, 26, had apprehended a man who allegedly fired a gun inside a Robbins, Illinois, bar early Sunday when he was gunned down by a police officer responding from neighboring Midlothian.

Roberson had been awaiting police help when he was shot multiple times by the officer. He was wearing a hat emblazoned with the word "Security" when he was shot, said attorney Gregory Kulis, an attorney for Roberson's mother.

"What we have learned is Jemel Roberson was a brave man who was doing his best to end an active shooter situation at Manny's Blue Room," Midlothian Police Chief Daniel Delaney said in a statement.

"The Midlothian Police Department is completely saddened by this tragic incident and we give our heartfelt condolences to Jemel, his family and his friends. There are no words that can be expressed as to the sorrow his family is dealing with. "

Roberson, who was armed, had apprehended the suspect outside the bar and had him pinned to the ground when the officer arrived. Witnesses say they shouted at the officer that Roberson was a security guard.

The Illinois State Police Public Integrity Task Force is investigating the officer-involved shooting. The agency said in a statement late Tuesday that witnesses they've interviewed also heard the officer give Roberson "multiple verbal commands to drop the gun and get on the ground before ultimately discharging his weapon and striking the subject. "

The agency added that Roberson was wearing plain black clothing "with no markings readily identifying him as a security guard. "

Police have not released the name of the officer, who was placed on administrative leave following the shooting.

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The incident has drawn national headlines, outrage and questions about whether race factored into the officer's decision to open fire. Roberson was black. The officer is white.

In an initial statement on the incident, Delaney referred to Roberson as "a subject with a gun. "

Delaney said Tuesday there were "conflicting reports" immediately following the shooting about whether Roberson was the suspect or a security guard.

"Since, we have learned that the subject our officer shot was in fact security guard, Jemel Roberson," he said.

The Cook County Sheriff's Office is investigating the shooting inside the bar.

The suspect had not been charged as of Tuesday night.

Authorities say Roberson was working at the bar when a dispute broke out among several men. The incident escalated when one of the men opened fire inside the bar.

Illinois State Police Sgt. Jacqueline Cepeda said there is no timeline for completing the investigation of the police shooting. She declined to say whether the officer was wearing a body camera or if the incident was captured by any other video surveillance.

Cepeda said the task force will present its findings to the Cook County State's Attorney's Office prosecution bureau, which will determine whether the shooting was legally justified or if charges against the officer are merited.

The mother of Roberson has filed a federal lawsuit against Midlothian and the officer –identified only as John Doe –seeking more than \$1 million in damages.

She called the officer's action "unprovoked" and an "excessive and unreasonable" use of force.

Roberson suffered multiple gunshot wounds, according to the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office.

The incidents comes after former Chicago police officer Jason Van Dyke was found guilty by a jury of second-degree murder and aggravated battery last month for the 2014 shooting death of Laquan McDonald.

That controversial incident –police video showed McDonald was armed with a small knife but was walking away from police when Van Dyke fired 16 times at the black teen –spurred protest and political tumult in the nation's third-largest city.

The Rev. Michael Pfleger, a Chicago pastor and civil rights leader, said Tuesday the Midlothian officer "must face the same consequence as Van Dyke. "

"He must be Indicted. . . . and White Society's "Fear of Black Men" must END!!!!" Pfleger posted on Twitter.

Robbins Mayor Tyrone Ward said it was crucial that there is a "clean and thorough" investigation. He also urged the community of 5,500 residents to remain patient while the state police conducts its investigation.

"I wish it had been one of our (officers) who came across the situation," Ward said. "They may have been more familiar with security (at the bar). That's my honest opinion. "

George Brewton, 28, a Robbins resident, said that incident has shaken the community.

"We now need nothing more, nothing less than justice for Jemel," Brewton said.

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## DETAILS

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