

# At funeral for slain security guard Jemel Roberson, his mom says 'justice will be served, but in God's time'

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## FULL TEXT

Family of slain security guard Jemel Roberson said during his funeral service Saturday they are "hurting to the core" and promised that "we will see justice is served."

Mourners who gathered at House of Hope Worship Center on Chicago's South Side nearly two weeks following the 26-year-old's shooting death heard how Roberson was a "talented young man" who played music at several area churches.

Roberson's mother, Beatrice Roberson, said her son "died doing what he loved," and that the loss "hurts like crazy." "He was a good person, he had a good heart," she said.

Roberson, of Chicago, had been working security at Manny's Blue Room in Robbins in the early morning hours of Nov. 11 when a fight broke out between two groups of men and shots were fired.

Police from multiple local departments responded to the shooting, including a white officer from neighboring Midlothian, who shot Roberson, who was black, as he held one of the suspected bar shooters at gunpoint.

According to a preliminary Illinois State Police investigation into the shooting that cited "witness statements," the officer gave "multiple verbal commands" to Roberson to drop his gun and get on the ground before shooting him. The preliminary report also said Roberson was wearing "plain black clothing with no markings readily identifying him as a Security Guard."

Witnesses, however, have contradicted that account, saying that the officer opened fire on Roberson before giving him an adequate opportunity to respond to his verbal commands. They also reported that Roberson was wearing clothing clearly marked with the word "Security."

**Family members have said that Roberson had aspirations of becoming a police officer.**

Roberson's aunt, Louise Roberson, said a "racist white" police officer took her nephew's life, and that "justice will be done."

"The fight has just begun," she told several hundred mourners.

"He was a people person," Roberson's sister, Learahteen Bridges, said. "He loved everybody."

Bridges said the shooting was unjustified, and that Roberson's family is angry but "not hating."

"We're hurting to the core," she said. "We will see justice is served."

Roberson's mother said she didn't like the job her son had working as a security guard, but said he loved to help people.

As far as the unnamed officer who fatally shot her son, Beatrice Robeson said "I don't hate him, I pray for him."

The officer is on paid administrative leave pending the outcome of the state police investigation.

Acknowledging the anger that the circumstances surrounding her son's death has caused, she told those in the church that "if you want to honor my son's life, you show love."

"Justice will be served, but in God's time," she said.

A federal judge has denied a request by the family to identify the Midlothian officer involved in the shooting, and an attorney for Roberson's family has issued a subpoena to the state police requesting that by Friday they turn over

all preliminary reports regarding the department's findings about the shooting. That includes all police reports, witness statements and other investigative documents pertaining to the shooting, the name of the Midlothian officer who shot Roberson and any footage from the incident.

Cook County Sheriff's Police are also seeking the public's help in identifying possible witnesses to the shooting, which took place in the parking lot of Manny's.

The Rev. Michael Reynolds, pastor of new Life Celebration Church of God, which Beatrice Robeson attends, was critical of the police response.

He said Jemel Roberson "believed in being a good guy" and was "wearing one of the good guy hats," referring to a cap he was allegedly wearing at the time identifying him as "Security." Reynolds said that Roberson's life was "snuffed out by the so-called good guys."

The pastor said that security work was in Roberson and that he was a hero for subduing one of the suspected bar shooters.

Reynolds said Roberson would have followed a command from the police to drop his own gun, and would not "oppose or rebel" against "the people he admired."

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Credit: Mike Nolan

## **DETAILS**

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