

Man's sister: I don't blame cop who shot him - South Jersey Times (NJ) - February 18, 2018 - page A1

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cumberland county

Sheila Goldsmith said she will not watch the dashcam video of her brother, **Edward C. Gandy Jr.**, being shot to death by a Millville police officer in January. She said she doesn't need to see it to trust that her brother, who was unarmed and has mental health issues, engaged police that day because he was suicidal.

"This was his way out. He wanted this to happen," she said in a phone interview Thursday. It's not a view shared by some of her relatives, including her mother.

Goldsmith is mourning her brother but also taking comfort in the feeling that he is no longer suffering. "He's at rest. He's at peace. He had a very hard life," she said. His family said he was diagnosed with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

According to authorities and a released 911 call, Gandy, 46, called 911 and said he had a gun and was "feeling homicidal." His family has said police were familiar with Gandy because of previous incidents related to his mental health issues.

When Officer Colt Gibson's cruiser pulled up to the intersection of North High and McNeal streets, Gandy immediately started walking toward him and did not follow Gibson's orders to show his hands, according to dashcam footage released last week.

Gibson repeatedly called Gandy by his first name and told him to stop, but he kept moving, gesturing as if he took something out of his back pocket and then holding his hands in front of him as though pointing a gun, the video shows. His hands went behind his back again as he got close to the cruiser and shots rang out, according to the video.

Gibson checked on Gandy within seconds and was putting on latex gloves when an ambulance pulled up, less than a minute after the shooting, the video shows.

Goldsmith said that she understands why Gibson fired on her brother.

"I'm not upset with the officer at all. I understand the ordeal they have to go through," she said. "They had no other way around it."

The Cumberland County Prosecutor's Office is investigating the shooting while Gibson remains on leave, per state guidelines.

Gandy's mother, Catherine Gandy of Millville, declined to speak with a reporter last week but

previously told NJ Advance Media that police knew Gandy and his issues and should have known he didn't really have a gun.

She does not believe he claimed to have a gun in hopes that police would shoot him. She said he had a history of calling the police when he felt out of control or suicidal, and this was just another cry for help.

Goldsmith believes Gandy's mental health issues began when he hit his head when he was about 11 years old. His symptoms worsened when he was in his 20s, she said. Some medications seemed to help, but some also had negative side effects.

"He'd call me whenever he had a problem, and I could usually calm him down," she said. If he talked about suicide, she'd tell him it was not the answer. "He didn't call me this time," she said.

Goldsmith left Millville many years ago, but she said Gandy would still call her regularly and always sent a Christmas card. He had also been battling cancer for several years.

She said that in recent months his symptoms were getting worse and she believed he needed to be in a behavioral health facility.

Gandy's relatives agreed that he would never hurt anyone and was only ever a threat to himself.

"He had a very loving heart," Goldsmith said. "He would always help anyone."

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