

Family bids farewell to man killed by Chicago police, waits for body-camera footage

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FULL TEXT

Dozens of friends and family gathered around the gravesite as Maurice Granton's black casket with silver detailing was slowly lowered into the ground. Six white gloves were placed on top, a sign of respect from the former South Side gang he was once part of. Now, the family must wait for the release of body-camera footage from June 6, when a Chicago police officer fired three shots at Granton —one fatally striking the 24-year-old's spine —as he ran away.

More than 70 people attended Granton's funeral Monday morning at the Metropolitan Apostolic Community Church in Bronzeville. Some wore red or white shirts with sayings on the back such as "Long Live Maurice" or "Fly high angel" with his face printed on the front. As they walked up to his open casket decorated with a large bouquet of plastic red roses and orange flowers, some leaned in and kissed his cheek while others cried out and leaned onto one another for support.

The Rev. Chris Harris encouraged members of the audience to hug each other and offered them opportunities to give Granton standing ovations. Despite the controversy surrounding Granton's death, the funeral remained uplifting.

"He pulled him out. Not the police. Not the bullet. God," Harris said.

Among the crowd were Granton's two daughters, both under 2 and too young to understand what had happened. Their mother, Tayshia, who declined to be interviewed, held her oldest daughter as she told the audience, "He gave me these two pretty little girls. ...Despite of everything, I still love you, and I'll always love you."

As the service ended, a large organ played in the background as people funneled out of the church. The mourners piled into about 20 cars and followed the hearse about 30 minutes south to Mount Hope Cemetery. A group of young people leaned out the windows of their cars, cheering and holding one of the red shirts that memorialized Granton.

Granton's father, Maurice Granton Sr., said, "He was a good kid. He liked to be goofy, silly, make people laugh all the time. He was a protector, too, of his sisters."

After the body camera tapes are released, Granton Sr. said, "we can proceed from there."

On June 2, Granton walked out of a hospital with a graze wound near his right eye. Police had found him lying in an alley in Chatham on the South Side, authorities said, but he had refused to cooperate.

Four days later and barely 4 miles away in Bronzeville, police say Granton started running from plainclothes officers working a drug investigation. He ignored their orders to stop, pulled a gun and was shot by one of the officers, according to a statement from the Police Department.

Granton was pronounced dead at the University of Chicago Medical Center, the same hospital where he was treated for the graze wound. He had been shot in the back, according to the Cook County medical examiner's office.

The Police Department released surveillance video it said shows Granton holding a gun sometime before he was shot by the officer in the 4700 block of South Prairie Avenue. The department also tweeted a photo of a 9 mm handgun it said was recovered. The department did not say whether there was an exchange of gunfire between the officer and Granton.

Ziff Sistrunk, the family spokesman, said the family has hired lawyers, and they are preparing to file a lawsuit against the city within the next 10 days. In the meantime, they're gearing up for a protest in about two weeks in front of the mayor's office to demand the release of the body cam tapes.

"Mr. Maurice Sr. is the person that's going to review (the camera footage) —not Black Lives Matter. ...So these other groups need to push back off this family for a minute," Sistrunk said. "Right now, we just need the mayor and this city to step up."

Denise Granton, one of Granton's aunts, said the family is hurting right now and trying to make sure his daughters are provided for, but everyone is still confused by what led to his death.

"We want to wait to see when the body cam's released to see what is actually shown because we don't know.

We're only going by what they've said, and what they've said has not made sense."

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Credit: Paige Fry

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