

Police: Emantic Bradford's gun 'heightened the sense of threat' at Ala. mall before he was shot

Bacon, John . USA Today (Online) ; Arlington [Arlington]26 Nov 2018.

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ABSTRACT (ENGLISH)

An Alabama city extended sympathy to the family of a black man killed by an officer in the chaotic moments after a shooting at crowded mall.

FULL TEXT

An Alabama city and its police department publicly expressed condolences Monday to the family of a black man fatally shot by an officer in the chaotic moments after a prior shooting at a crowded mall on Thanksgiving night. But a statement issued by officials in Hoover, 10 miles south of Birmingham, placed some of the responsibility on Emantic "EJ" Bradford Jr. , who was killed by an officer working private security at the sprawling, two-story Riverchase Galleria.

The statement said Bradford, 21, was shot during Hoover police's efforts to secure the scene after the initial shooting, which wounded an 18-year-old man and a 12-year-old girl. A manhunt for at least one shooter continued Monday.

"We can say with certainty Mr. Bradford brandished a gun during the seconds following the gunshots, which instantly heightened the sense of threat to approaching police officers responding to the chaotic scene," the statement said.

Police clarified that "brandished" meant Bradford was holding a gun.

"We are deeply and sincerely sympathetic to Mr. Bradford's grieving family and all of those affected by this incident," the statement said. "We all want answers, and we believe that with patience and focus the truth will be firmly established. "

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In the hours after the shooting, Hoover police lauded the "heroic" officer for taking down a suspect. Several hours later, police walked the story back, saying Bradford was not the initial shooter.

Bradford's father, Emantic Bradford Sr. , said Monday that police had not reached out to the family to apologize or explain what happened. He said his son was disrespected by police who initially suggested he was the shooter –and by officers at the scene who allowed bystanders to take photos and video after the shooting.

Bradford's family hired civil rights lawyer Benjamin Crump.

Crump said Bradford tried to bring calm to the altercation and had a permit for his gun. Crump said the officer "saw a black man with a gun, and he made his determination that he (Bradford) must be a criminal. "

Crump and the family have called on police to release body camera footage and other video of the shooting, saying it would tell the "whole story. "

Hoover police said they turned over video and other evidence to the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, which turned it over to the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency that leads the investigation. ALEA has not announced when or if the videos would be released.

The city and police department pledged transparency throughout the investigation and said it would provide weekly updates. Authorities have "certain information" about the initial shooter and urged the public to provide

ALEA with any information that could hasten an arrest, the statement said.

The statement sent condolences to the family of the two initial victims, both hospitalized in stable condition after the gunfire.

"These are just some of the many lives that were immediately impacted by an event so unnecessary on what should have been a peaceful Thanksgiving evening," Monday's statement said.

DETAILS

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