

ATTORNEY: MAN KILLED AT MALL BY POLICE WAS SHOT FROM BEHIND

Holly Yan CNN . Pittsburgh Post - Gazette ; Pittsburgh, Pa. [Pittsburgh, Pa]04 Dec 2018: A-5.

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FULL TEXT

Emantic Bradford Jr. wasn't just wrongfully identified as a mall shooter when he was killed by police. He was shot three times from behind, his family's attorney said Monday.

A medical review commissioned by Mr. Bradford's family showed the 21-year-old, nicknamed "EJ," was shot in the head, the neck and near his right hip, attorney Ben Crump said.

"There's nothing that justifies [the officer] shooting EJ as he's moving away from him. You're not a threat when you're running away," Mr. Crump said.

That doesn't mean Mr. Bradford was trying to run away from police, Mr. Crump said. Rather, when gunfire first rang out at the Alabama mall, "witnesses have verified that everybody was running from the gunshots," he said.

Mr. Bradford was at the Riverchase Galleria mall in Hoover on Thanksgiving night. Someone opened fire, wounding an 18-year-old man and a 12-year-old bystander.

Moments later, a Hoover police officer working security at the mall shot and killed Mr. Bradford.

At first, police identified Mr. Bradford as the assailant. They later changed their story, saying Mr. Bradford probably wasn't the shooter but did have his hand on his gun. (Mr. Crump said Mr. Bradford had a legal permit to carry a gun in public.)

A week after the mall shooting, authorities identified Erron Martez Dequan Brown as the suspect. Mr. Brown is now in custody, charged with attempted murder for wounding the 18-year-old.

Many residents in the Birmingham area have called for police to release any body camera footage to the public.

But neither Hoover police nor the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency - which is now leading the investigation - will be releasing evidence in the near future.

Hoover police Chief Nick Derzis issued a statement Monday saying the state's secretary of law enforcement asked the city not to release any critical information prematurely.

"Secretary [Hal] Taylor reiterated the importance of maintaining the integrity of their investigation. He has specifically asked that we do not release any potential evidence as it may not only jeopardize the integrity of the case, but also complicate or delay their efforts," Chief Derzis said.

"While we maintain our commitment to be fully transparent during this process, we must respect the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency's request for full cooperation and continue to have faith in the judicial process. We want the whole truth, unimpeded and not delayed."

Mr. Bradford's father, Emantic Bradford Sr., called the Hoover police officer who killed his son a "coward."

"What you have done was destroy my family," the father said. "You shot a 21-year-old person running away from gunfire."

The officer, who has not been publicly identified, is on paid administrative leave pending the state's investigation.

CAPTION: PHOTO: AP photo/Jay Reeves: Attorney Ben Crump discusses the results of a forensic examination on Emantic "EJ" Bradford Jr. - who was fatally shot by police in a shopping mall on Thanksgiving - during a news conference in Birmingham, Ala., on Dec. 3, 2018.

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