

Police kill the wrong Black man again

By HERB BOYD
Special to the AmNews

"Friendly fire," and "We shot and killed the wrong man," are recent responses from police officials in the shootings of innocent Black men that are heard time and time again, and they are as tired as they are iniquitous.

Within hours of the funeral services for Jemel Roberson, 26, Saturday, in a Chicago suburb, Emantic Fitzgerald Bradford Jr., a 21-year-old Black man, was shot and killed inside the Riverchase Galleria mall near Birmingham, Ala. The police in Midlothian, Ill., where Roberson, a security guard, was killed, said he was a victim of "friendly fire."

In the first reports on the shooting at the mall in Hoover, Ala., Bradford was cited as the shooter, but now the police are retracting the story and saying they might have shot the wrong man, and the real shooter, who wounded two, including a young girl, is still at large.

Both incidents have brought in their wake hundreds of protesters concerned about police violence, and then a rush by the police to extricate themselves from possible errors or wrongdoings.

The police said that Bradford, who had received a general discharge from the Army and was licensed to carry the gun in his possession, "likely didn't fire the rounds" that wounded the others in the mall, said the Hoover police. And although he might have been involved in

an altercation that triggered the shooting, some witnesses say he was trying to quell the disturbance.

In the shooting of Roberson, video accounts clearly show that he had apprehended and was holding the shooter down at the Blue Room Lounge where the incident occurred. The officer who shot Roberson remains unidentified and on administrative leave.

Meanwhile in Alabama, attorney Benjamin Crump, acclaimed for representing the families of the slain Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown and Tamir Rice, has been retained by Bradford's family. Crump said of the police account that they were "jumping to conclusions" merely because he was a Black man with a gun.

"He was trying to be somebody who helped save people, yet he was killed," the civil rights attorney added.

Roberson and Bradford can be counted among the more than 850 people shot and killed by the police in the U.S. this year, according to a *Washington Post* database. Moreover, the report fuels the latest accusations of systemic racism in U.S. law enforcement.

"Our family is completely shocked, heartbroken and devastated by the tragic death of our beloved E.J.," a statement from the family said, noting that E.J. was what they called Bradford. "E.J. was a devoted son and brother, who dedicated his life to serving his country and doing the right thing."

Trump adds his rebel yell to Mississippi Senate race

By HERB BOYD
Special to the AmNews

Catching flak from even GOP members for his stance on climate change, with six in 10 Americans disapproving of his leadership, and the Mexican border tearing at the seams, Trump had no choice but to run for cover in Mississippi with an alternate purpose of helping the incumbent Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith.

"I'm here to ask the people of Mississippi to send Cindy Hyde-Smith back to the United States Senate," Trump told a partisan crowd in Tupelo Monday evening. This stop was his first of the night, and he added that the runoff between Hyde-Smith and Democrat Mike Espy "is one of the most important elections of your lives."

It was in Tupelo weeks earlier that Hyde-Smith angered African-Americans with a comment while complimenting a supporter. She said, "If he invited me to a public hanging, I'd be on the front row." Later, she attempted to apologize for the comment.

When asked about the comment, Trump told reporters that he had heard her apology "loud and clear." He added, "I know where her heart is, and her heart is good."

For every good word for Hyde-Smith, Trump had stinging words for Espy, a former Clinton administration official. He asserted that Espy represented the "far

left" and was more concerned about protecting undocumented immigrants than natives of Mississippi.

Seeking to further identify with a crowd during his speech in Tupelo, Trump said he didn't want to sound "conceited," but during his younger days he said he was often compared to Elvis Presley, whose hometown was Tupelo.

"Other than the blond hair, when I was growing up, they said I looked like Elvis," he said. "Can you believe it? I always considered that a great compliment."

There had been only one survey completed before Tuesday's election, and Hyde-Smith had a wide lead over Espy.

"Cindy Hyde-Smith's comments are reprehensible," Espy said. "They have no place in our political discourse, in Mississippi, or in our country. We need leaders, not dividers, and her words show that she lacks the understanding and judgment to represent the people of our state."

The runoff occurred when neither candidate—like Trump's approval rating—got 50 percent. Hyde-Smith, who had been appointed by the governor to fill the seat vacated by Thad Cochran in March, received 41.5 percent of the vote to Espy's 40.6 percent. He served as secretary of Agriculture under Bill Clinton.

It turns out that Alphonso Michael Espy will not be the first African-American to serve in the U.S. Senate from Mississippi since Reconstruction.

New Jersey News



First African-American elected sheriff sworn in the Bergen County

"I knew what I had to do, as far as being a foot soldier, getting on the ground and doing what I had to do."

By CYRIL JOSH BARKER
Amsterdam News Staff

Anthony Cureton makes history as the first African-American elected sheriff in Bergen County. Cureton was sworn in last Tuesday during a ceremony in Hackensack by State Attorney General Gurbir Grewal.

Winning in a landslide, Cureton beat Republican and Hasbrouck Heights Mayor Jack DeLorenzo. "I knew what I had to do, as far as being a foot soldier, getting on the ground and doing what I had to do," Cureton said when he won. "I've dealt with people in many different forums."

Before winning, Cureton was president of Bergen County's NAACP. He stepped down from the role because of the civil rights organization's policy prohibiting elected officials from serving as chapter leaders.

Cureton's win has been called a form of poetic justice in Bergen County. He ran for sher-

iff after former sheriff Michael Saudino resigned when a recording surfaced of him making racist and homophobic comments in September. Cureton served in law enforcement for 25 years and has been retired for four years.

In one tape Saudino said legalizing marijuana in New Jersey would "let the Blacks come in, do whatever the [expletive] they want, do this do that, don't worry about it. You know, we'll tie the hands of cops." Saudino made the comments after Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy took office this year. There were also complaints about the diversity of officers in the sheriff's office.

"To me it's a good indicator of change where the voters of Bergen County have spoken that regardless of color they can look at the credential of the man and allow that to be the decision-making when it came time to the election," Cureton said during a recent podcast interview.

Gov. Phil Murphy wants \$15 minimum wage passed by year's end

By CYRIL JOSH BARKER
Amsterdam News Staff

This week, Gov. Phil Murphy urged the Legislature to close the wage gap and pass a bill raising the minimum wage to \$15 per hour in New Jersey before the end of the year. "Establishing a livable wage of \$15 per hour provides New Jersey's working families with the opportunity to put food on their tables and keep the lights on in their homes," Murphy said.

He added that increasing the minimum wage to \$15 will empower working families, which in turn will boost productivity and grow New Jersey's economy. Starting next year, minimum wage will go up by 25 cents to \$8.85 per hour.

The State Constitution charges the Department of Labor and

Workforce Development with calculating a minimum wage adjustment each fall based on consumer price index data collected over the prior year. The change will become effective on the first day of the new year. Last year, the wage increased by 16 cents, to \$8.60 per hour, providing roughly 300,000 minimum wage workers with a raise.

"Raising the minimum wage is a crucial piece in building the foundation for a robust and fair economy," said Murphy. "We have talked about this issue and the benefits it will bring to New Jerseyans long enough. The time for the Legislature to act is now."

New Jersey is one of eight states to adjust their rate automatically based on the cost of living. The federal minimum wage is \$7.25 per hour.

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