

# What's known – and not known – about the police shooting of security guard Jemel Roberson

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## FULL TEXT

This much is known about the death of Jemel Roberson: The armed security guard was trying to subdue a suspect in a bar shooting in Robbins early Sunday when he was shot by a Midlothian police officer who responded to the call. Roberson was black; the unnamed police officer is white.

Beyond that, some basic facts are in dispute or unknown.

An attorney for Roberson's family said the 26-year-old Chicago man was wearing a hat with "security" printed on it. Illinois State Police, which is investigating, released a contradictory statement, saying Roberson was clad in "plain black clothing with no markings readily identifying him as a Security Guard."

The attorney, Greg Kulis, also claims in a lawsuit filed Monday that multiple witnesses shouted at the Midlothian officer that Roberson was a security guard, but the state police report, citing witness statements, said its preliminary finding was that the police officer gave multiple commands to Roberson to drop his firearm before the officer opened fire.

Late Wednesday, one of the other four people wounded in the gunfire exchange at the bar emerged. Dorian Myrickes told the Tribune that he was also working security at the bar that night and that he saw the officer shoot Roberson within seconds of warning him to drop his weapon.

From his hospital bed, Myrickes also said Roberson had the word "security" printed on his hat and on the back shoulder of the black sweatshirt he was wearing. But Myrickes acknowledged that the officer might not have been able to see that lettering, according to a separate interview he gave to The Associated Press.

According to the AP report, Myrickes said he did not hear the officer give any verbal warning before shooting Roberson.

Another thing that is clear is the bar, Manny's Blue Room Lounge, was not authorized to serve alcohol, since its state liquor license expired on Sept. 30 and had not been renewed, according to the Illinois Liquor Control Commission.

Here are some other questions that remain:

- What were the circumstances of the gunfire at the bar that prompted the police response? Among the four wounded was the person Roberson was restraining. That man is being treated for injuries that are not life-threatening, but no charges have been filed, according to the Cook County sheriff's office, which is handling the investigation of the initial shooting. Police officials have said it stemmed from a verbal dispute and escalated when someone left, returned with a gun and fired.
- Little is known about the officer who shot Roberson. He is white and a seven-year police veteran. (Midlothian officials clarified Wednesday he's been with that department nearly four years and worked for three at another department.) He is currently on paid leave while the state police Public Integrity Task Force investigates.
- The details of Roberson's employment at the bar are also murky. He was licensed to carry a firearm as a security guard, according to state records, but it's unclear if he was licensed to work as an armed security guard at Manny's specifically, since employers are also required under most circumstances to be licensed. Bar owners did not return

multiple calls for comment, and state officials requested that the Tribune obtain records via an open records request. The request has been made, but the state's response is still pending. Myrickes said he and Roberson were not initially armed but that Roberson might have had the suspect's gun when Roberson was shot, or might have at some point retrieved his weapon from the car.

*mwalberg@chicagotribune.com*

*Twitter @mattwalberg1*

Credit: Matthew Walberg

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