

The mother of the man killed at an Alabama mall faints at a prayer meeting for him

Hanna, Jason; Alsup, Dave . CNN Wire Service ; Atlanta [Atlanta]28 Nov 2018.

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FULL TEXT

April Pipkins, holding a picture of her slain son, had just started talking about the trauma of his shooting death by Alabama police when she paused Tuesday night during a town hall and prayer meeting for him.

"I'm just at a loss of words. I'm trying to be strong during this time and hold up, you know," Pipkins told a gathering at Birmingham's 16th Street Baptist Church about Emantic Bradford Jr.'s shooting death last week at a mall.

She put her head in her hand and, after a few seconds, fell back into the arms of her attorney.

Pipkins fainted, attorney Ben Crump said, and was sent to a hospital, where she was being evaluated.

"The doctor said she's going to be OK," Crump said. Further details about her condition weren't immediately available.

Pipkins and her family have demanded answers from police about the Thanksgiving night shooting at the Riverchase Galleria in nearby Hoover.

Hoover police initially said Bradford, 21, shot a 12- and an 18-year-old in the mall after a fight, and that an officer killed him as he fled, brandishing a gun.

But police later changed the story, saying witnesses and forensic tests indicated that while Bradford may have been involved in an altercation at the mall, he likely did not fire the rounds that injured the victims.

The initial shooter, who has not been publicly identified, remains at large, and the officer who was working as mall security when he killed Bradford is on administrative leave pending an investigation, police say.

Crump, a civil rights attorney representing Bradford's family, has leveled a series of allegations, including that Bradford actually was trying to help victims to safety when he was shot; that the officer who killed him didn't warn him before shooting; and that police didn't give him medical assistance as he lay dying.

Pipkins was one of several speakers at Tuesday evening's church gathering.

Jefferson County Commissioner Sheila Tyson gave a fiery speech about boycotting the mall, CNN affiliate WVTM reported. And Bradford's father emotionally shared memories of his son.

"I can't hear him say 'Daddy' no more," Emantic Bradford Sr. said, according to WVTM. "You'll never walk through my door and call my name again."

'They want answers'

Hoover Mayor Frank V. Brocato, Police Chief Nicholas Derzis and other city officials met with the Bradford family Tuesday night and apologized for initially identifying Bradford as the gunman, then saying he likely wasn't the gunman, according to Tyson, who also attended the meeting.

CNN has not been able to independently verify what occurred in the meeting. Brocato could not be reached.

Neither could Hoover police or Crump.

"The family was open they want answers," Tyson said in an interview on Wednesday. "They don't just want to meet, they want answers."

'He's in a lot of pain'

Brian Wilson, the 18-year-old victim, is recovering at a hospital after he was shot in the side and the abdomen, said his attorney, John C. Robbins.

"He's in a lot of pain," Robbins told CNN Wednesday. "We anticipate a full recovery, but it's going to take some

time."

Wilson and Bradford were friends, according to Robbins. He said his client was upset about Bradford's death. Wilson, who is enrolled in a trade school to become a welder, went to the mall to do Christmas shopping last Thursday.

The attorney declined to give additional details about the incident.

In a statement, Robbins said Wilson's family offers condolences to the Bradfords and prayers for the 12-year-old victim, who also is recovering.

"The Wilson Family hopes that this tragic event will lead to real, open and honest dialogue not only between the African-American community and the police, but also the entire community must be involved in this discussion," the statement said. "Reckless police shootings of young black man must stop. But they will not end until there is rational and productive communication between the entire community and the police force whose duty it is to protect that community."

"So let it begin in Birmingham, and let it begin now," the statement said.

DETAILS

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