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Slain man's family wants report; cops support officer

Michael P. Mayko

Updated 12:32 am, Tuesday, January 14, 2014

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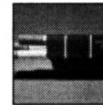


Sarah Abraham, left, and Melissa Gibbs, right, grandmother and mother of Brian Stukes, stand in prayer after lighting candles at the spot on Coleman Street in Bridgeport, Conn. where Stukes died after being shot by Bridgeport police on April 1, 2013. Photo: Brian A. Pounds | Buy This Photo

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BRIDGEPORT -- Melissa Gibbs knelt slowly, placing the votive candle at the foot of the Coleman Street driveway where her 21-year-old son died after being shot by a police officer April 1.

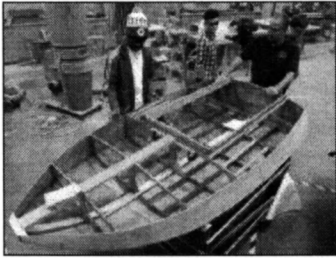
"All I want to know is what happened," Gibbs said, tears streaming down her cheeks. "Why did they shoot him?"

She hopes answers detailing what happened that day come soon, with the release of a State Police report



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detailing Det. Christopher Borona's fatal shooting of Bryan Stukes, Gibbs' son.

On Monday, Martin Minella, a Waterbury lawyer, and A. Paul Spinella, a Hartford lawyer, conducted a news conference outside Golfinho's Fish Market at 3100 Pequonnock St., demanding the report be completed and released.

"We will be delivering a letter to the governor this afternoon imploring him to ask the state police to issue their report on this incident," said Minella.

"Myself and Attorney Spinella, along with our investigators, have supplied testimony from actual witnesses as well as forensic evidence we feel refutes the police officer's version of the events."

Minella said he wants Gov. Dannel P. Malloy to "ascertain the status of the investigation ... and forcefully determine a set date" for the report to be completed and released.

Once completed, the report is to be given to Stamford State's Attorney David Cohen, who will determine whether the matter will be prosecuted criminally. Bridgeport State's Attorney John Smriga has recused himself because his office works with Borona.

At the time of the shooting, police said Borona responded to a call about a man, identified as Stukes, armed with a rifle and threatening another man outside Golfinho's. Police said Borona ordered Stukes to drop the rifle and fired only when the victim turned and pointed the weapon at him. Stukes then ran a block down Benham Street and turned onto Coleman before collapsing in a driveway.

But Minella, surrounded by a dozen of Stukes' family members and friends as three city police cruisers sat parked nearby, said his investigation uncovered pieces of evidence that "completely dispute the unofficial reports being circulated."

He said the lawyers hired a former state police supervisor and canvassed the neighborhood, discovering witnesses who were never interviewed and forensic evidence not located by police.

For instance, Minella said, police claim Stukes was shot in the chest, but the autopsy report indicates he was shot in the back.

Stukes' uncle, who identified himself only as Nate, said a hollow-point bullet was found on a Benham Street porch, near the driveway where Stukes collapsed. The driveway and the porch are a block from the fish market.

"We turned that bullet over to the state police," said Minella, who added they determined it was fired from Borona's gun. "Witnesses say three, four, five shots were fired."

He further claimed that it took at least 30 minutes before Stukes was taken on the "five-minute" drive to the hospital, where he later died.

"Unbelievably, that same officer has been involved in another shooting in which another young Bridgeport man has been shot and killed while another youth in the same vehicle ... riddled by 40 shots, was horribly maimed," Minella said.

Borona was one of four police officers placed on desk duty following the November fatal shooting of Carnell Williams during an undercover investigation that ended in the Bayview



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Plaza parking lot. That shooting also is being investigated by state police.

"Detective Borona is a very well-respected member of this department and a dedicated detective," Chief Joseph Gaudett said in a prepared statement following Minella's news conference. "The state police investigations are ongoing, and I want to respect the integrity of the investigations. We need to allow the Connecticut State Police and the State's Attorney's Office to do their work. I will say this: We are cooperating completely with the state police and I'm confident that Detective Borona's actions were completely justified."

Anticipating a lawsuit from the shooting, Associate City Attorney Betsy Edwards said the city would defend Borona against "these baseless claims. No police officer ever wants to take a life. This officer was protecting his life and the lives of others from this armed gunman, and he should be honored for that, not falsely vilified."

Meanwhile, Gibbs and her mother, the Rev. Sarah Abraham, of Salem Lutheran Church on Park Avenue, chose to remember the better days Monday -- days when Stukes uttered his first word, took his first steps and played his first basketball game.

"He loved sports. He loved to tell jokes," Gibbs said. "I miss him so much, every day. Without him, I'm lost."

mmayko@ctpost.com, 203-330-6286

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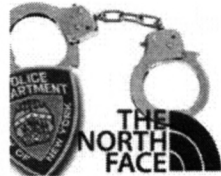
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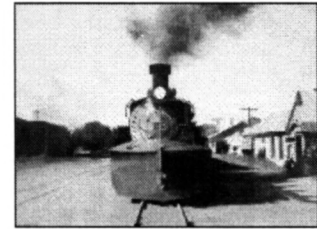
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rukidding Rank 493

I have to wonder: How does this get turned around to being the cops fault ? The criminal had a loaded rifle....threatening another person....refused to drop it when directed by police....points it at the police.....and it's the cop's fault????? How about it's the criminal's fault for all of the above? How about it's the parent's fault for not teaching the criminal respect ? Why does everyone have to blame everyone else, all the time ? Take responsibility for your own inactions.

40 minutes ago 0 Likes

Like Reply Share



exconn Rank 10

and hey, Post editors..... first line of this story....she KNEELED down, (not knealed)

also, the perps Mom is there, Grandma too. Where's Pop? Grand Dad? Maybe thats why the kid had no moral compass?

2 hours ago 1 Like

Like Reply Share



exconn Rank 10

No doubt, he was on the short waiting list at Yale

2 hours ago 0 Likes

Like Reply Share



VideoPhotogr Rank 60

Awaiting the state police report. Get in line, the state police take their sweet time....

8 hours ago 0 Likes

Like Reply Share



Student Rank 41

Lol she wants to know why he shot him. Well maybe it has to do with not dropping a rifle when a cop is telling you to. I mean at least I think that's what you are suppose to do. The ones that don't usually come out dead.

8 hours ago 3 Likes

Like Reply Share

SomeCTGuy Rank 78

"He loved his rifle." said Gibbs.

8 hours ago 2 Likes

Like Reply Share

cocoaruz Rank 386

One less savage to worry about. Good job Detective.

8 hours ago 2 Likes

Like Reply Share



Workingforaliving Rank 292

Another bunch of lawyers trying to find a deep pocket so they can finance there lifestyle in the burbs , far far away from the crime ridden city

12 hours ago 3 Likes

Like Reply Share



StillStanding Rank 80

So let me get this right. This cat comes out with a gun....a rifle....and gets shot by a detective. Now you want to waste the court systems time and my money to attempt to sue the city to buy more red hair. Really?? Maybe the family should have done a better job raising this lost soul. Crime rate lowered by 1. NEXT!!!!

12 hours ago 4 Likes

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MilfordRez. Rank 53

@StillStanding ...by 2... Don't forget the gun runner in November

10 hours ago 3 Likes

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BoozyBill Rank 13

He was armed with a rifle on the city streets , YOUR TO BLAME MAMA !!

13 hours ago 3 Likes

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