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Family of man shot dead by Broward deputy in 2013 seeks answers

Jermaine McBean was fatally shot by a Broward Sheriff's deputy more than two years ago, and his survivors are impatient that a grand jury has not yet heard the case.



By **Linda Trischitta · Contact Reporter**
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Jermaine McBean was fatally shot by a **Broward Sheriff's** deputy more than two years ago, and his survivors are impatient that a grand jury has not yet heard the case.

"He was too quick on the draw," Jennifer Young said about Broward Sheriff's Deputy Peter Peraza, who shot her son on July 31, 2013 after McBean carried an unloaded air rifle on his shoulders and entered the grounds of his Oakland Park apartment complex. "Why did he kill my child?"

The family's attorney said he is hopeful charges will be brought in McBean's homicide.

Young, 66, a certified nursing assistant who lives in Delray Beach, gathered with family members, lawyers and civil rights activists Thursday in front of the Broward County courthouse in Fort Lauderdale to describe McBean and plead for justice in his case.

There are two legal actions surrounding the McBean shooting: Young has sued Broward Sheriff Scott Israel, Peraza and two other deputies in a federal civil suit. The second is the Broward state attorney's criminal investigation into the shooting.

"We believe this will be presented to the grand jury before the end of the year," said Ron Ishoy, spokesman for Broward State Attorney Michael Satz. "It's an ongoing case. We have been in touch with the counsel for the civil suit. We just can't talk about an ongoing case."

Satz's office has presented more than 170 police-involved deaths cases to grand juries from when he won office in 1976 through early 2015, Ishoy said.

In nearly four decades, prosecutors have obtained seven indictments of cops from grand juries; five of those cases involved gunfire and one of those was not a fatal shooting.

Additionally, on behalf of the U.S. Department of Justice, the FBI is reviewing sheriff's office investigative files to determine whether McBean's civil rights were violated.

Jermaine McBean was Young's middle son, a 33-year-old computer systems engineer at Zimmerman Advertising in Fort Lauderdale. He earned bachelor's and master's degrees in science and loved his two cats and Kawasaki motorcycle, his mother said.

"Jermaine was my person to lean on," Young said. Her two other sons, also professionals, do not live close by.

On the day McBean died, he was off from work, had eaten at a Denny's restaurant and purchased the gun from a pawn shop during his walk home along North Federal Highway, his mother said.

The family says he was listening to music through earbuds while he carried the rifle on his shoulders. Witnesses called 911, which brought three deputies to the Green Tree apartment complex and the deadly encounter.

Young's lawsuit alleges McBean's earbuds prevented him from hearing deputies' orders to stop and drop the air rifle.

"He is always listening to music, and he dances," Young said. "He wears his earbuds all the time. It was a habit, even in the house."

The earbuds were even worn when McBean rode his motorcycle.

"It made me crazy," she said.

In a Broward Sheriff's case report, Peraza told an investigator that deputies screamed numerous times at McBean to drop his weapon, and that it didn't appear as though anything was obstructing his hearing.

McBean also appeared to be ignoring deputies, Peraza said.

In May, a witness's photograph surfaced of a mortally wounded McBean that shows him wearing earbuds.

The day after the shooting, a sheriff's press release said that McBean had begun to turn and point the gun in Peraza's direction before Peraza shot him.

Three months after the shooting, Israel awarded Peraza and another deputy the agency's Gold Cross award for their conduct that day.

The awards were given "prematurely" and the agency was looking into it, Israel said in June.

Young wants the awards to be taken back; the sheriff's office said Thursday it will make a decision about them after the criminal case is closed.

The sheriff's office also said it had complied with the FBI's request for its files and that it was awaiting a prosecutor's decision about whether to bring the case before a grand jury.

Attorney David Schoen represents Young.

"This case is as heartbreaking and as tragic as any I have ever seen," Schoen said. "This is a victim who was beloved by everyone who ever met him, who by all accounts did absolutely nothing illegal that day."

Young says she bears her grief with work and the companionship of relatives and her fiancé, Roger Bailey, who all joined her at Thursday's press conference.

"I'm hoping ... that someone ... will pay attention [to] what has happened to my son," Young said.

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