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Opinion: The Discordant Account of the September 6th Dallas Shooting and What May
Come to Follow the Grand Jury's Decision

Manslaughter, murder, black, white, police, victim. These buzzwords have shot out into the nation and sent an all too familiar pain reverberating across the raw nerves of citizens throughout America. Amidst a gray cloud of questions, the tragic fact has come to light that on the evening of Sept. 6, 2018, in Dallas, Texas, another young black man was shot and killed by a white police officer.

This fact alone, though death should never be dismissed lightly, is not what has torn open more widely the existing wound of this sensitive topic. The odd and ambiguous circumstances surrounding the shooting have evoked more questions and bewilderment than information and answers.

Amber Guyger, the Dallas police officer in question, shot and killed 26-year-old Harding University graduate, a cappella singer, and PricewaterhouseCoopers accountant Botham Shem Jean in his own apartment, which she supposedly mistook for her own.

An affidavit released Monday by the Texas Rangers, who are currently investigating the case, spelled out their current account of the event.

The affidavit paints a picture of a tragic accident. The event was gravely tragic indeed, but the accidental nature of the tragedy is yet to be determined. Jean's attorney, Lee Merritt, is spearheading the skepticism surrounding the idea of the event being a mishap.

Common sense, he said in a recent news conference, is preventing him from buying the account of events recorded in the affidavit. Logic, I foresee, will be one of

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Guyger's major accusers and a crucial piece of this puzzle that the Texas Rangers are going to have an immense difficulty placing with accuracy.

Upon arriving home after her shift, Guyger parked on the wrong floor. She walked down the wrong hallway. She came to the wrong door and stood on the wrong entry mat that was clearly not her own. She attempted to insert her key into the supposedly propped open door, which itself is an odd thing to do. According to the affidavit, Guyger gave verbal commands that were "ignored by Complainant Jean." Instead of investigating further or calling for reinforcements, Guyger's first reaction was deadly force.

After she proceeded to shoot Jean in his own home, give him first aid, and call 911, she finally turned lights on. It was not until she was asked for her location by dispatchers that Guyger, according to the account recorded in the affidavit, realized she was not in her apartment. All that is truly known at this point is that Guyger obtained access to an apartment that was not her own, saw a man that she did not recognize, and that man is now dead.

The ambiguous account in the affidavit provided by the Texas Rangers has only cleared up one thing: the account of that night and the death of Botham Shem Jean is discordant, senseless and not adding up.

Jean's attorney Lee Merritt added a narrative of disturbance that contradicts the account in the affidavit. Merritt says that neighboring witnesses heard loud banging on a nearby door in tandem with the command "let me in, let me in" before the gunshots that we know took place occurred.

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Manslaughter is an appropriate charge for a tragic accident. Was this death an accident? Using what Jean's attorneys call "common sense" one is tempted to question if it was. If the evidence that continues to come in confirms the testimony of Jean's neighbors, the charge of murder must be strongly considered.

Dallas district attorney Faith Johnson said a news conference Monday that although the Texas Rangers are still investigating, she and her team will continue to conduct a thorough investigation as well.

"My staff is constantly out there talking to witnesses, uncovering additional information, and we will be prepared to present a full case to the grand jury in this matter."

I believe there is hot and sore wound left by these police shootings that has the potential to flare up into a full-fledged infectious riot if this case is not handled by the grand jury with the utmost diligence, compassion and vigilance. The gray cloud of ambiguity left in the wake of these recent events must dissipate into a just decision of the court. Our nation needs to take a giant step in the direction of justice and peace, and I pray that the grand jury will weigh the implications of their choice during deliberation.