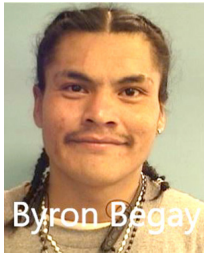


GPD still investigating May 10 shooting

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
Friday, 15 July 2022 09:52



Victim's sister looking for answers

It's been almost two months since Octavia Johnson's brother Byron Begay was killed, but she's not giving up on trying to bring his killer to justice.

On May 10, Begay, 32, from Churchrock, was shot outside of the Cliffside Apartments, 602 Dani Dr. When the Gallup Police arrived at the scene, they found Begay with two gunshots to his torso area.

In an interview with the *Sun* on June 22, Johnson described her brother as someone who was always willing to help others.

"If somebody was needing food or needing something, he would always say 'oh if you guys need a place to stay you can stay in my room' or if he knew that somebody was needing something he was always there to help, even though he didn't have much of his own," Johnson said.

GPD still investigating May 10 shooting

Written by Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
Friday, 15 July 2022 09:52

Johnson is frustrated with how the Gallup Police are handling her brother's case.

"The Gallup Police Department is not making the effort to put word out there about the name of the suspect and the witnesses," Johnson said.

In an interview with the *Sun*, Gallup Police Captain Billy Padavich disagreed with Johnson, saying that the department is following procedure when it comes to Begay's murder.

"The case is moving forward; we have who we believe is a suspect or a person of interest, we have some stuff up at the lab that needs to be analyzed still, we have a couple more people to interview, and then we'll be consulting with the DA's office on our next step," Padavich explained.

Johnson said that she knows who shot her brother, and she doesn't understand why the Gallup Police have not made an arrest yet.

"Everybody on the streets knows who did it," Johnson said. "Two weeks ago some of my brothers' friends were following the murderer downtown and I contacted the police department. I said 'hey, I got my brother's friends following this murderer and he's got a gun strapped to his belt walking downtown.'"

Padavich said he and the police department do not condone Johnson and her brother's friends trying to locate the murderer themselves.

"If they have information, we would love to hear that, but we as a Gallup Police Department are not asking these family friends to do the investigation on their own," Padavich said. "That is going to hinder our investigation, it could actually obstruct our investigation."

GPD still investigating May 10 shooting

Written by Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
Friday, 15 July 2022 09:52

Johnson said she knows who killed her brother, but she was unwilling to release the person's name.

Padavich said that Johnson has given the police department the information about who she believes killed her brother, and that the department's looked into everything she's asked them to.

"I just can't give you a lot of information because I don't want it to hinder our case, and I can tell you that [Octavia] has been given updates and I don't understand why she's feeling that we're not doing anything with the case because we've been actively working the case," Padavich said. "There have been people we need to reach out to and interview and we don't want her to obstruct our case in anyway or hinder our case in anyway. We can't give her too much information because that information could get out to the person who knows something about the case to where it could hurt our case."

Padavich said that his department is still working on tracking certain people down so they can be interviewed, and that some evidence still needs to be processed before they can go to the DA's office to try and make an arrest.

Padavich said he could understand Johnson's frustration.

"I understand that this was her brother and I understand that she's mad about this, and I totally understand that, but we've been working this case and trying to locate these individuals {that we need to talk to} is sort of hard sometimes," Padavich said.

Padavich said the police department is working on contacting some key witnesses and finishing up the necessary interviews while also waiting on some evidence to come back from the labs in Santa Fe before the department can go to the DA's office to start the arrest process.

"If we don't have the proper investigation done where we can make an arrest without probable cause, how can we arrest someone?" Padavich asked. "We can't just arrest people to arrest them if we don't have probable cause to make an arrest."

GPD still investigating May 10 shooting

Written by By Molly Ann Howell Sun Correspondent
Friday, 15 July 2022 09:52

By Molly Ann Howell
Sun Correspondent