

R O B E R T B A R R O N

July 13, 2005

Open Letter to:

Gregg Abbot, State Attorney General
Susan Reed, Bexar Country District Attorney
Ralph Lopez, Bexar County Sheriff
Bexar County Commissioner 1
Bexar County Commissioner 1
Mayor of San Antonio
Governor of Texas

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This letter is written on behalf of Joseph Marcus Barron, the 18-year boy who was shot by Sheriff's deputies on July 7, 2005 in the Brentfield Subdivision, on the Northeast side of Bexar County, Texas.

Joseph **was not** shot because he was a known gang member standing on the street with a gun and a knife after-hours. He **was not** shot because he was in the commission of a criminal act. This **was not** one of those situations where one must ask, "Where are the parents?" At the time of Joseph's shooting, he was at home, with his parents, under their control, that is until deputies arrived and aggravated a situation, acted without just cause and shot Joseph. So why was Joseph shot? Because he is mentally ill. A victim of a horrible, terminal disease called Huntington's Disease, which he has been dealing with since he was 13 years old. He is under the care of a team of physicians, primarily for emotional disturbance. He is now grossly crippled.

Joseph was experiencing a psychotic episode that night and was peaking emotionally. He was scared, confused and detached from reality and needing help. His step-mother panicked and called for a deputy to assist. On arrival, the deputy explained that he **was not permitted** to restrain or assist with psychiatric patients as per departmental policy. We have since checked and found that this policy is in place, and had the deputy abided by that policy, you would not be reading his letter now.

Soon, other deputies arrived and despite having just quoted us policy, together they felt they had to intervene in Joseph's situation. **Grossly untrained to handle psychiatric patients**, the deputies only served to horribly escalate the situation, which soon found Joseph in a total panic, a situation which the parents witnessed and tried desperately to stop. The result was Joseph was shot three times at close range, twice in the right leg, and once in the left. He has lost the use of both legs. The damage to his psychological state is unmeasureable. **Extreme punishment for being mentally ill and emotionally unsound**. Perhaps this is why the Sheriff's department has their policy in place.

Joseph underwent approximately 12 hours of surgery that day; he underwent an additional 7 hours on July 13, 2005. He is still at risk for having his right leg amputated. He will be severely crippled for the remainder of his life.

The concern of this family is that we are not allowed to be at Joseph's side while he undergoes all this treatment. He is under 24-hour guard by a Sheriff's deputy. Again, Joseph is 18 years old chronologically, but only a young adolescent emotionally and psychologically. We are his support. I am his military sponsor. He needs us at his bedside to help him with his medical decisions. We have pleaded and pleaded with **Sheriff Lopez** to remove his deputies, to allow us access to our sick and now horribly injured son, but we have yet to hear one word for anyone in regards to anything

pertaining to this case.

The reason we are not at his bedside is that Joseph is supposedly charged with three counts of attempted capitol murder. However, one week after the incident, we have not seen so much as an incident report, formal charges, we have not been contacted by the district attorney's office, we have not been contacted by any law enforcement representative what so ever with any explanation as to why this happened, we have not even been asked to submit an official statement as eye witnesses, we have never been offered a case number, the names of the deputies involved, we cannot even locate his wallet, which contained a substantial amount of cash and his military identification card and his cell phone.

Flatly, we do not acknowledge any charges written against Joseph. He was in a psychotic state, not in control of his actions. I was in control of Joseph that night; he was contained in a family vehicle in the family driveway. That is not a crime. The responding deputies knew he was not a threat to them contained in the vehicle. Yet, without cause, and against the parent's demands to cease their actions, the deputies aggravated the situation, flushed Joseph from our vehicle, forcing him to leave our property, pursued him and shot him. How that translates to attempted capitol murder charges against Joseph is beyond us.

If the district attorney's office intends to maintain and proceed with charges against Joseph, it will only be to justify and legitimize the wrongful actions of the deputies. If that occurs, then may God bless our legal system, and may the word get out as fast as possible that in Bexar County, the insane and impaired have no rights or place in our society.

If the sheriff of this county feels that policies and procedures are only for administrative purposes and not applicable to real street situations, and if he feels he does not have to respond to the public on the conduct of his deputies, then he and his deputies are just another street gang that the public has to content with. Especially considering that personal property does not have to be returned to their victims or family. If my son's personal property is not returned, intact, then this incident was nothing more than an act of aggravated robbery, perpetrated by those sworn to protect and serve.

We, the family of Joseph Barron, are asking one of you, **just one of you**, to step up and talk to us. We want to be heard. We want Joseph to be heard. We want the guard removed from Joseph's bedside that we may be there. So the question is, which of you still holds to the belief that you are responsible to your constituents and the public?

As Joseph's father and representative, I will be waiting patiently, at Brooke Army Medical Center, Ward 2 West to hear from you. I will commence a **hunger strike** as of the date of this letter, in protest of the apparent solidarity that law enforcement, the judicial system, and possibly political figures have formed against the sick, helpless, and innocent members of our community. I will cease it only after the truth is acknowledged and recorded and responsibility assigned.

Sincerely,

Robert Barron

Cc:

Express-News

All local television stations

AP News Service