

NAACP New Bedford calls on U.S. Department of Justice to investigate Malcom Gracia killing

In a letter to the head of the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice, NAACP New Bedford Branch President Dr. LaSella L. Hall called for an outside investigation of the killing by police officers of Malcom Gracia in New Bedford in 2012. A presentation by Gracia's family's attorney revealed that many facts were overlooked or ignored in the Police Department's and District Attorney's investigation at the time of the killing. The letter reads, in part:

With compelling evidence of mishandled forensics; overly friendly interrogation of the accused police officers; an assistant DA who failed to gather critical evidence; mishandled forensics; the DA's final report riddled with factual errors and implausible assumptions; a gag order on medical records of the police officer who claimed to have been stabbed and; New Bedford's half-million-dollar settlement with the Gracia family, it is clear that justice was the second casualty in this case.

Citizens are still calling for the prosecution of officers Trevor Sylvia and Paul Fonseca, and discipline for filing false police reports by officers Tyson Barnes, David Brown, Paul Fonseca, Brian Safioleas, and Trevor Sylvia. Mr. Brisson's presentations casts a disturbing light on the New Bedford Police, the District Attorney's office, and the Mayor himself in the wake of Malcolm Gracia's shooting. We think there's enough substance in Brisson's presentations to at least warrant an independent investigation. We join with others in our community calling for re-opening the case.

Dr. Hall said, "Justice has been long denied. We expect a speedy but thorough, independent investigation and will not rest until that is secured."

The mission of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) is to secure the political, educational, social, and economic equality of rights in order to eliminate race-based discrimination and ensure the health and well-being of all persons.