

Judge rules fatal shooting ‘reasonable’

Death of the 26-year-old protester in 2023 became a flashpoint for the ‘Stop Cop City’ movement.

By Rosie Manins
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A deadly shooting by Georgia State Patrol officers that became a rallying cry for protesters against building Atlanta’s public safety training center was ultimately “reasonable” considering the circumstances, a federal judge ruled.

In his ruling Monday, U.S. District Judge Steven Grimberg noted that Manuel Paez Teran shot at the officers first, wounding one, before the officers returned fire and killed the 26-year-old. The incident happened Jan. 18, 2023, at In trenchment Creek Park, where Paez Teran and others were camping in protest of the training cen-

ter’s construction nearby. Paez Teran’s parents, Joel Paez and Belkis Teran, sued Georgia State Patrol officers Mark Lamb and Bryland Myers in December 2024, claiming false arrest and excessive force. They also sued GBI agent Ryan Long, claiming he was additionally liable for their child’s death because he ordered the clearing of the park and the arrest of the protesters.

Shooting continued on A7



The parents of 26-year-old Manuel Paez Teran sued two State Patrol officers and a GBI agent over their son’s fatal shooting on Jan. 18, 2023. BEN GRAY FOR THE AJC 2023

Lost evidence found in long-closed sex-assault case

Savannah DA reopens the controversial case. The suspect, who maintains his innocence, was released in 2024 after serving over two decades in prison.

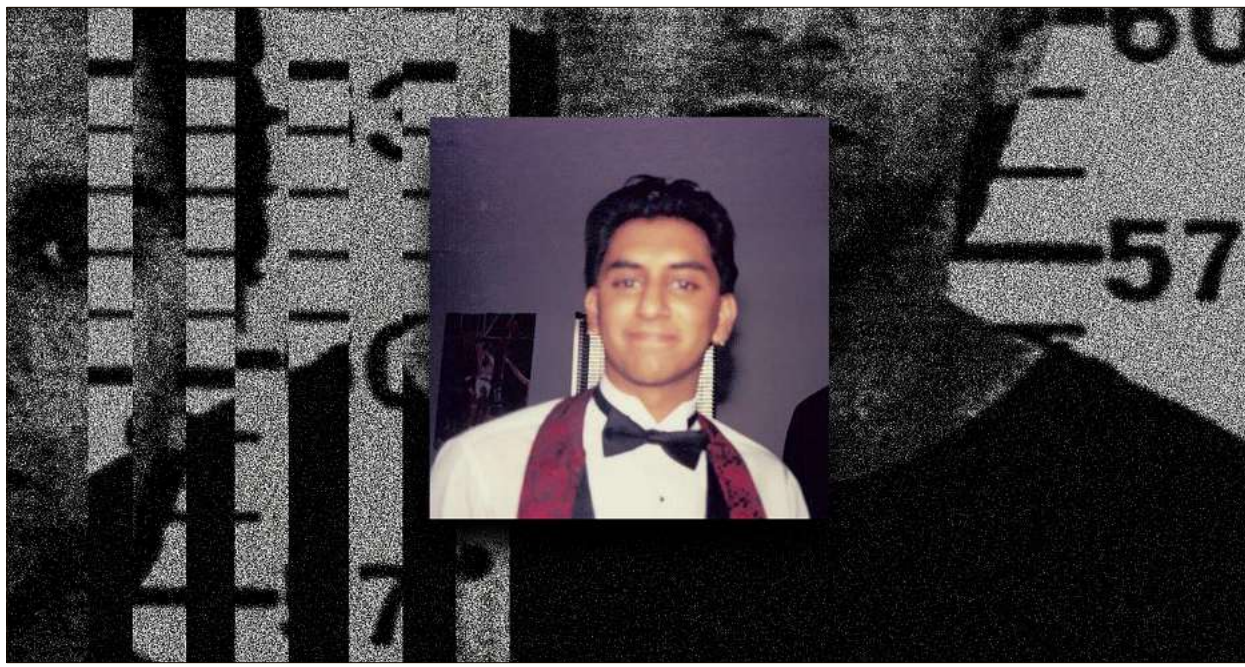


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY PHILIP ROBIBERO/AJC IMAGE SOURCE: AJC FILE

By Shaddi Abusaid shaddi.abusaid@ajc.com | Katherine Landergan katherine.landergan@ajc.com

Prosecutors in Savannah have reopened an unsolved sexual assault case after an unexpected discovery: Key evidence that had been missing for decades was found scattered about the small-town police department that investigated the case.

The development marks a stunning twist in the case of Sandeep “Sonny” Bharadia, who was released in 2024 after spending more than 22 years behind bars for a crime he says he didn’t commit.

A three-day sweep of the Thunderbolt Police Department turned up the evidence that was missing for nearly a quarter-century, according to officials with the Chatham County District Attorney’s Office. Investigators found the files strewn about the police department and in another building, Shalena Jones, the county’s district attorney, said Monday.

“It was like a treasure hunt,” she said.

The news comes nearly two years after Bharadia’s

Cold case continued on A7



The lawsuit alleges investigators intentionally used an older picture of Sandeep “Sonny” Bharadia in a photo lineup shown to the woman. The recently relocated photo was missing for years, the police department said. LAWSUIT EXHIBIT

Leaders urge Kemp to veto nonpartisan election bill

Measure would affect only metro Atlanta, where Democrats hold power.

By Caleb Groves
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Local leaders across metro Atlanta on Tuesday excoriated a Republican-passed bill that would make most local races in Georgia’s most populous – and most Democratic – counties nonpartisan.

If Republican Gov. Brian Kemp signs House Bill 369 into law, voters in Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Fulton and Gwinnett counties would elect most candidates for local offices without a “Democrat” or “Republican” by their names. The bill would apply to district attorneys, county commissioners and tax commissioners. It exempts sheriffs and the DeKalb County Commission.

Officials are urging Kemp to veto the measure, arguing it would create one set of rules for elections within metro Atlanta and another for the rest of the state. A group of district attorneys are already preparing a lawsuit to challenge the bill if Kemp signs it.

“We cannot keep moving the goalposts out of convenience,” DeKalb County CEO Lorraine Cochran-Johnson said.

Bill continued on A7



Cobb County District Attorney Sonya Allen was part of a joint news conference of local leaders voicing opposition to House Bill 369 on Tuesday. BEN HENDREN FOR THE AJC

PBS documentary reconsiders W.E.B. Du Bois, the Atlanta that shaped him



Filmmaker Rita Coburn will screen her new documentary, “W.E.B. Du Bois: Rebel With a Cause,” tonight at the Gathering Spot in Atlanta. The film traces the transformation of Du Bois from scholar to activist.

Rita Coburn’s film ‘Rebel With a Cause’ traces how the scholar’s time in the city charted his work and the course of Black intellectual history.

By Ernie Suggs
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Before he became a globally recognized thinker and author of “The Souls of Black Folk,” which identified the “color line” as America’s defining problem, W.E.B. Du Bois came to Atlanta – and it changed him.

The city at the turn of the 20th century offered a growing Black intellectual class, a network of institutions and a fragile sense of possibility.

But he also found something harsher and more immediate – violence, constraint and the lived reality of Southern racism.

Born in Great Barrington, Mas-

sachusetts, Du Bois graduated from both Fisk University and Harvard University before finding his way to Atlanta in 1897 to try to establish himself as a sociologist and scholar at Atlanta University.

“Atlanta was pivotal,” said Rita Coburn, whose new documentary, “W.E.B. Du Bois: Rebel With a Cause,” traces Du Bois’ transformation from scholar to activist – a shift that helped redefine Black sociology and the writing of history itself. “It gave him his first real professional respect. It

had a strong Black intellectual community. But it also exposed him to the brutal reality of Southern racism.”

The Chicago-based Coburn will be in Atlanta tonight for a screening and conversation with National Association of Black Journalists President Errin Haines at the Gathering Spot. The invitation-only event is hosted by the Tenth, an organization inspired by Du Bois’ concept of the “Tal-

Du Bois continued on A6

TODAY’S TOP STORIES INSIDE



LOCAL, A2

Commission lukewarm on tax extensions

Andre Dickens’ \$5 billion neighborhood plan did get backing in the board’s final report. But approval for eight tax allocation districts is key to the mayor’s plan.



IRAN WAR, A3

Trump to allies: ‘Go get your own oil’

President Donald Trump expressed frustration with allies who have been unwilling to do more as average U.S. gas prices passed \$4 a gallon.



BRAVES, B1

Pitching rotation looks good – so far

It’s not even been a week, but Braves starters have only surrendered four runs over 23 innings during the team’s 3-1 start, striking out 18 while walking eight.



MICHAEL CUNNINGHAM, B1

Hawks show they’re ready for the playoffs

The team rolled through March, although many of its 13 wins were against lowly opponents. Then the Hawks ended the month with a win over the mighty Boston Celtics.



LIVING, C2

A midday snooze is good for your brain

Few things bog down the workday quite like the midday slump. The fix might be simpler than you think. Grab your favorite pillow and find somewhere comfy to doze off.

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