

Kelly Ghaisar

Testimony
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Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee

Thank you Representative Wexton for that kind introduction and your support. My name is Kelly Ghaisar. I am Bijan Ghaisar's Mom. On September 4, we celebrated Bijan's 28th birthday; the third year we celebrated without him.

Bijan was born in the same Fairfax hospital where he died 25 years later.

Bijan was the cutest boy imaginable. He loved his micro cars and Lego. I will never forget the joy in his eyes when he got his first Play Station as a Christmas gift when he was in 4th grade.

The summer before high school, he trained for and made the Langley High School's freshman football team. He did not have a football player's physique and was not born an athlete, but he loved the game and worked really hard.

Bijan was also a fan of the game. He fell in love with the New England Patriots when they won the Super Bowl after 9/11. He said they brought back hope and joy to America. We watched his last Patriots game together the Sunday before he was killed.

My husband James, our daughter Negeen, her husband Kouros, Bijan and myself were a tight-knit family. We stayed up late and talked about our ideas, dreams, and future. We were fortunate and traveled to many countries and experienced many cultures together.

Bijan earned his undergraduate degree in accounting from Virginia Commonwealth University and joined his father's accounting firm in McLean, VA.

Everything for my family changed on November 18, 2017, at about 1:00 AM, when two men in plain clothes knocked on our front door and showed me a photograph of Bijan's torso with his only tattoo and asked me if I recognized it. I said, "Yes. That is Bijan's tattoo of a love poem from Rumi."

These men, who were from the U.S. Park Police, told my husband and me that Bijan was in a "shootout." I didn't believe them. Bijan was anti-violence and definitely anti-guns so would not be involved in a shootout. They went on to say Bijan had been shot and was in critical condition at Fairfax Hospital. When I asked for details, they said they were going back to the scene and promised that they would meet us at the hospital.

We never saw them again.

When we got to the ICU, the doctor told us that Bijan had been shot in the head multiple times and he wouldn't survive. The doctor described his wounds as like those suffered by JFK.

Though Park Police officers were right there, we had to learn from the television news that was on in the waiting area that they had killed our son.

When we asked to see our son, hospital staff said the Park Police were guarding his body and not allowing visitors.

We pleaded with the doctors and finally someone told us we could see him, but we could not get close; we could not touch him; and there would always be a Park Police officer in the room.

To this day, I cannot put into words how that felt as his mother – watching my child lie there and not be allowed to comfort him or hold him in my arms.

Three days later, the Park Police turned the investigation over to the Department of Justice and the FBI.

Bijan was in the hospital for 10 days, fighting to survive, before he died on November 27.

Neither the Park Police Chief nor any other federal government employee has ever explained to my family or the public why Officers Alejandro Amaya and Lucas Vinyard murdered my son. The Park Police has not even started an internal investigation into Bijan's shooting and the officers have been back to work fully paid, with their guns and badges, for years. They get to carry on, like nothing happened. We don't have that luxury.

A few days before the Second anniversary of the shooting, the Justice Department, without meeting with us first, publicly declined to charge the officers.

To this day, Park Police do not wear body cameras and their cars are not equipped with dash cameras.

If not for the footage from a Fairfax County Police Department's dash camera, we would never know how the police murdered our son. We would never have seen them violate their own policies. Bijan's family, his many, many friends, his community, the members of this Committee, the world would never have seen those officers needlessly fire 10 shots at Bijan as he sat unarmed in his Jeep. And, if not for the courage and thoughtfulness of Fairfax County Police Chief Ed Roessler, there is a good chance we would have never seen the video, these officers would have given their false versions and they would have gotten away with it.

In addition to Congresswoman Wexton, I also must thank Congressman Don Beyer, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, Senators Mark Warner, Tim Kaine, and Chuck Grassley, and Virginia State Senator Scott Surovell for the kindness and tireless support that they have shown me and my family and for pushing the U.S. Park Police for answers.

About a month ago, U.S. Park Police Chief Gregory Monahan came before a House Committee and testified that his agency would not participate in a body camera pilot. Why would they if they can literally get away with murder without them?

Bijan was a handsome, charming, caring, inclusive, fun and most of all loyal man. Everywhere we went together, you could see it and hear it in how people reacted to him. I can still hear the - "Hey Bijan! Bijan is here! Bij!

I am proud to have had him for the short 25 years that I did.

Bijan was my best friend and teacher. He introduced me to American Football and made me a diehard fan. Every time he heard me complain or not be at my best, he would say, "Mommy, you are better than that." It was humbling and I loved him for it. Even now, I use my words and choose my actions wanting to make him proud.

I go to his gravesite every day and pray to him to help me be a better person and not sink into despair and anger.

Bijan deserves justice and transparency.

Body cameras and dash cameras do an important job--they give us the truth.

Not a version of alternative truth.

Thank you for giving me the honor of testifying before this sub-committee.

We are your eyes
We are your voice
We are your heart
We are Bijan

I am forever BIJAN