

REMEMBERING ANTHONY MITCHELL



42 NEWS DESK

JASPER

REGIONAL NEWS

Who was Anthony 'Tony' Mitchell? Friends remember Walker County man who died in police custody

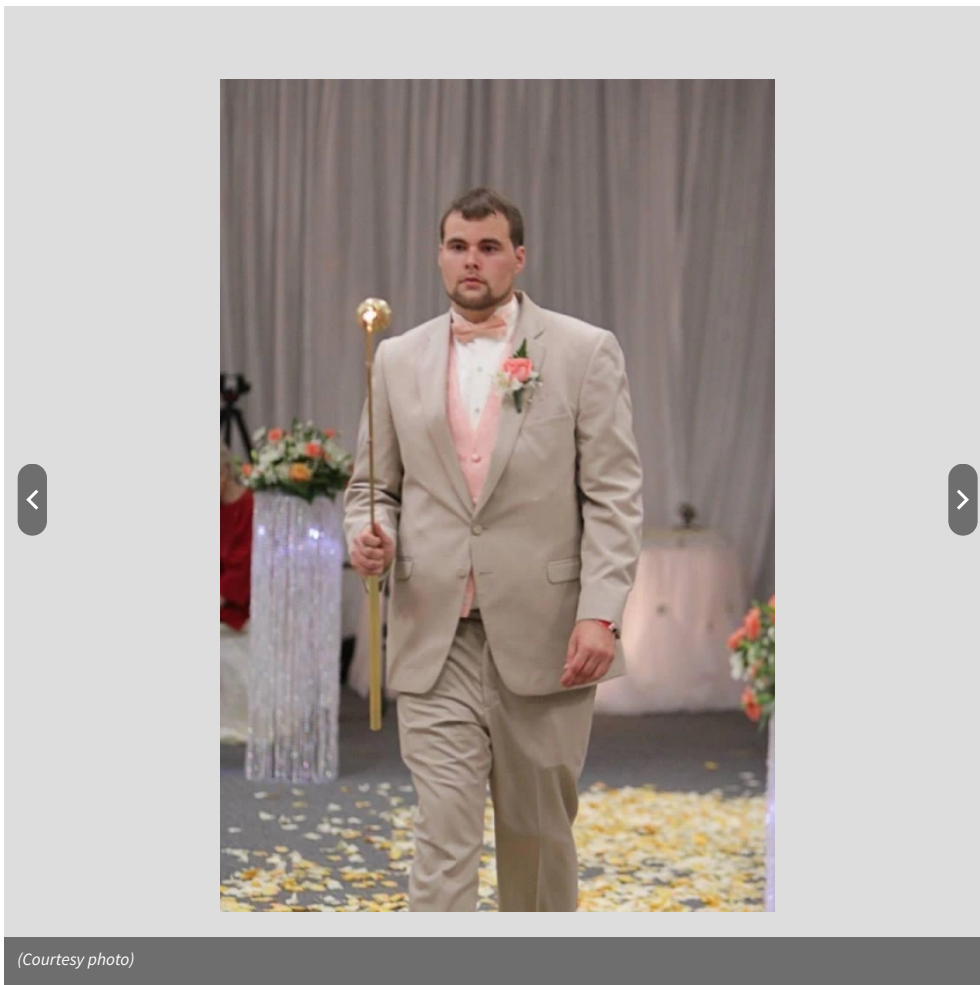
by: [Carly Laing](#), [Lee Hedgepeth](#)
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JASPER, Ala. (WIAT) – Friends and family are speaking out for the first time about [Anthony “Tony” Mitchell](#), the inmate who died while in the custody of the Walker County Sheriff’s Office.

[Jail surveillance video and multiple newly-filed lawsuits](#) surrounding the death of Anthony “Tony” Mitchell, who was incarcerated at the Walker County Jail, are raising concerns and outrage from friends and some in the community.

Those who spoke with CBS 42 said this is not how they want him to be remembered.



(Courtesy photo)



“Tony was a very a good person and he didn’t deserve any of this,” Jordan Wilson, a close friend of Mitchell’s, said Tuesday.

In light of a recent video and graphic images detailed in a wrongful death lawsuit filed by Mitchell’s mother, friends like Wilson are sharing their stories of Mitchell.

“We ended up having this huge group of Valley and Cordova kids who were like best friends through the end and Tony was always in it,” Wilson said.

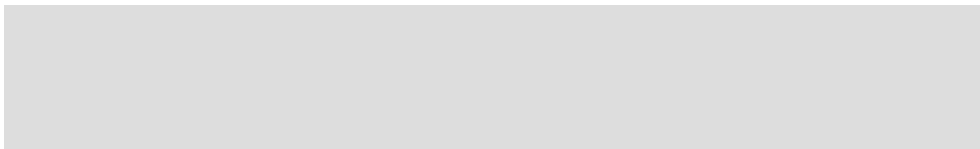
Mitchell was arrested on Jan. 13. The Walker County Sheriff’s Office posted information about the arrest on its Facebook page. The post included an unedited, full-body photo of Mitchell, whose face appeared to be spray-painted black.

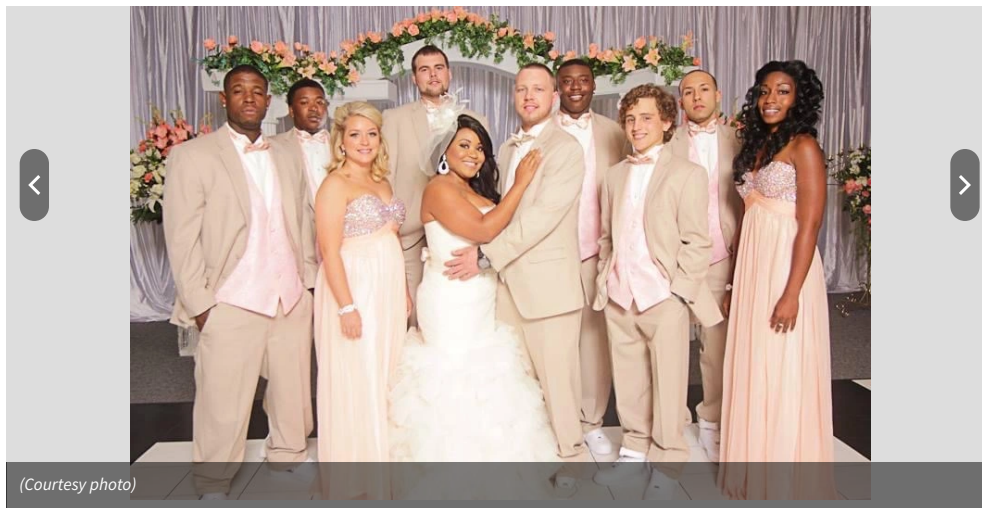
The photo, which was shared hundreds of times across social media and in multiple news outlets, garnered significant public pushback by those criticizing the “sensationalism” of the post.

According to Facebook records, the sheriff’s office edited the post later that day, cropping the photo to exclude Mitchell’s face.

Friends and family of Mitchell said the picture in the post shocked them. The picture, they said, is not how they wanted their friend to be remembered.

“When we got married, Tony actually walked our dog down the aisle. So, I always think about that. He loved our little Piglet so much,” Anitra Pearson said.





(Courtesy photo)



Pearson also went to high school with Mitchell. She said she couldn't believe it when she heard what happened to her friend.

"What happened to Tony was inhumane. And I think anybody who has watched the video can agree that nobody should be treated that way," Pearson said.

Cecily Bush, another classmate of Mitchell's, said she hopes his family gets answers.

"Life throws us a lot of challenges you know. And I don't want them looking at that and make it look like that was his life. He was a good person, and I hope he does get justice," Bush said.

CBS 42 reached out to the sheriff's office again for a comment on the video and the now two lawsuits filed against them. As of publication time, we have not heard back.

CBS 42 first reported on Monday that the family of Mitchell filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Walker County Sheriff Nick Smith and other jail personnel. Tuesday, former corrections officer Karen Kelly filed a [First Amendment lawsuit](#) against both the sheriff and the other personnel, arguing that she was fired in retaliation after she shared video that contradicted police statements about Mitchell's condition.

Mitchell's friends said they are thankful for the bravery of officer Kelly for sharing the video. They said they hope it shines a light on what they believe happened to Mitchell while in the care of the Walker County Sheriff's office.

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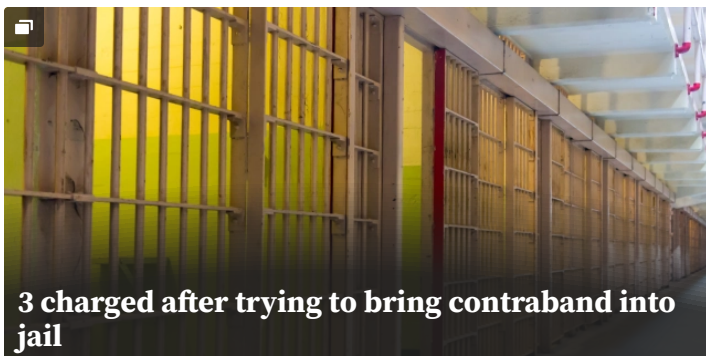
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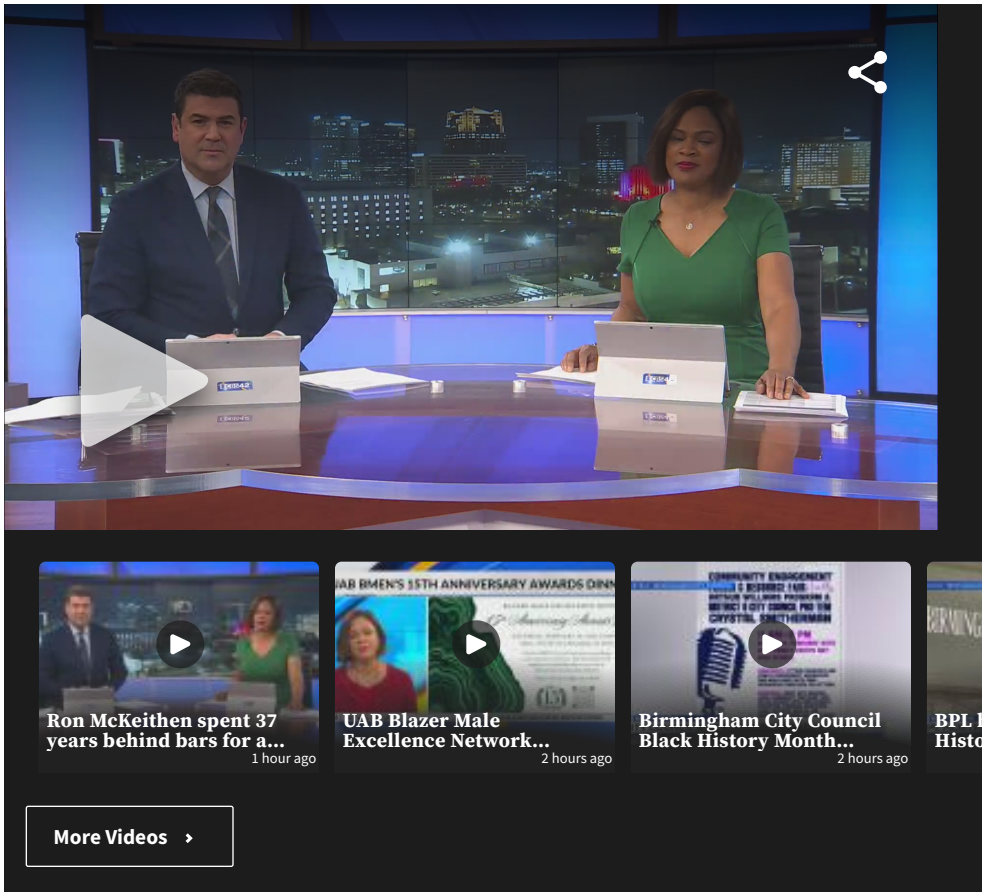
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CBS 42 Video



The main video shows a male anchor in a dark suit and a female anchor in a green top sitting at a news desk. The background is a cityscape at night. A play button is overlaid on the left side of the video. A share icon is in the top right corner.

Below the video are four video thumbnails:

- Ron McKeithen spent 37 years behind bars for a...** 1 hour ago
- UAB Blazer Male Excellence Network...** 2 hours ago
- Birmingham City Council Black History Month...** 2 hours ago
- BPL h Histor...**

A "More Videos" button with a right-pointing arrow is located at the bottom left of the video player area.

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- 4 Who was Anthony 'Tony' Mitchell?**
- 5 Police shooting left MS man hospitalized for weeks**

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Should not be

I'm not sure

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