



# WHY ANDY WON'T DIE

Almost a year after Andy Sallenger's fatal encounter with police, his family continues to seek "justice."

By Dusty Rhodes

**T**he homemade flyers appear all around town like a tragic folk art series. Some feature a snapshot of three smiling boys—a young father holding his two little sons. Some feature a morbid photo of that same father, bruised and bleeding, sustained by a ventilator and IVs. The text below the picture is always something sensational rendered in multi-colored Magic Marker: "Andrew (Andy) Sallenger, killed by 3 Spfld. IL. Policemen. Please, Stop The Brutality!!! Justice for All!"

In the 11 months since Andy Sallenger's death, his relatives and their supporters have distributed scores of these flyers. His siblings have become omnipresent at council meetings, candidates' debates, and the meetings of various activist groups. They march in protests; they help organize rallies.

Perhaps it's their constant presence that makes them so easy to dismiss. Perhaps it's their lack of education and polish, coupled with their downhome grit and twang. Or maybe it's their tendency to invent conspiracies and nefarious plots. But who can blame them? They are desperate to make sense of a senseless death.

The basic outline is, by now, familiar to anybody who follows the news in Springfield. One night last April, Andy's sister Kim called 911 to report that Andy

was walking around naked, breaking things in his room and talking to the cat. Her brother was "very psychotic . . . schizophrenic, bipolar, manic depressive," she told the dispatcher. Within a few minutes, three police officers arrived at the house and found Andy sitting "indian style" on his bedroom floor, nude and mumbling. Police say he lunged and they struggled to subdue him.

In police reports, two of the three officers detail how they sprayed Andy with pepper mace, applied pressure at sensitive points, and struck him several times with their fists. When these blows proved ineffective, they hit him repeatedly with their flashlights, using "baseball" type swings. After they had Andy handcuffed and hobbled, they noticed he had no pulse. He was taken to the hospital, but after a

day on life support Andy was pronounced dead. The Sangamon County coroner's inquest determined Andy died of "agitated delirium" and other natural causes. The Sallengers have retained an attorney, who plans to sue the City of Springfield. Whatever the outcome of this potential lawsuit, it's unlikely to illuminate the whole truth about Andy or about his long and colorful relationship with the Springfield Police Department. People who knew Andy—even people who aren't his kin—say the naked babbling lunatic police met that April night wasn't anything like the Andy they knew. The image of the SPD that night may be equally distorted. There are several other officers who had previously encountered Andy—even when he was in the grips of his most severe psychosis—and managed to handle him with patience and grace.

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Long before their final, fatal confrontation, Andrew Sallenger and the SPD had made headlines together: July 9, 1996—a day that found the SPD performing at its best, and Andy Sallenger behaving at his worst.

Andy was 30 and living in Olde Towne apartments with his wife Barbara and their two sons, Joey, then 12, and

Jacob, then 6 [their names have been changed to protect their privacy]. Andy and Barbara had been together for 13 years, but Barbara was exhausted by Andy's

erratic behavior. He had already been diagnosed bipolar, and he didn't always take his medication.

On July 2, she wrote Andy a note asking for a divorce and telling him he had to move out. Then she took the kids and went to stay with her grandmother.

Andy began calling, begging to just spend the Fourth of July holiday with his kids. Barbara agreed, dropping the boys off at their apartment, planning to pick them up at the beginning of the next week.

On July 9, Barbara had a friend drive her to the apartment, where Andy was waiting on the steps. He told her the boys were getting their shoes on and asked Barbara's friend if they could give him a ride to the store. When Barbara opened the car door for Andy to get in, he

pulled out a 9mm handgun and said, "Bitch, you're not going nowhere." He shoved the gun into her friend's mouth, then pushed him into the apartment's mailboxes.

Barbara's hair was long, past her hips; Andy wrapped a handful around his arm like he was winding up a length of rope and began dragging Barbara toward their apartment. She broke fingernails all along the outside wall, trying to find something to grab onto. A cable TV repairman in the parking lot called police, and a tense standoff began.

Within half an hour, Officer Steve Swetland reached Andy by phone, and Barbara noticed that Swetland's calls seemed to have a calming effect on Andy. Meanwhile, a police lieutenant contacted McFarland Mental Health Center, where Andy had previously been hospitalized, and found a doctor who explained Andy's mental condition. The doctor advised that if Andy was off medication he could be paranoid and delusional but probably not violent. Threats against Barbara should be taken seriously, but the children should be safe, the doctor said.

SPD's hostage negotiators eventually told Andy he would go to McFarland, rather than to jail, if he surrendered peacefully. Andy wouldn't believe the offer was legitimate unless he heard it from a particular McFarland counselor, who just happened to be out of town. It would be hours before the counselor could get to Springfield, but the police negotiators decided a quiet resolution was worth the wait.

After six hours, Andy told the police he was ready to surrender. His main concern was making sure his children would not see him handcuffed. He called his boys out of their bedroom, where they had been throughout the ordeal, gave them each a hug and a kiss, and walked outside into SPD custody. Aside from Barbara's friend, who sustained a minor injury when Andy pushed him into the mailboxes, no one got hurt.

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Barbara, who has since remarried, asked us not to use her surname. Her current husband, Brad, believes Barbara may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, due to her experiences with Andy.

"I think the brunt of his mental illness while they were together was directed towards Barbara. She was the devil," he

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Andy's mother, Mary Joanne Sallenger, in front of her home on Eastdale.



says.

But ironically that doesn't mean he thinks Andy was a bad person. "I could tell the moment I met his kids. They're both good kids, and Andy helped raise them. That right there told me he had to be OK. He was a good guy with a mental illness," Brad says.

Perhaps even more surprising is the obvious affection Barbara still has for her first husband. "I loved him more than anything in the world," she says. "I wanted to be with him the rest of my life. He was handsome, he was funny, he was a good person. He would do anything for me."

They met at Lanphier High School, when Andy was 17, Barbara just 16. Andy was in the work program and only went to school half-days. He worked at the Jolly Tamale on Dirksen.

"I lived on the north end of town, and he would come to my house, and then run to work. You know how far that is? Just to see me. And as soon as he'd get off work, he'd come back to my house. Even in the rain," Barbara says.

They had dated less than a full year when Joey was born in 1984. Their relationship was always full of drama, with numerous break-ups and reconciliations. They took out a marriage license in 1986, then finally got married in 1988. Jacob was born in 1989.

Though she didn't realize it at the time, Barbara believes Andy's first bout with mental illness occurred in 1989 or '90, when Andy would've been about 24 years old. For a couple of weeks, he believed that their neighbors worked for the FBI and were watching him and Barbara. "I didn't think anything of it," Barbara says. "I was young. I thought maybe they have something over there. I didn't know."

But a couple of years later, "all hell broke loose," Barbara says. Andy again became convinced he and Barbara were being watched, followed, and preyed upon. He wouldn't let her leave the house, wouldn't let the boys attend school. "He eventually took every mirror and every picture off our walls because he said there were cameras in them. It was awful," Barbara says.

Then one of Andy's brothers, Jeffrey "Buzz" Stubbs, was fatally shot. Grief sent Andy deeper into his disease. He couldn't sleep. He would leave for days at a time, always carrying his

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backpack full of "little trinket things." He came to believe that he was Jesus.

One day, when Barbara went to work, Andy told her he was going to the cemetery to find Buzz's grave. When Barbara got off work at 3 p.m., Andy was still wandering through the cemetery. "He said 'See the helicopters? They're following me here!'" There were no helicopters.

Barbara didn't know what to do. Her grandmother told her to talk to her pastor. But Barbara couldn't imagine the church helping Andy. Instead, she turned to the Springfield police. The officer she consulted explained to Barbara how she could go to the state's attorneys office, swear out a statement before a judge, and have Andy involuntarily committed. She did as the officer suggested, and Andy was taken immediately to McFarland Mental Health Center, where he spent several months.

"When he took his medication, he was the best person in the world. He was like Mr. OK, Mr. Alright," she says. When he wouldn't take it, she crushed the pills and slipped the powder into his beverages. He didn't have another major episode until the day he took her and the kids hostage.

Even that day, she says, she wasn't scared of him. "He just didn't want me to leave," she says, sadly. "He was like 'Please, I'll do whatever you want.' So I told him if he would just get some help, I'd stay with him. Even though of course I couldn't, for my kids' sake. They were in the next room, for God's sake."

That night, both children gave statements to police about what went on inside the apartment during the long standoff.

Officer R.L. Wiese interviewed 6-year-old Jacob:

"Jacob told me that his daddy was really mad at his mom and they were out in the hallway outside the apartment screaming. He was inside eating ice cream. Then his mommy and daddy came inside and daddy told him to go to his bedroom. He stayed in there 5 or 6 hours. He heard his mommy and daddy screaming some more but didn't see his daddy do anything to his mommy. He came out of his room and then the police came and took

his daddy. He wanted his daddy back.

"Jacob was very tired and hungry. . . . He seemed very loyal to his father and told me he was afraid he was going to get his daddy in trouble."

That was the last time Jacob or Joey saw Andy alive. Barbara never again felt she could entrust her children to Andy. Or, more specifically, to Andy's disease.

"Andy was a good father," she says. "He would do anything for his kids. I think till the day he died, he loved his kids."

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with alcohol and drug addiction. Kim Nolan, the sister who called 911 to get help the night Andy ended up dead, couldn't be interviewed for this story because she's in a residential treatment center. Her four children, who were also present the night of Andy's final episode, are currently in foster care.

The Sallengers know how these facts add up in most folks' eyes: "They call us trailer trash, white trash, poor trash," Bonnie says. The stereotypes roll off her back as easily as they roll off her tongue.

But anybody who looks even one layer deeper into this Faulknerian family finds one remarkable trait: They have the kind of intense



Mary Sallenger hasn't changed anything in Andy's room. Behind her is the broken lamp; to her right are kick-knacks undisturbed.

*Tonight I sit and gaze out of my window,  
watching the heavens cloud up and repair  
[sic] to shed its tears . . .*

*I try to figure out why:*

*What could ever sadden the heart of the heavens  
so very high above?*

*Does heaven experience pain such as I?*

*My oh my, what could possibly make the heavens  
sad enough to cry?*

Andy included this poem in one of the many letters he wrote to his youngest sister, Bonnie Burrello, during the three years he spent in prison for holding Barbara hostage. Bonnie says she never asked Andy whether he composed the poem or copied it from another source. But she is pretty certain he didn't write it himself.

"I have a feeling he copied it," she says. "I mean, it's got most of the words spelled right."

Spelling isn't the strong suit of the Sallenger family. Book learning doesn't appear to be top priority. In fact, when Andy earned his G.E.D. in prison, he became the most educated member of his family.

This lack of formal education is just one of the hardships faced by the Sallengers. Along with it comes poverty, service-sector jobs, cramped quarters in old houses, and worse: Andy was the third of his mother's nine children to die. His half-brother Buzz was shot to death in 1991; before that, his sister Tonya Sallenger was fatally burned in a pre-dawn house fire when she was five and Andy just four. And several of the surviving siblings struggle

bond seldom seen in families today. They live near each other, share meals together, hang out with one another as much as possible. They seem to crave the comfort of their kin.

For Andy, this craving was especially painful since he never got to know his father. The name Bernard Kurz is listed on Andy's death certificate as his biological father. The family says Kurz was a Roman Catholic priest. The local diocese confirms that a Bernard Kurz did serve several area parishes in the 1960s, but for reasons not recorded in his file Kurz was transferred to Wisconsin in 1972. Andy would've been about six years old.

About two years ago, Bonnie says, Andy began searching for Bernard Kurz in earnest. Andy's two older brothers had been Kurz's altar boys and remembered that he had a mental illness like Andy. But Andy discovered (and the local diocese confirms) that Kurz died in 1989.

What was even harder for Andy than never knowing his father was losing contact with his own two sons. In a letter written from the county jail, shortly after the hostage crisis, he described for Bonnie the severe depression he suffered after he stopped taking his medicine, the depression that precipitated the hostage ordeal. "I thought of suicide alot of times but I didn't want to miss out on the boys growing up," he wrote. "I didn't want to be around anybody or talk to anyone except my family."

His family had their own terms for Andy's episodes. "He's out there again," or "in one of his moods," they'd say. Bonnie says he was



Some of the Sallengers (clockwise from upper right): Andy, his mother Mary, his sister Kim, and his brother Eric.



**"They call us trailer trash, white trash, poor trash," says Andy's youngest sister, Bonnie Burrello. The stereotypes roll off her back as easily as they roll off her tongue.**

acutely self-conscious about his illness, paranoid about his paranoia. "He'd be sitting at my kitchen table with my husband and me, just sitting there talking about the weather, and all the sudden Andy would look at me— 'Bonnie? I didn't do anything, did I? Did I just say something crazy?' He didn't know if he slipped and did something crazy. He did not want people seeing him like that."

In late January of 2000, just nine months out of prison, Andy had a terrifying episode, detailed in a statement his then-girlfriend gave to Springfield police. The episode began on a Friday morning and became increasingly bizarre as the girlfriend, Debra (not her real name)—apparently unaccustomed to dealing with Andy's mental illness—tried to go along with his weird demands. Compounding the danger was Debra's two-year-old son, Travis, whose father Andy believed was about to take full custody.

On Saturday, Andy held a phone against Debra's ear and forced her to call authorities and say Travis was being sexually abused. The next day, Andy kept Debra's keys in his pocket and wouldn't let her leave, saying "predators" working for Satan were watching because he's the son of God.

He decided they could leave long enough to meet his family at the bingo hall, but warned her not to say anything to his mom "because she'll think I'm going crazy again." After bingo, he wanted to go to a hotel. But as soon as they settled into the room, Andy began talking again about Satan's predators again. He had Debra rub his back and recite Bible verses. Suddenly he decided they had to leave because "hotels were Satan's whorehouses."

Back at Debra's home, it got worse. Andy shoved a cross up her nose to remove "anything that Satan's helpers" had put in her head. He urinated in a glass and asked Debra if she wanted to "drink the fruit juice of my loins." When she refused, he dumped the urine in her lap.

At some point during the day on Monday, Debra and her son took a nap. They were awakened around 4 p.m. by Andy screaming that they had to leave and take all the "incriminating evidence" with them. Debra frantically packed clothes into bags and took them to the car. They drove around less than half an hour

before ending up at his mom's tiny house on Eastdale, across from the old Terminix plant.

As family members came and went, Andy moderated his behavior. Around his mother, Debra reports, he acted like "nothing was going on." After his mother left, Andy suddenly ordered Debra to go back home and gather all the remaining "incriminating evidence," including the trash, and bring it to his mother's house. But he wouldn't let Debra drive; he called his brother to get her. And he wouldn't let Debra take her baby, Travis, with her. In fact, Andy told her, if she didn't return within half an hour, she would never see Travis again.

When Andy's brother, Tim, arrived, found Debra in tears, and learned he was supposed to go get trash from her house, he knew instantly what was happening. He

said, "Oh my God, he's doing it again."

After some confusion over whether the Sallenger home was in Capital Township or not (it's on the border), Springfield police officers were summoned. They found the house locked and apparently just waited outside. After about 10 minutes, Andy allowed a family friend who was the only other adult in the house to leave. Approximately 20 minutes later, Andy popped out the front door and set little Travis on the porch, naked but wrapped in a blanket.

The police report doesn't say what happened after Andy released the toddler. But the Sallenger family recalls that officers stayed on the scene to help them get Andy to the hospital. Neither Debra nor the family friend wanted to press charges. In their report, the police officers classified this potentially volatile incident as "Mental Illness (No crime)."

Asked how this episode ranks on a scale of one to 10, with 10 being most severe, Andy's sister Bonnie rates this incident a "15 or 20." She had never known about the episode with Debra and Travis, and she cries as she listens to the details. Andy's mother, Mary Sallenger, has to leave the room momentarily. Even for a family familiar with mental illness, this story is excruciating. It's not the Andy they knew.

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Vicki Harness, a registered nurse 10 years Andy's senior, was his girlfriend the last year and a half of his life. She lives in Quincy and estimates Andy spent three-quarters of his time with her. She knew he had been hospitalized at McFarland and that he had prescription medication, but he told her his problem was depression, and she didn't pry.

Besides, she said, if she had found his medicine, looked it up, and discovered it was for schizophrenia, she would have assumed it was prescribed to treat something else. That's how certain Vicki felt that Andy was not schizophrenic.

"The whole time I was with him, I never knew," she says. "He was just a really nice, kind, caring person—the person I could talk to about anything. He always saw the good in everything."

Late last April, Andy and Vicki drove to

Springfield so Andy could spend a few days with his folks. Vicki was planning to get back to Quincy, but she fell and broke her foot. The accident upset Andy, because it happened at his mother's house, and he wanted Vicki to stay so they could take care of her. She stayed one night, and she noticed Andy's behavior begin to change. It was so troubling, she got up and talked to his mother, Mary.

"I told her he's flighty, his thought processes aren't good, he's short with me—what's going on? And she said what do you mean? So obviously, she didn't see it," Vicki recalls.

Vicki returned to Quincy, but over the next few days she talked more with Mary, mainly because Andy didn't call (another strange thing, since he loved to talk on the phone). Slowly, Mary and Andy's sister Kim began to tell Vicki the truth about Andy's illness. "It was all just a shock to me," Vicki says.

The evening of Sunday, April 28, they called to tell her Andy was missing.

He had simply walked out of the house and wandered away. Vicki had to ask herself how she would feel if Andy suddenly appeared on her doorstep—not the Andy she knew, but the schizophrenic Andy. "I thought, would I be afraid of him? Mentally ill people—you can't really reason with them," Vicki says. "But I decided, no, I was not afraid. I knew he would never hurt anybody, especially me."

As it turned out, Andy had wandered only a few blocks away and knocked on the door of a house on Pope Street. The lady who answered the door called Springfield police, who later found Andy at a nearby church. Police reports

say Andy was lying on the floor, being held down by church members who were performing an exorcism on him. The officers found him "limp," so they called for an ambulance. "Salenger [sic] was taken outside . . . where he began to jerk his body around violently while on his stomach. Salenger was handcuffed for officer safety reasons," the report says. The officer then ran a background check and discovered that Andy had an outstanding warrant for fishing without a license near Quincy. On that charge, he was taken to jail, with a brief stop at Memorial Hospital for a psychiatric evaluation.

The Sallengers' version of events that Sunday night was slightly different. The next

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### **The name Bernard Kurz is listed on Andy's death certificate as his biological father. Kurz was a Roman Catholic priest.**

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day, after they got Andy out of jail, he told his family, "Those cops stomped me like a cigarette butt."

The Sallengers say they spent Monday trying to get Andy involuntarily committed to the state mental hospital. Since he hadn't threatened anyone, he didn't qualify.

That night, he played cards with Kim's kids past 10:30. Around midnight, he called Vicki to make sure she was still planning to come to Springfield the next day, and she assured him that she was. He told her had a bad headache, and said, "You wouldn't believe what those cops

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did to me. They beat me.” But their conversation was brief. “He was too disorganized in his thoughts,” Vicki says.

She was still asleep the next morning when her phone rang. It was Andy’s brother, Tim, and he was crying.

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Sometime in the middle of the night, Kim Nolan woke up to the sound of the front door banging. She got up and looked into the hallway. Andy was coming in the front door, naked. Kim started getting her four children dressed and ready to leave the house.

Andy’s relatives insist they weren’t scared of him. Kim, whose children were already under DCFS supervision, says she wanted to make sure they weren’t in any unhealthy environment. So she and her mom chose to pack four kids into the van and drive to a payphone rather than ask Andy to give them the cordless phone from his room.

At Road Ranger, Kim called 911. A tape of the call shows Kim sounding anxious, but not frantic. She tells the dispatcher that Andy had been arrested on a fishing warrant, and that he was now “very psychotic . . . schizophrenic bipolar manic depressive.” She says he is naked, yelling that he’s sorry, “breaking all kinds of stuff,” and has the cat locked in his bedroom. “They’re going to need a lot of backup because he is out there bad and he’s very strong,” Kim tells the dispatcher. “And will you send the paramedics too?”

“For what?” asks the dispatcher.

“To take him! I mean he’s very, you know, he’s very psychotic. I mean, he’s running around naked in front of the kids and everything,” Kim says.

But throughout this conversation, the dispatcher is trying to find the Sallenger’s street on her computer. The address is on Eastdale—all one word—but the dispatcher thinks Kim is saying two words, like the eastern portion of a street named Dale, Dial, Dale Davis, Dale Road . . . and Kim never clarifies that the street name is one word. The dispatcher finally locates the address and says she’ll “get somebody to you.”

After a minute, a male operator dispatches the call to officers, requesting two cars to go to a “disturbance” involving “Andrew Sallenger . . . breaking things in residence, causing a problem.” Kim’s entire list of Andy’s mental problems somehow evaporates. This dispatcher

### When police were called to the Sallenger house, the dispatcher never mentioned that Andy was mentally ill.

never mentions that Andy is mentally ill. Nor does he contact paramedics.

According to official written and verbal reports given by the police officers involved in the incident, this is what happened at the Sallenger house:

The first officer to arrive is Brian Oakes. He meets Kim a block or so from the house, and she tells him Andy is “highly agitated and he doesn’t like you guys.” Oakes asks dispatch to send a third officer.

The second officer to arrive is Sergeant James Zimmerman. While they wait for the third officer, Zimmerman and Oakes decide they will arrest Andy for disorderly conduct, “if there was no other evidence to prove otherwise.”

The third officer to arrive is Jason Oliver. Oakes tells him Andy “would probably fight with officers”—because officers had fought with him a day earlier—and is “highly agitated.” Kim may have also mentioned that Andy had “mental problems” and “needed to go somewhere,” Oliver recalls later.

Kim tells the officers the back door is open. As the three officers line up at the door, Zimmerman calls Andy’s name. Hearing no response, he announces that police are coming in.

The house is almost entirely dark. The officers proceed through the kitchen, the living room, and the hallway. Through an open bedroom door, Oakes sees Andy sitting “indian style” on the floor, naked and mumbling. Zimmerman says, “Andy? Are you OK?”

Andy lobs a small white object—probably an ashtray—toward Zimmerman, but it hits the doorjamb. Andy says, “Oh, it’s you (expletives)! Get out of my house!” He stands and approaches the officers with his fists clenched. Oakes sprays him with pepper mace as Andy grabs Zimmerman’s shoulder. Zimmerman and Andy fall into the room, with the officer landing on top of Andy.

For the next several minutes, the officers struggle to get control of Andy so they can handcuff him. Andy resists—thrashing about wildly, “jerking his body violently,” trying to raise himself off the floor. At one point, he manages to get into a crawling stance, then in a kneeling position with his upper body on the



bed. As he fights, he occasionally grunts and says “Get the (expletive) out of my house” and “I’m gonna kill you guys!” The officers continually tell Andy, “Stop resisting, you are under arrest.” During the struggle, a lamp is broken and the room is dark, illuminated only by the officers’ flashlights.

Following the police department policy of “force continuum,” Oakes and Oliver increase the intensity of their efforts. Oliver tries using pressure under Andy’s nose and behind his ear, then a series of closed-fist punches to Andy’s right shoulder. Oakes delivers a half-dozen punches to the back of Andy’s right thigh. When those prove ineffective, he uses his flashlight to deliver nine more “baseball swing” blows. Finally, the officers succeed in getting the handcuffs on. Zimmerman, who was hit by some of the pepper mace sprayed at Andy, leaves the room to rinse his eyes. Oakes radios dispatch to request the van SPD uses to transport combative arrestees. When he learns the van is temporarily unavailable, he asks for a backup unit.

But Andy strains against the handcuffs and continues to try to stand up, even grabbing for Oliver’s duty belt. Oakes delivers three more flashlight blows to Andy’s thigh, then gets on the radio again to urge backup units to hurry. By this time, the officers have been struggling with Andy more than 10 minutes.

Oakes suddenly remembers he has a hobble—a specially configured piece of rope used to secure ankles—and Zimmerman runs outside to get it from Oakes’ car. Kim follows Zimmerman into the house, flips on the bedroom’s overhead light, sees the officers applying the hobble, and leaves. The officers connect the hobble to Andy’s handcuffs. Then they “disengage” to see if he stopped resisting.

A minute or two later, the officers notice Andy isn’t breathing. In quick order, they roll him over onto his side, check for a pulse, and, finding none, remove the hobble, begin first-aid, and call for an ambulance.

At St. John’s Hospital, Andy spent a day on life-support. No one, not even his siblings, held out much hope. It was more of a merciful transitional phase, a time for them to ease into the realization that Andy was gone.

An autopsy performed by a dual-degreed doctor/attorney found that Andy died of “cardiorespiratory arrest during prone police restraint, due to excited or agitated delirium.” Contributing factors cited by this doctor include “mental illness, cardiomegaly (enlarged heart), fatty liver, and obesity.”

Andy’s relatives—Bonnie, in particular—have pored over every document they could get their hands on. They have questions they want answered: What caused the large contusion on the left side of Andy’s head? What caused the “subdural hematoma” on the left side of his brain? And how did four men—each at least 200 pounds—fight violently in a tiny bedroom without jostling knick-knacks on the



### **The autopsy cites “cardiomegaly (enlarged heart),” but just hours before Andy’s death a radiology report states “cardiac size is normal.”**

shelves?

Some of the family’s opinions may sound far-fetched: For example, they insist that pepper spray wasn’t used on Andy but that one officer must have had a stun gun. They base this on patterned marks they saw on Andy’s body and on what they say was the stench of burning hair in his room.

But they have some opinions that seem more reasonable: For example, their refusal to believe Andy’s heart was enlarged is based on the radiology report stating “cardiac size is normal” just hours before he died.

“There is no cut-and-dried cause of death,” says Vicki, the nurse who was Andy’s last girlfriend. “You would think an autopsy with a good pathologist would be able to pinpoint a definite cause of death. The family deserves that.”

Bonnie has her own colorful version of what she believes happened to Andy. “We’re not saying these cops intentionally came here to kill Andy. But they did let their hormones and their testosterone and their big hangly-danglies get the best of them,” she says. “They just went too far.”

Bonnie is the one protesting, lobbying, pestering, pleading, begging for “justice.” Vicki, in an attempt to move on with her life, takes a somewhat more cynical view.

“Nobody really knows what happened in that room besides those three police officers and Andy,” she says. “Is anybody ever going to do anything about it? No.” u