

# Murder-suicide victim's five daughters face trauma of shooting, contemplate life without her | Crime/Police

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BY KATIE GAGLIANO | Staff writer, Katie Gagliano

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As Kawanna Felix's family enters a new period of mourning, her five daughters are sizing up a future without the bedrock of their family.

The 43-year-old mother of five was mourned Friday with a visitation at Kinchen Funeral Home and a service at Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church on Martin Luther King Jr. Drive.

[Felix was one of three people killed](#) by [her estranged husband, 36-year-old Andres Jamall Felix](#), in a rampage on Oct. 4; the other victims were Ross Chaisson, 29, and Paige Lewis, 25. After the killings, each of which happened at different locations, Andres Felix drove to a relative's home and killed himself, police said.

The family's pain extends beyond the loss of a family member, said Mandalyn Mitchell, a half sister to one of Kawanna Felix's children.

Kawanna Felix's youngest two daughters were home at the time of the shooting, and her daughters Bernazia Shelvin and Dataishia Comeaux were on FaceTime with her.

One of her daughters attempted to throw herself in front of Kawanna Felix to prevent the shooting, but Andres Felix walked around her to fire on her mother, Mitchell said.

Shelvin and Comeaux heard over the phone his arrival, his threats to shoot and the chaos as Kawanna Felix ordered her children and other family members into her home in the 100 block of Clara Street and out of the line of fire, followed by her screaming, "No!" and the sound of gunfire, she said.

Mitchell, who lives in New Orleans, picked up her half sister Shelvin from Dillard University, where she's studying nursing, and drove her to Lafayette in the aftermath.

"We literally held hands all the way from New Orleans to Lafayette while she sat on the passenger side in silence and in tears because she didn't know for sure what she was walking into. ... She said, 'Mandalyn, I don't feel her anymore. She didn't make it.' At that point, it's just like I had to turn on a gospel song, Marvin Sapp's 'He Has His Hands on You.' That's all I could do," Mitchell said.

Unfortunately, the family is not a stranger to gun violence.

Mitchell and Shelvin's father was shot and killed when the younger was 4 years old, and several years ago, Comeaux, Kawanna Felix's eldest daughter, was shot by an intimate partner and paralyzed from the waist down. She was pregnant at the time and carried and gave birth to her second daughter while paralyzed, Mitchell said.

"They're not bad people at all; it's just the circumstances that life has unfortunately presented," she said.

The 30-year-old Lafayette native said she's referred her sister and her siblings to counseling services to process through the trauma.

Though Shelvin is her only blood relation, Mitchell said she considers all of the girls family and she's doing her best to support where she can — it's what Kawanna Felix would have wanted and expected, she said.

The two women developed a bond when Shelvin began expressing an interest in college. Mitchell has a bachelor's degree from Southeastern University and a master's degree in business from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and she partnered with her sister's mother to put together a college plan for Shelvin and help her become the first in her family to graduate college.

"I will not fail at making sure that her vision for my sister and her dream for my sister becomes a reality. I won't stop at anything," she said.

Mitchell, like others, described Kawanna Felix as a “superwoman.” She cared for everyone — her children, grandchildren, her mother — and would step up to help when other family or friends were in need. She always found a way to help, even when things were difficult, Mitchell said.

It’s going to take time before everyone fully processes her absence, Mitchell said.

Two of Kawanna Felix’s daughters had birthdays in the two weeks since she died. Shelvin has returned to school, where she started clinicals for nursing. They’re trying their best to live up to their mother’s expectations, which would be to get up and keep moving, Mitchell said.

“I think we’re all getting by on our faith in God and our trust in his strength. Just knowing that he is going to carry us through. I would be extremely dishonest and not transparent if I didn’t explain how difficult and, honestly, unreal this all seems. I think we all are waking up day by day in the twilight zone,” Mitchell said.

She said the family’s situation moving forward is fairly dire.

The youngest children are now orphaned.

Kawanna Felix’s two youngest daughters and Dataishia Comeaux’s two daughters, whom Kawanna Felix cared for, will now be cared for by Kawanna Felix’s 24-year-old daughter, Mercedes Comeaux, who has two sons herself. The family is looking into 24/7 care for Dataishia Comeaux, who wants to live independently but still struggles with health complications related to her paralysis, Mitchell said.

There is no life insurance policy or money set aside to buoy the family until they get to a more stable place.

“It’s awful, honestly,” Mitchell said.

A [GoFundMe Mitchell established for the family](#) had raised \$7,740 as of Friday afternoon. On Wednesday, she said the family was about \$2,000 short of covering funeral costs with the funds raised. She said she’s hopeful the [community will rally around the family](#).

“We talk about ‘Lafayette Strong.’ I think this is the time where we’re supposed to come together and demonstrate that. We’re Lafayette natives all our lives and we’re asking for that Lafayette motto that we demonstrate here ... for everyone to show up and show out for these girls so that their future can be totally different than what their past and present have been,” Mitchell said.