

# Canton, Ohio police officer fatally shoots man during New Year's celebration just minutes into 2022

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A police officer in Canton, Ohio fatally shot a man just minutes into the new year as he fired a gun in the air to celebrate the advent of 2022. Marquetta Williams told Cleveland 19 News she was only feet away from her husband, James Williams, a 46-year-old father of six, when he was shot. According to Marquetta the officer opened fire on him without warning.

Williams said she and her husband had used an AR-15 rifle she owns to fire celebratory shots in the air early Saturday, a common practice in many working-class neighborhoods across the US. She added that the gunfire was an annual tradition in their neighborhood, and that many neighbors also fired shots in the area that night.

“The kids were watching the countdown and we were going outside to shoot guns like everybody else does at New Year’s,” she said.

The couple came back into their house after firing a few rounds, but James decided to go back outside and shoot some more, Marquetta said. She told Cleveland 19 News James fired four shots into the air, standing inside their enclosed wooden fence while Marquetta stood close by in the doorway. However, once James turned to come back inside, he told her, “I’ve been shot.”

“I could see the blood splattering across his shirt,” Williams said. “He collapsed in the living room.”

She also said James was behind a six foot high fence, adding: “You can’t see in. You can’t see out.”

Williams immediately called 911. When she opened her door, she said “There were 30-something officers with guns pointing at us, telling us to get down and come out of the house with our hands up.”

James Williams was taken to a hospital but was

pronounced dead there a short time later.

In a press release statement, Canton Police Chief Jack Angelo claimed police were investigating reports of gunfire when a responding officer who was outside his vehicle confronted someone who began shooting a firearm. The official police account claims the officer feared for his safety and fired his service weapon at Williams, striking him.

Police have so far declined to comment further on the incident, but confirmed Williams was pronounced dead at 12:27 a.m. in a hospital a few blocks away from his home.

The officer involved in the shooting has been placed on administrative duty and their name has not been released. The Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation has launched an investigation into the incident, gathering all evidence, including body camera footage and firearms, none of which has been revealed to the public.

Marquetta said no officers identified themselves before the shooting occurred.

“Out of the blue, he said he got shot, he got hit,” she said. “I don’t know where it came from. Nobody said anything. They didn’t say, ‘Police.’ They didn’t say, ‘Freeze.’ They didn’t say, ‘Drop your weapon.’ They just shot him.”

When asked by 19 News about the officer who shot her husband, she said: “His life was in danger, because you didn’t announce yourself. That’s cold-blooded and I’m not going to rest until he does get justice, period.”

“My husband was a good man, and he didn’t deserve to die this way,” Marquetta told Yahoo News. “He was loved. He was lovable and kind. He would give you the shirt off his back... He shouldn’t have died the way that

he did. I just want justice for him.

Williams told reporters protests and a vigil were planned for her late husband in the coming days.

Despite mass protests demanding an end to police violence and high profile convictions, including of George Floyd's killer, Derek Chauvin, the rate of police killings in the US has remained defiantly steady. According to Mapping Police Violence, police killed 1,117 people in 2021, for an average of just over three killings per day, similar to previous years.



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