



Ohio Attorney General's Office
Bureau of Criminal Investigation
Investigative Report



2022-0001

Officer Involved Critical Incident - 2307 10th Street SW, Canton, Ohio

Investigative Activity: News Articles Obtained; News Videos Obtained;
Subpoenas Served
Involves: Marquetta Williams (W), 19 News (O), The Repository (O)
Activity Date: 1/18/2022
Activity Location: Online Websites
Authoring Agent: SA Charles Moran #67

Narrative:

On January 18, 2022, at 1545 hours, Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) Special Agent (SA) Chuck Moran (Moran) obtained a video from the 19 News website related to the incident and officer-involved shooting that occurred in Canton, Ohio, on January 1, 2022.

Previously, on January 7, 2022, SA Moran learned about two news articles and news videos involving Marquetta Williams (Marquetta). The news articles and videos were from 19 News (www.cleveland19.com) and from The Repository (www.cantonrep.com). After reviewing the articles and videos, it appeared that the statement that Marquetta provided BCI agents after the incident on January 1, 2022, was different that the statements she provided to the news organizations.

The main differences that SA Moran noted were the following:

- Marquetta told BCI agents that she was upstairs in the second-floor bathroom when James Williams (James) was firing the rifle and was shot by the officer and she did not see any part of it. She told the reporter that she was standing next to James when the shooting happened.
- Marquetta told BCI agents that no one else had been outside shooting firearms during the evening. Marquetta told the news reporter that all of the adults were outside shooting firearms at 2359 hours. The DVR video recordings from the cameras outside Marquetta's residence showed James Williams, Jermal Monday and Janairul Williams shooting firearms while Marquetta used a mobile phone to video or photograph the activity. Marquetta also went outside and shot a pistol while James Williams used a mobile phone to video or photograph the activity.

On January 7, 2022, SA Moran sent an email to Stark County Assistant Prosecutor Mlinar requesting subpoenas be issued to 19 News and to The Repository for the full, unedited video footage of the news videos and articles involving Marquetta.

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Below is the link for the news article and video from 19 News:

<https://www.cleveland19.com/2022/01/04/wife-man-shot-killed-by-canton-police-officer-says-husband-was-put-unsafe-situation/>

Below is the link for the news article and video from The Repository:

<https://www.cantonrep.com/story/news/2022/01/03/wife-canton-man-killed-police-during-new-years-eve-celebration/9078516002/>

On January 14, 2022, SA Moran spoke with Attorney Dave Thomas (Thomas) by phone. He indicated that he was the attorney representing The Repository. Attorney Thomas indicated that he and The Repository objected to the subpoena. Attorney Thomas indicated that the news article and video were on The Repository website. Attorney Thomas also sent SA Moran an email about the subpoena.

On January 17, 2022, SA Moran received an email from Attorney Kaitlin Gurney (Gurney). The email contained a letter in response to the subpoena issued.

The letter indicated that 19 News (WOIO) objected to the subpoena because it sought "newsgathering materials" protected from disclosure by Ohio's reporter shield law, Ohio Revised Code 2739.04, Article I, Section 11 of the Ohio Constitution and the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The letter stated, "WOIO states that it does not possess full, unedited, or raw video recordings or any audio recordings of Ms. Mazur's interview involving Marquetta Williams other than what is already posted online."

SA Moran made PDF versions of the news articles posted on the 19 News website and The Repository website. The links for the articles are listed above.

SA Moran made a screen recording of the news video posted on the 19 News website with the article.

SA Moran made a screen recording of the news video posted on The Repository website with the article.

This document is the property of the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation and is confidential in nature. Neither the document nor its contents are to be disseminated outside your agency except as provided by law - a statute, an administrative rule, or any rule of procedure.



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Reference Items:

The screen recordings of the news videos were copied to a disc and were submitted to the BCI case file as reference item E.

Attachments:

The news articles (PDF) from the 19 News website and The Repository website were attached to this report. The email and letter received from Attorney Gurney were attached to this report. The email received from Attorney Thomas was attached to this report.

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Wife of man shot, killed by Canton police officer says husband was put in unsafe situation



By [Kristin Mazur](#)

Published: Jan. 3, 2022 at 10:36 PM EST



CANTON, Ohio (WOIO) - The wife of a Canton man shot and killed by a police officer on New Years Day is demanding justice, saying her husband was the one placed in an unsafe situation by police.

According to Canton police, officers went to the 2300 block of 10th Street SW on Saturday after getting a call about shots being fired.

Police said an officer confronted a man on scene and that the man started shooting.

Canton Police Chief Jack Angelo said the officer feared for his safety and shot the man.

The man was taken to the hospital where he later died.

Williams wife Marquetta told 19 News that they were in their backyard firing in the new year when the shooting happened.

"My husband and I both went out there to shoot guns in the air, like everybody does to celebrate," Williams said.

She said James, known by friends and family as Roe, was behind a 6-foot high wooden privacy fence

"You can't see in. You can't see out," she said.

Marquetta said her husband wasn't firing at an officer, rather still shooting into the air and even more, didn't know police were on the other side of their fence.

"We didn't know who it was when it happened because nobody said anything. They didn't say: 'Stop, freeze, police!' Nothing, they just shot him," she told 19 News.

Williams said her husband was the one put in the unsafe situation, not the police officer.

"His life was in danger, because you didn't announce yourself," Williams said. "That's cold-blooded and I'm not going to rest until he does get justice, period."

She told 19 News plans for protests are in the works, along with a vigil for her husband.

A spokesperson for the Ohio BCI said no officers were injured in the shooting.

The officer is on administrative leave, which Canton police said is a common procedure.

Ohio BCI will investigate the shooting, and the spokesperson said their investigation is active and ongoing.

A request for body camera footage has been made by 19 News.

This is a developing story. Return to 19 News for updates.

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Charles Moran

From: Gurney, Kaitlin <gurneyK@ballardspahr.com>
Sent: Monday, January 17, 2022 1:10 PM
To: Charles Moran
Subject: Grand Jury Subpoena Addressed to WOIO
Attachments: 2022.01.17 Letter re WOIO Grand Jury Subpoena DMFIRM_401434332(1).PDF

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Special Agent Moran:

Attached please find a letter addressed to you and Ms. Mlinar responding to the subpoena served on WOIO News Director Ian Rubin. Please contact me directly with any questions or concerns.

Best regards,
Kaitlin Gurney

Kaitlin M. Gurney

2021 Pro Bono Honor Roll – Gold



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January 17, 2022

Kristen L. Mlinar, Esq.
Stark County Prosecutor's Office
110 Central Plaza South, Suite 510
Canton, Ohio 44702
Via First Class Mail

Charles Moran
Special Agent
Bureau of Criminal Investigation
Office of Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost
Via Email Charles.Moran@ohioattorneygeneral.gov

Re: *State of Ohio v. Investigation (Stark County C.P., No case number assigned)*

Dear Ms. Mlinar and Special Agent Moran,

This firm represents WOIO Channel 19 News in Cleveland. Our client has referred to us a subpoena it received from you addressed to News Director Ian Rubin. Please direct any further communications regarding this matter to me.

Your subpoena requested:

- Full, and/or unedited, and/or raw video recording(s) and audio recording(s) of an interview conducted by 19 News reporter Kristen Mazur involving Marquetta Williams in Canton, Ohio on 1/3/2022 and/or 1/4/2022, for a news article/report titled, "Wife of man shot, killed by Canton police officer says husband was put in unsafe situation."
- Any still images or photographs taken during the interview.

WOIO objects to the subpoena to the extent that it seeks newsgathering materials protected from disclosure by Ohio's reporter's shield law, Ohio Rev. Code § 2739.04, Article I, Section 11 of the Ohio Constitution, and the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Without waiving the foregoing, WOIO states that it does not possess full, unedited, or raw video recordings or any audio recordings of Ms. Mazur's interview involving Marquetta Williams other than what is already posted online, including at:

- <https://www.cleveland19.com/2022/01/04/wife-man-shot-killed-by-canton-police-officer-says-husband-was-put-unsafe-situation/>

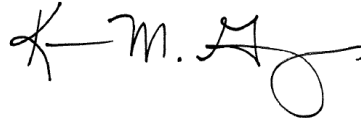
Kristen L. Mlinar, Esq. and Special Agent Charles Moran
January 17, 2022
Page 2

- <https://www.cleveland19.com/2022/01/05/canton-police-release-video-fatal-officer-involved-shooting-new-years-day-graphic/>

The second link contains a livestream of the events recorded. WOIO also does not have any still images or photographs taken during the interview.

We trust that this resolves your requests and that there will be no further need to involve the station in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K.M. Gurney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Kaitlin Gurney

cc: WOIO

NEWS

Widow: "They didn't say, 'Police.' They didn't say, 'Freeze.' ... They just shot him."

Lori Steineck The Repository

Published 4:34 p.m. ET Jan. 3, 2022 | Updated 5:49 p.m. ET Jan. 4, 2022

CANTON – Nine-year-old Ja'Lia Williams pointed out the blood spots on the living room floor where her father fell following the family's New Year's Eve celebration.

James Williams, 46, had been blasting celebratory gunfire to ring in the new year when a police officer shot him to death minutes after midnight, firing through the family's enclosed wooden security fence, which is 6 feet high, according to his wife, Marquetta Williams.

"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."

Marquetta Williams said she was standing only a foot or two from her husband inside the back door at their 10th Street SW home when he fired four shots into the air. James Williams turned to follow her inside and then told her, "I've been shot."

Police Chief Jack Angelo has asked the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation to investigate, turning over police body camera footage which has not yet been released to the public.

The chief issued a news release Saturday saying that Williams was armed when police responded at 12:06 a.m. to gunfire at his house in the 2300 block of 10th Street SW. The release said "... the officer, who was outside of his vehicle, confronted a subject that began shooting a firearm. The officer, in fear for his safety, fired his duty weapon at the subject and struck him."

Police have declined to comment beyond the initial news release from Angelo.

More: Second victim emerges from fatal shooting in Canton

More: Man killed on 17th Street NW in Canton

Harry Campbell, chief investigator of the Stark County Coroner's Office, said Williams was pronounced dead at 12:27 a.m. Sunday at Aultman Hospital, which is only a few blocks from Williams' home.

The officer, who has not been identified, has been placed on administrative leave, as is policy in an officer-involved shooting.

'We were going outside to shoot guns like everybody else does at New Year's.'

Williams' wife told The Canton Repository that she never saw an officer before her husband was shot.

The father of six girls, James Williams was at home New Year's Eve with his wife and three of their daughters, his mother's cousin and her nephew-in-law.

The girls were watching TV and, at midnight, "when the ball dropped," the adults stepped out the side door into the enclosed patio, Marquetta Williams said.

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

She said her husband used her AR-15 and fired into the air as they heard their neighbors firing guns into the air, too. He does not have a concealed carry permit, but she does, she said, adding that the gun belongs to her.

"We do this every year because it was New Year's Eve," she said. "Everybody (in the neighborhood) was shooting. It was a tradition. Everybody shoots on New Year's Eve."

After he fired off a few rounds, they stepped back inside and, a few seconds later, he wanted to fire off a few more rounds. He fired four times as he stood just outside their side door, about a foot away from her, still inside the enclosed patio.

She said he stepped back into the house and he told her he'd been hit.

"I could see the blood splattering across his shirt," she said. "He collapsed in the living room."

Marquetta Williams called 911 and by the time she opened the door, "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."

In a 911 recording released to the newspaper on Monday, a woman can be heard telling the dispatcher, "My husband is shot."

On Monday morning, Beacon Academy Principal Cami Lewis went to the family's house. Lewis said the girls attend her school, and she was preparing to send food, school counselors and other resources to the home.

Holes could be seen in the fencing where, Marquetta Williams said, the bullets had passed through

'He loved spending time with his kids.'

Ja'Lia Williams said her father cooked brunch on New Year's Eve, a meal of bacon, eggs and biscuits.

"That was the last meal he cooked," she said.

Her mother explained that James Williams loved to cook, often making their favorites, spaghetti and macaroni and cheese.

He had a massive hat collection and, she said, "He was a die-hard Detroit Lions and Detroit Pistons fan. He's from Detroit. He doesn't care if they were losing or not, he still rooted for them."

The Detroit native attended the University of Akron where he studied criminal justice before moving to Canton. The family also lived in Indiana for a short time.

And, she said, "he loved spending time with his kids."

A stay-at-home father, Williams had four daughters ages 9 through 15 and two step-daughters. Family photos decorating the living room show him proudly grinning in the middle of his large family.

"My husband was a good man, and he didn't deserve to die this way," Marquetta Williams said. "He was loved. He was lovable and kind. He would give you the shirt off of his back. ... He's going to be dearly missed. He shouldn't have died the way that he did. I just want justice for him."

NEWS

"We're mourning another Black man." Candlelight vigil held for 46-year-old James Williams

Benjamin Duer The Repository

Published 10:48 p.m. ET Jan. 5, 2022 | Updated 7:59 a.m. ET Jan. 6, 2022

CANTON – James Williams, a father of six and a man beloved by friends and neighbors, was remembered Wednesday night during a candlelight vigil.

Williams, 46, was shot and killed minutes after midnight on New Year's Day by a Canton police officer.

"He didn't deserve to die like this, at all," his daughter, Ja'Lia Williams, said.

Widow speaks: "They didn't say, 'Police.' They didn't say, 'Freeze.' ... They just shot him."

Body cam footage: Officer shoots before yelling, "Police! Get down now!"

The man friends called Roe was standing behind a 6-foot wooden fence on the side of his home repeatedly firing an AR-15 skyward in celebration of the occasion, his wife Marquetta Williams has said.

Police have said an officer responded to reports of gunfire in the area and was outside the family's home in the 2300 block of 10th Street SW.

As Williams continued to fire the weapon, a police officer heard the shots. Video from the unnamed officer's body camera shows the officer drawing his gun and firing at least four times through the fence. Williams was struck and later died in Aultman Hospital.

Nearly 60 people shared grief and their outrage outside the family's home during the vigil. Dozens of blue, silver and white balloons were released into the nighttime sky.

They chanted: "Justice for Roe!"

What they said about the James Williams' shooting on Jan. 1

Many who spoke demanded police accountability and some called for the officer's arrest. Police Chief Jack Angelo has asked the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation to investigate.

The chief issued a news release Saturday saying that Williams was armed when police responded at 12:06 a.m. to the reported gunfire. The release said "... the officer, who was outside of his vehicle, confronted a subject that began shooting a firearm. The officer, in fear for his safety, fired his duty weapon at the subject and struck him."

The officer's name has not been released publicly and Angelo and the department have declined additional comment, citing the ongoing investigation.

"We're mourning another Black man," said community activist Sierra Mason.

Mason said the officer shot "senselessly at a Black family for doing the same thing his white friends were doing," saying the Black community faces double standards.

"Any of these rich townships, they wouldn't give no care who was shooting up in the air. They would've been hooping and hollering and drinking beers right with them," Mason told the crowd.

She added: "Why do they care about our communities when they are doing the same things ... celebrating? His babies didn't deserve to see that coming into the new year."

Police body camera footage released Wednesday

Police released body camera footage Wednesday morning. Many of those attending the vigil believe the footage justifies their outrage over Williams' death.

"It makes me angry because it's exactly how I said it happened," his wife, Marquetta Williams, said following the vigil. "It makes me hurt. (The officer) got to go home to his family. My husband didn't."

Marquetta Williams said her husband was a "gentle giant" and family man who always made others laugh. "He'd give you the shoes off his feet and the shirt off his back. He looked out for everybody."

She has established a GoFundMe account for funeral expenses.

Marquetta Williams said she is trying to stay strong for her children, shedding her tears in private.

"But the last 48 hours have been hell."

Reach Benjamin Duer at 330-580-8567 or ben.duer@cantonrep.com

Follow on Twitter @bduerREP

Charles Moran

From: Thomas, David H. <dthomas@taftlaw.com>
Sent: Friday, January 14, 2022 3:27 PM
To: Charles Moran
Cc: klmlinar@starkcountyohio.gov
Subject: grand jury subpoena to my client the Repository

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Special Agent Moran:

Thanks for the call today and the confirmation that the grand jury subpoena issued to the Repository has been withdrawn and we do not need to do anything further or address the January 21 deadline.

Please let me know if you need anything else.

Dave

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