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Guns don't kill people, morons do: Detroit leaders urge an end to celebratory New Year's Eve gunfire

Published: Thursday, December 30, 2010, 8:45 AM Updated: Thursday, December 30, 2010, 10:04 AM



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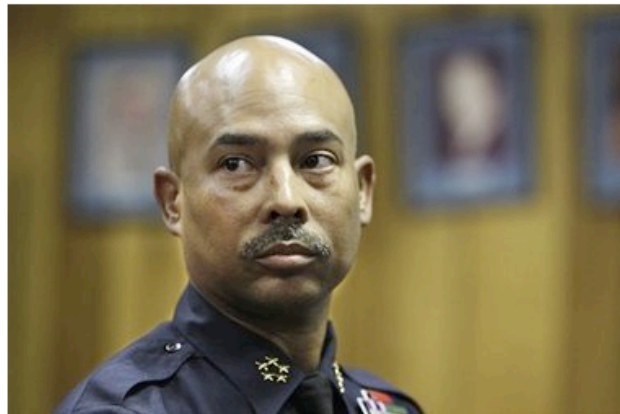
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Guns don't kill people. Morons who randomly fire bullets from guns -- even when the bullets are shot up into the air -- kill people.

So it is that Detroit Police Chief Ralph Godbee and other city leaders are asking local gun owners to not be morons this New Year's Eve and hold off on the celebratory gunfire.

Dec. 30, Detroit Free Press:

Members of the Neighborhood Service Organization's Youth Initiatives Project, joined by Detroit Police Chief Ralph Godbee Jr. and Detroit City Councilman James Tate, kicked off the sixth annual Hugs, Not Bullets campaign Wednesday.



AP Photo

Detroit Police Chief Ralph Godbee is urging Detroit-area residents not to shoot guns in celebration on New Year's Eve.

The message: What goes up must come down, so a bullet shot into the air could injure or kill someone.

"We have to provide a better quality of life for our children," Tate said, cautioning any revelers thinking of firing a gun to ring in the new year. "You could end up being a murderer."

Excellent message, to be sure, but one that's certain to be lost on those who still argue that "falling bullets" aren't lethal. (**That myth has long been debunked.**) And it's a message that's also almost guaranteed to be dismissed by the thousands in Detroit and its suburbs who are delusional enough to think of a gun as anything other than a tool of destruction.

Detroiters who remember the tragedy that befell Sandra Latham should know better, though. Latham was a grandmother who was killed while sitting in her home on New Year's Day 1997 when she was struck by a stray bullet fired during "celebratory" shooting. Her death sparked another initiative, **the "Ring In The New Year With A Bell" campaign**, that has also tried to quell gunfire around the city early on Jan. 1. Latham's daughter, Charlotte Jackson Bell, is among those involved with the campaign.

Personally, I've never understood the need to shoot up the late-night sky on Dec. 31. I've owned guns for years, some big-ass calibers, too. But I've always believed that you fire a gun for one of two reasons: to practice and to kill. In either case, you should have every intention on destroying anything in your bullets' path. In either case, you're not messing around.

This doesn't really jibe with my take on the New Year holiday, which I see as a moment to look ahead, to think about life and how and what it is I want to get done. Of course, that's just me. I don't really care if anyone else shares my maudlin take on New Year.

Like Godbee and the rest, I'd rather we could just agree on the seriousness of these guns.

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