

MEDIA RELEASE – Holiday Tradition and a Felony

DOUGLAS, AZ (January 8, 2020) The holidays are a time of family, friends, food and felonies. What many consider to be a holiday tradition – shooting weapons into the night sky as part of the celebration – is actually a class 6 felony. Tragically, the celebrations for at least three families across our Nation were cut short when someone's celebratory round found its mark on the way back down. Adding to the tragedy is that the act defies common sense; it violates the law; and it is completely avoidable.

While there is a substantial amount of gunfire each year; some originating in Mexico and some originating here; it was once limited to ushering in the New Year by a few misguided individuals. A troubling trend is it now involves a greater number of people and is increasingly present on other holidays celebrated throughout the year.

Anyone who is outside or traveling the streets, including our first responders, is at greater risk of being struck by a stray bullet, but those indoors are also at risk of sustaining injury or death. In the days that follow the New Year, we investigate a few cases where the rounds have come through a ceiling, a wall or vehicle.

Celebratory gunfire is not new and is not unique to our community, but our tolerance of it should be. Arizona Revised Statute §13-3107 is commonly known as "Shannon's Law", was enacted following the death of Shannon Smith who was tragically killed by a stray bullet in Phoenix in 1999. We can hope that a similar tragedy doesn't happen here, but hope is not an action.

The Douglas Police Department needs your assistance in reporting these incidents as they occur. The majority of incidents are not reported and those that are typically lack a specific location, address or description of the shooter. We need as much detail as possible to help us locate and arrest those who are willing to put our community at risk.

It takes a community to police a community.

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