

Manitoba

Family of man fatally shot by Winnipeg police says he overcame 'troubled past' to care for kids

Jason Collins, 36, died after being shot by officers responding to domestic violence call on Thursday

[Dana Hatherly](#) · CBC News ·

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A candlelight vigil was held Saturday night for Jason Collins, who has been identified by his family as the man shot by police on Thursday. His daughter, Tianna Rasmussen, says her father had a contagious laugh and a great sense of humour. (Dana Hatherly/CBC)

The family of a man shot and killed by Winnipeg police on Thursday is remembering him as a funny person who would "light up the whole room" with his humour and laughter.

"He was so loving," said his 15-year-old daughter, Tianna Rasmussen.

"He's my dad, and I know him.... [he was] the best dad."

Tianna was at the Anderson Avenue home where Collins, a 36-year-old father of three, was shot early Thursday morning by officers who were responding to a domestic violence call.

His death was the second fatal police shooting in the city in a period of less than 12 hours — a [16-year-old girl died after being shot by police](#) around 5:30 p.m. Wednesday.

In a phone interview Saturday, Tianna recalled her father's genuine personality, saying he was the kind of person who would drop everything if someone needed help.

She and her mother, Lisa Rasmussen, also say they question some of the details that have been made public so far about the circumstances around Collins's shooting.

- [Man, 36, dies after being shot by Winnipeg police on Anderson Avenue](#)
- [Winnipeg parents of girl, 16, fatally shot by police in shock and grieving](#)

Winnipeg Police Service Chief Danny Smyth said during a news conference Thursday that officers arrived at the house on Anderson Avenue, between Salter and Aikins streets, around 4:38 a.m. They said a 36-year-old man — who they did not identify, but who the family confirms was Collins — was shot just over 40 minutes later.

Emergency dispatchers got the 911 call from someone in the house reporting a man with a gun, the chief said. When officers arrived at the house, they heard a woman screaming in distress from inside before they forced their way into the

home and found a man with a gun, a woman and a teenage girl.

Officers left the house to de-escalate the situation, Smyth told reporters, while the teen left out the back door. Shortly after that, the man walked out the front door and confronted officers, Smyth said, and that's when an officer shot him.



Jason Collins's three children honour their father during a vigil Saturday night, held outside the house where he was shot by police two days earlier. (Dana Hatherly/CBC)

Smyth would not comment on whether the man pointed a gun at police, citing the ongoing investigation by the Independent Investigation Unit of Manitoba, which looks into serious incidents involving police in the province.

Smyth was not able to provide details about the relationship between the man killed by police and the woman inside the house.

The family confirmed Saturday the woman was Collins's wife and the teenager was Tianna, one of his two children from his previous relationship with Lisa.

Family questions police reporting

Tianna disputes some of the details presented to the media about the shooting.

"I watched the news, and just what they were saying made my dad sound like the worst person in the entire world, and I don't want people to think that of him," said Tianna.

"I know in my heart ... that he's not a domestic violence person."

She acknowledges there was prescription drug use in the house the night Collins was shot, and there was an argument between her father and his wife, but she says no one was in danger.

The person police heard screaming in the house, she says, was her.

"I thought that my dad was going to die right in front of me," she said. "I was just screaming at the cops ... 'Please, don't shoot him.'"





Jason Collins, middle, pictured with Tianna, right, and her brother. (Submitted by family)

Lisa and Tianna say they believe the gun Collins had was a BB gun.

Lisa wants people to understand Collins was not a "Native thug" or gang member. She says he was a caring father, a great friend and a good person overall.

He had a "troubled past," which he turned around, and started a career so he could care for his children, she says.

"That's very, very hard to do."

He was a survivor of intergenerational trauma, although he did not speak much of his past during the seven years they spent together, Lisa said.



Tianna Rasmussen, pictured here with Jason Collins, says her father had a contagious laugh and a great sense of humour before he was shot to death by police on Anderson Avenue two days ago. (Submitted by family)

Growing up, there were times he hung out with the wrong crowds, and alcohol and drugs came into play, she said, adding that while his mother did what she could, he lacked solid direction in life.

"Once you become a teenager and you are around certain people that live a certain way it's very easy to get swallowed up into that lifestyle ... if you don't have someone to guide you," she said.

Tianna said her father worked out of town and spent a lot of time on the road, so they cherished their time together.

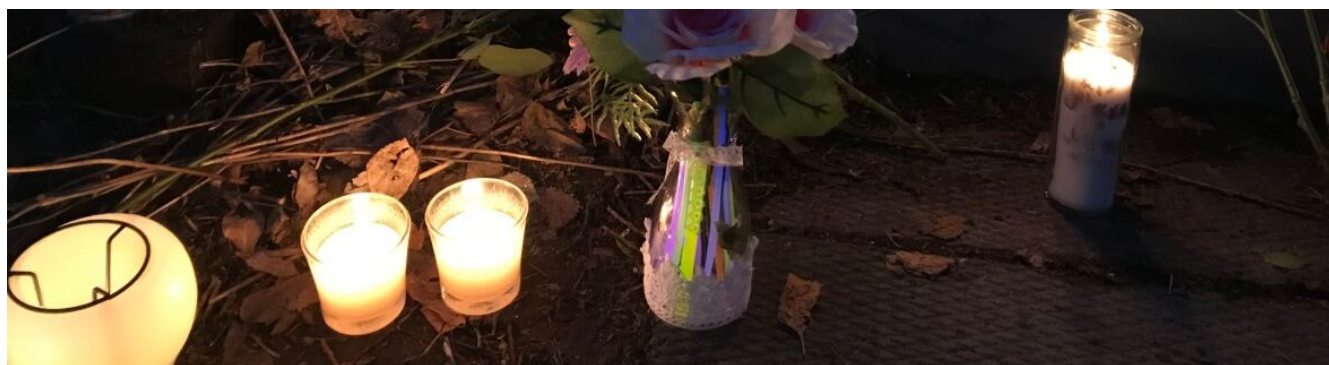
When he was home, they enjoyed trying new sports and watching hockey together. They had planned to go to a Winnipeg Jets game together before the NHL suspended its season.

Because they can't hold a funeral due to the public health order against gatherings of more than 10 people, the family honoured Collins with a candlelight vigil on Saturday evening, outside the house where he was shot.

"He was a good man, regardless. And he's gone," Lisa said Saturday afternoon.

"We all have to say our goodbyes tonight, and it sucks."





Tianna and Lisa Rasmussen say they want people to remember Collins as a caring father and a great friend. (Dana Hatherly/CBC)

With files from Caitlyn Gowriluk

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