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Garfield mother asks for outcry in police shooting death of her son

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The mother of a [Garfield](#) teen killed by police four months ago is happy for the family of Trayvon Martin, the Florida teen whose shooter was charged with murder Wednesday after weeks of nationwide outrage. But, she said, she wished her own son's death had drawn the same attention that Martin's had.

"What they did for Trayvon is outstanding. ... It's good, but I want the same thing for my son, too," Shirley Williams said Thursday.

Williams' son, 19-year-old Malik, turned himself in to [Garfield](#) police Dec. 10 after being notified that an aggravated assault warrant — stemming from an incident with his girlfriend, Jasmine Rivera — had been issued against him. While being processed on criminal complaints, Malik Williams fled an



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unlocked booking room.

Police tracked Williams to a nearby residential garage, where authorities say he had armed himself with tools. He allegedly threatened or attacked the officers according to police reports, and two officers — one from [Garfield](#), the other a [Bergen County](#) police officer — fired on him numerous times. He was pronounced dead that evening.

The case will be presented to a grand jury, [Bergen County](#) Prosecutor John L. Molinelli said in March.

Molinelli has been criticized for how he has chosen to release information about the shooting and his office's investigation into the incident. But he has defended his actions, citing state guidelines and the need to protect the integrity of the case.

Since December, several marches have been held in [Garfield](#) to protest Williams' death, but the level of public outrage for his shooting has not reached the same heights that it has for Martin's death, which inspired

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protests around the nation, including in Bergen and Passaic counties. At two of those recent rallies in Hackensack and Passaic, however, some protesters sought to draw a connection between Williams' and Martin's deaths.

Shirley Williams said Thursday that she wanted to meet Martin's parents and would try to contact them. She also planned to reach out to national media outlet CNN and to the Rev. Al Sharpton, who she said had been contacted after Malik's death but never responded.

By contrast, Sharpton has been at the forefront of protest efforts on behalf of Martin and his family. A spokeswoman for Sharpton's civil rights organization, the National Action Network, said Thursday evening that Shirley Williams' account was being looked into, but no further comment was issued.

Juda Engelmayer, an executive who works in crisis communications at the Manhattan firm 5W Public Relations, was confident that public pressure had an impact on the response to Martin's shooting.

Immediately after Martin's death, police declined to press charges against his shooter, George Zimmerman, who said he



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shot the youth in self-defense. After weeks of national outcry, however, special prosecutor Angela Corey announced Wednesday that Zimmerman was being charged with second-degree murder.

"I think the media attention helped bring this to an arrest... I don't believe any special investigator or prosecutor would have reviewed this case as fervently if there hadn't been protests around the country," Engelmayer said.

He added, "If you could somehow drum up the same attention ... you'd see a different approach in Garfield, too."

Shirley Williams expressed empathy for the Martin family, despite feeling that her own son's death had been overshadowed by his.

"I just want it to be like Trayvon, because a lot of people don't know what happened to Malik," she said. After Martin's death became national news, she said, "It was like Malik was left behind."