

Homeowners in North Carolina called 911 to report an intruder. It turned out to be a rogue Roomba

December 30 2019, by Dalvin Brown, Usa Today

Several police officers stormed into a home in North Carolina after the startled homeowners called to report an intruder in the middle of the night. The suspected burglar turned out to be a rogue robot vacuum cleaner.

Over the holidays, Thomas Milam and his wife, Elisa, were watching a movie just after midnight when they heard a series of noises coming from downstairs.

"We both were alarmed, we paused the movie, and I had Elisa go to a safe place," Milam said in a notice shared by the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office. "I immediately grabbed my gun, went to Elisa and we stayed there silently waiting to see if we heard more noises. Someone was definitely downstairs rummaging through things, and it sounded close to us."

Milam told his wife to call 911 and pointed his gun at the bedroom door. He was set on protecting his wife and their 2-year-old daughter who was sleeping soundly one bedroom over.

"All my military training came back to me, I started analyzing the path the intruder would take, their line of fire if they entered the room in certain ways, and where we should be to decrease our risk of getting hurt," Milam said.

The authorities arrived within a minute, searched the home, and the dispatcher on the phone told Milam to lower his gun. The homeowner opened the bedroom door to find [police](#) flashlights shining in his direction.

"Sir, I have one question," the lead officer said. "Is this Roomba yours?"

Apparently, the couple's new robot vacuum cleaner turned on in the middle of the night. Milam said no one set it to do that. The Roomba got stuck near the bottom of the staircase and was repeatedly bumping into a wall, Milam said.

"Merry Christmas everyone, please remember to turn off your burglar robot vacuums!" Milam posted on Facebook.

The embarrassing ordeal isn't the first time a homeowner has called the cops after being spooked by what turned out to be an automated floor cleaner.

In April, a similar incident occurred in Oregon after a woman reported that someone was locked in her bathroom. She saw a shadow under the door and heard noises. Authorities entered the bathroom 15 minutes later with their guns drawn.

"We breached the bathroom door and encountered a very thorough vacuuming job being done by a Roomba Robotic Vacuum cleaner," the Washington County Sheriff's Office posted on Facebook.

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