

# Father of girl killed by Pennsylvania cop charged with murder

Tom Eley  
2 February 2016

Donald Meyer, 57, has been charged with the murder of his daughter, Ciara Meyer, 12, who was gunned down by a Pennsylvania constable evicting the family from their apartment on the cold morning of January 11 in Ducannon, Pennsylvania, near the state capital of Harrisburg.

District Attorney Andrew Bender last Thursday cleared Constable Clark Steele, who shot the girl, of any wrongdoing. Instead, Bender charged Meyer with homicide and involuntary manslaughter, in addition to previously filed charges of aggravated assault, reckless endangerment and “terroristic threats.”

Ciara Meyer was standing behind her father when Steele fired his handgun at the man. The bullet passed through Donald Meyer’s arm, shattering his bone, before striking the girl, who was home sick from school that day. Ciara Meyer was pronounced dead at the scene. The bullet hit her heart and lungs, according to an autopsy.

Authorities claim that Donald Meyer aimed a rifle at Steele, who therefore withdrew his holstered weapon and fired in self-defense. They do not claim that Meyer actually fired his gun.

“Meyer’s reckless conduct, knowing his daughter was standing behind him, triggered a chain of events that tragically led to the death of Ciara Meyer,” District Attorney Andrew Bender told the media, in justifying the murder charge.

Donald Meyer protested the charge. “They’re responsible for the murder and shooting of my daughter and me, and now it’s a big cover up,” he said. “They’re charging me with a felony for protecting my family?”

Meyer has been assigned a public defender. He did not enter a plea at an arraignment last week.

Some news sources, including CNN, have falsely

reported that Steele came that morning to the family’s apartment to serve an “eviction notice.” In fact, Steele had come to physically remove the family. The low temperature that day was 19 degrees, and 12-year-old Ciara was suffering from bronchitis.

Meyer, who owed some \$1,400 in back rent, insisted that he had until midnight, a police report on the day’s events reveals. Meyer, who had mental health problems, repeatedly answered the door, the last time with a rifle in his hands, police claim. Other weapons were found in his home.

The girl’s aunt, Stephanie Cordas, said that both parents were out of work and on disability insurance. She said Donald Meyer had withheld the \$650 rent for the two-bedroom apartment because the rental management company had refused to make repairs. The girl’s mother, Sherry Meyer, who had been sleeping at the time, tried to provide assistance to her daughter before being ordered away by police.

Ciara, who was nicknamed “CeCe,” loved animals and wished to become a veterinarian, according to an obituary.

Constables are a low-level police force in Pennsylvania, technically under the authority of the governor. They receive no salary, but earn money by serving papers and other functions for courts. Constables are required to take only 80 hours of police training and supply their own equipment, including guns.

Steele shot Ciara Meyer with a .40 caliber gun. The Pennsylvania Constable Association has not released any information on his training, and the police report on the killing does not indicate whether or not Steele was aware that the girl was standing behind her father.

Ciara was the 21st person to be killed by police in 2016, according a count kept by the *Guardian*. Another

57 have been killed since.



To contact the WSWS and the  
Socialist Equality Party visit:

**[wsws.org/contact](https://www.wsws.org/contact)**