

Notes on Police Violence

Salt Lake City nurse arrested after refusing demand to draw blood from unconscious patient

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Hospital surveillance and police bodycam footage released this week shows a nurse, at University Hospital in Salt Lake City, being unlawfully arrested and assaulted by a police officer.

The incident occurred July 26, at the University of Utah, when a semi-truck driver was brought into the hospital after being struck by a driver fleeing Utah Highway Patrol.

At the time, Alex Wubbles was working as the charge nurse. After refusing his demand to draw a blood sample from the injured patient, in accordance with hospital policy, Wubbles was arrested by detective Jeff Payne.

In the video, Wubbles can be seen explaining that a policy agreed upon by the hospital and police department indicates that blood cannot be taken without the consent of the patient, a warrant from a judge, or if the patient was under arrest.

As Detective Payne continued to demand a blood sample, a representative can be heard on Wubble's phone asking, "Why are you attacking the messenger?" Payne responds, "She's telling me no."

Told that he was making a mistake by threatening a nurse, Payne escalated the situation by telling Wubbles she was under arrest. He then violently grabbed Wubbles and pushed her outside the hospital. After placing Wubbles in handcuffs, Payne had a short exchange with other staff at the hospital where he was told that his actions were unnecessary. Payne responded that "I'm doing my job" and "I'm leaving now, with her."

Throughout the encounter, Wubbles complained to the officer that he was hurting her.

The video ends with Wubbles being placed in a police vehicle. As is common in such cases, Wubbles was placed

under arrest without being told why.

While officers are not required by law to tell someone why they are under arrest, it is clear that this case was a clear abuse of power.

All arrests without a warrant must be supported by probable cause that a suspect has committed a crime. What was Wubbles's supposed crime? Following policy set by her employer and saying no to an officer.

The Salt Lake City Police Department has launched an internal investigation, but Detective Payne is still on active duty.

Georgia police officer assures woman "we only kill black people."

A video released this week by WSB-TV shows an officer attempting to calm a nervous woman during a traffic stop by jokingly telling her that police only shoot black people.

It was a simple traffic stop, but the driver was anxious, telling the officer that she was worried to move her hands in fear of being shot.

The officer, Lieutenant Greg Abbott, attempted to reassure her by saying, "But you're not black. Remember, we only shoot black people. Yeah, we only kill black people, right? All the videos you've seen, have you seen white people get killed?"

The words by Abbott led the Cobb County Police Department to launch an internal investigation last year, when the incident occurred.

On Thursday, the police chief confirmed Abbott will be fired. "I don't know what is in his heart, but I know what came out of his mouth," Cobb County Police Chief Mike Register said. "We recommend that he be terminated and we are moving forward on that."

Abbott applied for resignation not too long afterward to avoid being fired.

Previously, Abbott's attorney had released a statement justifying the incident:

"Lt. Greg Abbott is a highly respected 28-year veteran of the Cobb County Police Department. He is cooperating with the department's internal investigation and will continue to do so. His comments must be observed in their totality to understand their context. He was attempting to de-escalate a situation involving an uncooperative passenger. In context, his comments were clearly aimed at attempting to gain compliance by using the passenger's own statements and reasoning to avoid making an arrest."

Regardless of whether or not Abbott's statements were intended to be harmless, the fact that an officer would use such gross language to try to deescalate a situation reveals something of the disturbed mindset of police in America.

The driver's fear reflects a legitimate worry among workers. On average, police killed three people a day in 2016. The epidemic of police killings is not the result of a few bad cops, poor training, a lack of public oversight or too few minority cops.

The increasing violence and militarization of police, especially in the past few decades, is rooted in the capitalist system. In a society with a massive gap between rich and poor, the ruling class must ultimately rely on state violence to defend its power and privileges and is preparing for social upheavals by putting in place the infrastructure of police-state rule.

Furthermore, Abbott's statements are not any sort of proof that police violence is a purely racial issue. While it is true that black people are killed more disproportionately than all other racial or ethnic groups, except for Native Americans, police kill workers regardless of race or ethnicity. The largest number of people killed by the police in a given year are white, a fact that the media and racist groups such as Black Lives Matter ignore.



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