

Philadelphia landlord's private police officer shoots tenant in the head during attempted eviction

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A 35-year-old woman in the city of Philadelphia was shot in the head on Wednesday morning during an eviction by a landlord-tenant officer.

Angel Davis was placed in critical condition at a local hospital following the altercation with a privately employed eviction officer, known as a landlord-tenant officer. On Thursday, her condition was upgraded to stable. She lives with her husband Gabriel Plummer, who was unharmed during the shooting.

The city of Philadelphia contracts private firms rather than deploying the sheriff or a public police force to throw people out of their homes. This is done nominally in the name of saving the city money. Sanctioned by the city's courts, a landlord-tenant officer in practice acts as the landlord's private paid police force. Moreover, Pennsylvania state law allows these individual contractors to carry firearms with the proper license.

The eviction started shortly after 9 a.m. when the landlord-tenant officer banged on the door. According to Lt. Jason Hendershot of the Philadelphia Police Department's officer-involved-shooting unit, "Allegedly, there was a knife involved and that's why he discharged his firearm, so we have to figure that out." The police official stated that there would be a review of surveillance and body camera footage.

"He was trying to push the door open," Plummer recounted to NBC10. "We're pushing it closed. Because you're not coming in here. We don't know what's going on."

After apparently failing to gain access to the apartment, the officer decided to pull out a firearm to evict the couple: "I seen when he drew up and he—just like this—baow! He shot her. Just like that.

Boom!" Plummer said. He then barricaded the door to prevent the officer from entering and demanded medical attention for his wife.

"It was like, boom boom! I saw her coming out and she was holding her head with a cloth, and she was alert because I saw her eyes open," Jennifer Rivera, a neighbor and friend of Davis, told ABC6. "Why he shoot her? Why he shoot her? She didn't deserve that, no one does," she added.

The city's police department is shielding the identity of the landlord-tenant officer by not releasing their name. According to the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the incident is being treated as an officer-involved shooting, "even though deputies are not sworn law enforcement personnel." Furthermore, "unlike a typical officer-involved shooting ... the Police Department ... has no responsibility to release a name in this case."

The violent incident happened in the Girard Court Apartments located near Girard College. According to the company's webpage, rent for a 725-square-foot apartment averages at least \$1,300 per month without additional utilities and fees included, more than half the individual average income in Philadelphia.

The apartment complex is owned by Odin Properties, a real estate investment firm operating throughout the eastern United States. The company presents itself as an innovator in "under-performing assets" seeking to "transform them to realize long-term value ... and overhauling them into safe, productive, design forward assets."

In reality, the firm swoops in to buy outdated, crumbling buildings, face-lifting and leasing them for heavy profits. This company operates in 14 states, owns 10,000 apartments and 200,000 square feet of

commercial space. A 2020 report by the group onePA notes the company is one of “the highest evictors in Philadelphia.”

No information was available stating the reason behind the attempted eviction of Davis and Plummer, but economic conditions in the city and throughout the United States have created outrageously unaffordable rent and housing costs and unprecedented inequality. Inflation, at a 40-year high, is hitting the working class and poor the hardest.

Evictions have soared in the city since the federal and local governments terminated the COVID-19 eviction moratorium in 2021. According to data compiled by Princeton University, over a four-week period in February and March of this year, 317 evictions were filed per week, a 135 percent increase over last year and 264 percent higher than the weekly average during the moratorium.

No matter the outcome of the release of bodycam and other footage, the city and state’s political establishment will seek to shield the police. On Thursday, the Democratic Socialists of America-aligned state Senator Nikil Saval announced that he would introduce legislation intended to ban the use of private firms in city evictions. “When things like this happen, there is no accountability,” he said, implying that if a publicly employed police force were used to carry out evictions then all would be well.

The police, whether a privatized security force operating at the behest of corporations or the traditional taxpayer-funded police, enforce the demands of the capitalist class and private property, protecting their wealth and privileges against workers and young people.

While instances of police violence against African Americans are disproportionate to their population and indicate the racist attitudes and backwardness which are promoted by the state, the indisputable common denominator when it comes to police brutality and killings is that the victims are working class and poor.

The most recent high-profile police murder of Tyre Nichols by an all black police gang has torpedoed the narrative of systemic racism as the leading factor in police killings. Last year in Philadelphia, the police gunned down 12-year-old Thomas Siderio, who was white. The African American officer who fired the fatal shot fabricated an unbelievable story in an effort to

exonerate himself from the crime of murder.



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