

Immigrant detention center employee shoots protester in Aurora, Colorado

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An employee of the Aurora ICE Processing Center in Aurora, Colorado, 42-year-old Brandon Booth, shot and injured Emma Landis, a 21-year-old waitress, during a protest outside of the facility on Thursday night. The ICE facility is operated by the GEO Group, a \$4 billion company that operates a network of ICE detention centers and state prisons across the country. Former GEO Group CEO David Venturella was appointed the acting director of ICE in June.

According to police reports and an interview by Landis with the *Colorado Sun*, Booth and three other GEO Group employees were unable to enter the facility to begin their shifts because of the protest. Landis and another protester began taking pictures of the employee's license plates and yelling at them over the reported abuses of those detained at the facility, including inadequate food, lack of air conditioning and a tuberculosis outbreak.

Booth then reportedly exited his vehicle and engaged in a verbal altercation before firing a single shot at the protesters with his personal firearm. According to Landis she had turned her back on the GEO Group employees and was walking away when she was shot in the foot. Booth then re-entered his vehicle and drove away before he was apprehended by police nearby.

Booth had worked at the GEO Group facility for two and a half years and in state juvenile corrections facilities before that. According to the Aurora Police Department, Booth was booked on suspicion of attempted second-degree murder, first-degree assault, attempted first-degree assault, felony menacing and unlawful carrying of a concealed weapon.

While Booth does not have an official violent criminal history, the *Colorado Sun* reported that the ex-wife of Booth's brother, Destiny Winter, alleged that Booth gave her a concussion in 2015 by slamming her

into a wall after she asked him to turn down the TV because children were sleeping in the house. "He goes above and beyond to show he's in charge. He's the king," she said.

In a statement on the shooting, Aurora Chief of Police Todd Chamberlain said, "This is a tragedy on all fronts, and the Aurora Police Department will investigate this incident with the same commitment to transparency and integrity as we do all shootings. We remain committed to ensuring an ethical, thorough, objective and comprehensive review of this case. Violence of any kind will not be tolerated in Aurora. Constitutional rights are a pivotal part of a just society—violence is not."

Such a statement is an outrageous display of hypocrisy. The Aurora Police Department has committed multiple murders over the past several years, shooting and killing seven people in 2022, two people in 2023, four people in 2024 and three in 2025. Many of these victims were unarmed.

One of the most notorious of Aurora's police killings was the brutal murder of Elijah McClain, a 23-year-old unarmed black man who was forcibly injected with 500mg of ketamine by paramedics after being detained by police officers as he walked home from a convenience store in 2019. He went into cardiac arrest at the scene and was declared brain-dead at the hospital three days later. Two paramedics and one of the officers involved were found guilty of negligent homicide and manslaughter respectively, while two of the officers were acquitted in 2023.

The shooting at the GEO Group facility comes in the wake of two murders of immigrants by ICE officers. Lorenzo Salgado Araujo was murdered by ICE agents on July 7, shortly followed by the killing of Joan Durán Guerrero on July 13. In both instances the ICE agents

were not even targeting for arrest the men they killed.

Similar to Booth, the ex-wife of the killer of Guerrero reported that he was violent and racist, demonstrating the tendencies of ICE and its contractors to recruit from backward and violent elements of the population, as they unleash fascistic terror in immigrant communities and in the detention centers where tens of thousands of immigrant workers are rounded up and imprisoned.

The fact that an employee of a detention center decided to shoot at a protester after these nationally publicized ICE killings is an indication of the pervasive attitude of impunity felt by these officers and their corporate allies. After ICE agents killed Renée Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis earlier this year with no repercussions, the immigration Gestapo has been empowered to deploy violence with little concern for the consequences.

The speed with which Booth was arrested and charged testifies to the fears in the ruling class and the political establishment that runaway violence from immigration enforcement will unleash mass opposition in the working class. It is also an indication of the repercussions that could be brought against murderous ICE agents by local authorities if they wished to do so, demonstrating the cowardice and complicity of the Democratic Party for not pushing for charges against ICE agents. Federal law enforcement officers have immunity from state and local prosecution if they are acting within the scope of their official duties. The use of excessive force, such as the summary execution of bystanders, does not fall within this scope.

Since Booth is not a federal officer, local officials will see the charges against him as a way to demonstrate to the public that they are committed to justice without offering any real challenge to Trump's fascistic assault on immigrants.



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