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## CU Citizens for Peace and Justice Help Ms. Davis Move Out Of Bullet-Riddled House

Submitted by Brian Dolinar on August 19, 2007 - 1:04pm  
Champaign Local Interest

On Saturday, August 18, 2007, Champaign-Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justice pitched in to get Ms. Mildred Davis moved out of her house at 4 Hedge Court, nearly two months after a tragedy struck her home. Champaign police were in pursuit of Torriano Johnson on June 24, 2007, which began in Urbana and ended up in a stand-off at 4 Hedge Court in the Garden Hills neighborhood in Champaign. Ms. Davis, a 62 year-old grandmother who lives there, says police fired into her home while people outside told officers that she and her grandchildren were inside.

Fortunately, no one was physically injured in the incident. But the approximately 30 bullet holes that remained in her living room were a daily reminder to Ms. Davis of the horror she experienced that night. She showed me the chair where her children usually sit in the evenings that had been shot by two bullets.

CU Citizens for Peace and Justice, a local grassroots organization, immediately responded after they heard the news. Martel Miller, who is from Garden Hills, talked to Ms. Davis to make sure she had somewhere else to stay and he also helped to get her some food. Miller contacted the local media and was there with them when Ms. Davis came back to her home Monday morning to find it ransacked, she believes by the Champaign police. She had given police a key to her home so that they could conduct an investigation. She says the police went through her personal items and damaged her property. What they were looking for she does not know. She says she never knew the suspect Torriano Johnson. Ms. Davis was just an innocent bystander.

Ms. Davis was sitting in the chair of her front

## Local Interest

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- [KIDS' STORY TIME!!](#)  
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- [Indiana May Drastically Reform Sentencing Practices](#)  
Post date: Dec 20 2010 - 6:09pm
- [The end of Don't Ask, Don't Tell? Call Sen. Kirk Today!](#)  
Post date: Dec 17 2010 - 10:50am
- [Disciplinary Actions Taken Against Champaign Police Officers](#)  
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living room when Torriano Johnson ran into her house. She grabbed her two-year-old great-grandson just as police started firing into the house. She held the boy as a hail of gunshots entered her front window and went through the curtains, just a few feet from her. Two of her other grandchildren were in the bedroom. People outside had told the police not to fire into the house, that people were inside.

For several weeks, Ms. Davis had to live in the same house, with bullet holes still in the front window and in the drapes. She told me, "Every time I sit in this house, I look at that window. Where I could have been killed. It gets me."

Concerned about getting the damage to Ms. Davis' home fixed, we contacted her landlord who lives in Chicago. He told us he could not locate a contractor while out of town. Marti Wilkinson, also of CU Citizens, contacted the city council representative for Garden Hills, Vic McIntosh, to ask what he could do to help. His only response was to provide a list of contractors to do the work. Aaron Ammons wrote a letter to the Champaign city council appealing for their help, but only Deb Feinan emailed him back. The local authorities must believe that because Ms. Davis is a poor elderly woman who lives in a black neighborhood, she does not deserve the same attention as the wealthy white residents of Champaign.

The Champaign police have claimed no responsibility, saying it is up to the owner's insurance to pay for the damage. Yet recently, they tried to pressure her into taking a settlement. Adding insult to injury, they offered her a paltry \$200.

Ms. Davis says the Champaign police sent Charles Nash, Pastor of the New Hope Church of God in Christ, along with Champaign spokesperson Rene Dunn, to talk with her. She says Reverend Nash told her it would be "ugly" if she took this to court. City officials then contacted her three days later offering her a \$200 check for her pain and suffering. This was, of course, in exchange for her signature on a settlement form. Just because Ms. Davis is a poor elderly woman who lives in Garden Hills, authorities believed she could be easily bought. Ms. Davis rejected the settlement and is looking for justice.

Because she is on a fixed income, Ms. Davis was unable to afford moving out of the house. CU Citizens for Peace and Justice raised \$750 from the community for a deposit on a new rental. Carol Ammons found a house just a few blocks away from 4 Hedge Court so Ms. Davis' foster children could remain in the same school district. Durl Kruse lent his truck and we helped

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Ms. Davis and her family to move to her new home. We hope Ms. Davis can now live without the daily reminder of this harrowing event.

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Interview with Ms. Mildred Davis on August 9, 2007 conducted by Brian Dolinar.

“God, Please Don’t Let These People Hurt My Kids.”

Ms. Davis: As all the shooting was going on, I was sitting right here [in her chair]. My little two-year-old great-grandson walked out that back room and got up on this couch. I said, “Don’t move. You sit there.” All of a sudden he just bust out and start hollering. I thought they had hit him. I got out the chair and crawled over and got him off the couch and sit back in this chair with him like this [holding him]. All them bullets was coming in here. Could have hit me or him. I said, “Lord, they done hit my baby.”

Then I had two [children] under the bed. I didn’t know the other two boys was back there until they told me, “Grandma, I heard everything you said to God.” I said, “God, please don’t let these people hurt my kids.”

I wondered why [that man] had run up in here. It was kind of warm. I didn’t have my air on so I left open the door in the evening. My friend’s out there sitting drinking coffee. I was sitting just like this. And I seen all them lights coming around the corner. I said that’s a lot of police cars behind one car. And by the time I said that, the man jumped out of the car, right where your car parked, with the car running and jumped out and left the door open and run on in.

My friend was sitting on the porch, where he sits all the time, he was out there drinking coffee. This man pulled up. [My friend] told him, don’t go in there with that. He just picked him up, set him to the side, and came on in.

BD: Did you see him carrying a gun?

Ms. Davis: He had it in his hand when he come in the door. I was sitting right here. He said, “I’m going out your back door.” I said, “Go ahead.” I’m not going to tell nobody got a gun they can’t go out my back door. What would I tell him that for? I said, “Go on out.”

BD: Did you see him shooting?

He didn’t shoot period. Now what he did to them [before] I don’t know. I don’t know what he did. I didn’t care.

What really got me, when that man run in the

door, they were right behind him and started shooting. People was starting to tell them, "Don't shoot in there. That lady in there with her grand-kids." They stood right there and shot [pointing at the front window]. They did that.

Even my grandson that had got out of here, the ten-year old, he was standing there hollering and crying, "My grandma and brothers are in there." But they still shot.

[Johnson] never shot period. Not here. Its not my problem what he did nowhere else. My problem was when he runs through here and they start shooting at him and people was telling them I was in here. That's what is my problem.

It hurt me for a person to do a person like that. Because I'm human just like anybody else. If it would have been their family, they would have been there. I don't believe they would have shot in the house like that if people started to tell them that somebody was in there. The [neighbors] across the street were telling them I was over here with them kids. But they still were shooting. Why would you just stand there and shoot if people are telling you I was in there?

I didn't have my mind on nothing but worrying about them kids. I could have been killed and they wouldn't have nobody. That stuff hurts. I sit and cry about it now. The didn't care, the way I feel. They didn't care. I been trying to figure it out, but I can't.

"They Didn't Say Nothing To Me."

When I went out, they sent me across the street. "Go this way." I went that way and there was a girl that knows me. She says, "Ain't you feeling bad?" I said, "Yes, I am." I could hardly see, my blood pressure had run up so high. When the ambulance got here my blood pressure was 270 over 150. I could hardly see.

They wanted to take me to the emergency room. I said, "No. I'm not going nowhere until I know them other kids out that house." They said, "We are going to have to take you, you're going to have a heart attack." I said, "I'll just have to have one. Because I'm not leaving until they come out."

My daughter came over to the ambulance. She said, "The kids are alright. The man surrendered." They said, "Are you willing to go now?" I said, "Yes, you can take me now."

I went to the emergency room. Didn't nobody come up there, no police officers, nobody came there from the time I went there until the time I left. Nobody came there to see how I was or to tell me nothing about whether they had got the man or nothing. They didn't say nothing to me.

House Ransacked

I got [the children] and I took my daughter home. She kept them with her. I stayed over at a friend's house. The next morning, the kids needed clothes. I called my case worker. Martel [Miller] had called me told me to come over here [her home], the news people was going to be here. When I got here, they was out there waiting for me. When I got here, they came in.

They had all my clothes on the hangers laid down on the floor in the closets. Why would the police [be] going in your closets. I had clothes folded up, in boxes, like my towels and stuff. I don't have no dressers yet.

That really pissed me off. I walked in here Monday morning with all my stuff laying on the floor. Some of it didn't work no more. The DVD games I had bought were broke. And them games are not cheap.

They broke a lot of my stuff. All my necklaces and stuff I had in a round thing sitting on my walnut stand. All of my earrings, everything else on the floor. All my papers from the DCFS office out of a little plastic thing that zips. All my papers on the floor. I can't find my kid's birth certificates. I can't be paying money out to get no birth certificates.

They ain't got no business knocking out everything in your house. I'll never believe that man (Johnson) took that stuff out of there and knocked it on the floor. I'll never believe that.

When I returned home that Monday morning to get clothes for my kids, my refrigerator was sitting over there. I had just got through shopping that night. All my food had thawed. I hadn't been here since I had left because they were to investigate, whatever they were doing, I don't know what they were doing because I wasn't here. They asked for a key. I gave them my door key. I had to keys. They had a key and I had a key. And I had not been in here. When I opened that door that Monday morning when I got here, with Martel and them, and my case worker from DCFS, everything was just pulled out and thrown around. And I don't think that's right.

The kid's clothes was all down. I've got pictures of it. All the clothes in each one of these closets was out on the floor. What else you looking for? I don't know the man. The man don't come here. Whoever he is. I wouldn't know him now. They don't have no right to do that. They going to holler about what it was they were looking for. What you looking for? I ain't never been involved in nothing. Why would they just come running through here like that? That's not right. That pissed me off.

Adding Insult to Injury

When I got home these cards was sticking in my door. I talked to him [handing me one of the cards].

BD: [Reading the card] Lieutenant Joe Gallo.

Yeah, he told me talk to Larry [Kraus] about my stuff that was damaged and that they would pay for it. Larry told me write down what was damaged and bring it to him. I didn't do it right then because my mind wasn't even on that. I was too thankful to be alive and didn't none of my kids get hurt. That's all that mattered to me right then.

BD: I heard a couple people came over from Champaign?

I had an appointment with Pastor Nash on Friday [August 3, 2007]. Pastor Nash come over here, and some Dunn lady [Champaign police spokesperson Rene Dunn.]. Him and her come over here. I didn't know he was bringing her with him. I don't know her anyway. When he got here, he introduced me to her.

Pastor Nash told me, "I'm pleased that the police are going to pay for your stuff." He said, if you go to court, he said "Things could get ugly." He said, "You know, some people were here that weren't supposed to be here." He said, "They are going to say stuff in court." I feel that they were trying to scare me. You see, I don't know nothing about no law.

When Pastor Nash came he said, "What would your stuff cost, give me a price." I said, "I don't know. I'll call you back."

I called Larry [Kraus] back. He said "I'm going out of town and [won't be] back until Friday." I told him my legs were bothering me. He said, "Well send somebody to get it." I told my daughter to go get the paper and don't sign nothing. I told him I wanted to read the paper myself so I could see what they were talking about. So my daughter went and got the paper. He called me back, when he was supposed to be going of town. I asked him, "What do I have to sign this paper for?" He said, "To pick up your check." I said, "I am not going to sign no paper for no check." Because I was not going to accept \$200. [See settlement letter below.]

I told Larry, "What is \$200 going to buy? That can't even buy my kids' game back. They shot a hole in my cabinet back there. He told me I could patch that up, and they'll give me a cover for my chair. I said, "It wasn't like that when you come here."

That chair [the one I was sitting in], that's where my kids sit at night. They shot twice in that chair. They had to cut it to get some bullets out. [See photo.]

My two-year-old boy, every time the police drive

by, he thinks they're coming back here. They keep riding by. They told me they were going to watch around.

Every time I sit in this house, I look at that window [with bullet holes still in it and the curtains]. Where I could have been killed. It gets me [she begins crying and our interview comes to a close].

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#### RELEASE AND WAIVER

[This settlement letter was given to Ms. Davis to sign]

I, Mildred Davis, hereby accept \$200.00 (two hundred dollars) in full compromise settlement and satisfaction of and as sole consideration of the final release and discharge of any and all action, claims, causes of action and demands whatsoever that now exist, or may hereafter accrue, against the City of Champaign, its officers, employees and agents and all others, and any other person in connection with the incident which occurred on June 24, 2007 involving the Champaign Police Department which resulted in damage to the contents of the house located at 4 Hedge Court, Champaign, Il 61820 and which I claim that above named persons or parties are legally liable in damages; which legal liability and damages are disputed and denied. I agree that this Release and Waiver shall apply to all unknown and unanticipated expenses, injuries, and damages resulting from the aforementioned incident as well as those now disclosed and shall be binding upon me and my heirs, executors, administrators and assigns. I do further covenant, warrant, and agree not to make further demands nor institute any suit or proceeding, whether in law or equity, arising from or connected with any loss, injury or damage that I may sustain as a result of the aforementioned incident. The delivery of this release and waiver is in exchange for payment of \$200.00. NO ORAL REPRESENTATIONS OR INDUCEMENTS have been made to me on which I rely upon to sign this agreement.

I have read and understand all of the RELEASE AND WAIVER FORM, and by signing below indicate my voluntary concurrence with its terms.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_



4432 reads

### What Does This Add Up To?

Submitted by nightwatch on August 19, 2007 - 7:27pm.

Let's see.

An innocent person's house gets trashed and vandalized, quite obviously NOT by the criminal who first dodged through her door. That guy didn't have time to do it. And he sure as hell didn't riddle her house irresponsibly with 30 bullets.

And there was only one arrest that night?

It's obvious that the gang that trashed her house was NOT arrested. They're criminals, too. In fact their behavior is even more criminal than the criminal who was arrested, because there was no excuse for what they did to her, her children, her house and her property. They attacked her house, vandalized it, and apparently have no remorse. At least the first criminal was willing to admit part of his crimes.

This other gang of criminals is looking for absolution, ponying up a paltry \$200 to compensate Ms. Davis for thousands of dollars worth of damage. And they are doing it under color of law. It looks a lot like, "Here take this cash and shut up -- or worse will happen to you!"

I know we don't have the guts as a nation to take on the gangster-in-chief in the Whitehouse. But why the hell can't the state's attorney do anything about the flagrantly abusive and criminal acts of a few well-known gang members from Champaign? We know what colors they wear -- brown -- and the color on their cars -- green. She's got lots of witnesses that can place those gangsters at the scene of the crime. But it looks like she's got weak knees again when it comes to the hard cases.

Who's going to protect the people from this gang, better known on the street as the Untouchables? This disgusts me as a citizen



of Champaign County. I know damn well that this wouldn't be tolerated in many neighborhoods in this town. Shame on the citizens of Champaign who don't hold the city council accountable for putting a stop to this pattern of violence against the people.

[reply](#)

### Thanks for the Report

Submitted by anonymous on August 20, 2007 - 6:39am.

In comparison to reading what the News-Gazette reported about this incident, it's stunning to realize how much the paper left out of the story. It's also nearly as disturbing as the actions of the police that evening.

And where is the Champaign City Council? After claiming that they didn't need a police review board, they indicated that they were competent to oversee the police. The only action we've seen from them so far is Vic McIntosh's offering up a list of contractors who could repair the damage the police caused. Gosh, I'm more than underwhelmed by their display of inaction, lack of concern, and inability to feel anyone else's pain, except for the bruised egos of the police when they get called out on their abusive practices.

Maybe the city council and the News-Gazette's motto should both be: "Positive public relations for the police state"?

[reply](#)

### News-Gazette does not have access to police reports

Submitted by Marti Wilkinson on August 20, 2007 - 4:25pm.

Neither does the public i. We can thank our States Attorneys office for finding a legal loophole for suppressing vital public information. The only reason why Vic provided the list of contractors is because I called and asked him to do so. What is seen as a lack of compassion on the part of the city council reflects a much deeper issue of cultural and institutional racism that many communities still struggle with.

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