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'You're fired,' man hears after saving a woman's life

The 24-year-old grabbed a gun before going to help his neighbor who had been shot.

By Jim Schoettler, The Times-Union

When a neighbor screamed she'd been shot, Colin Bruley grabbed his shotgun, found the victim and began treating her bloodied right leg.



JARRETT BAKER/The Times-Union Colin Bruley, 24, was fired from his job at a Monument Road apartment complex after grabbing his gun and running to help an injured neighbor.

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UPDATED: Shooting victim raises man who lost his job

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Monument Road complex since December and for the owner, Village Green Cos., since 2005.

Bruley said he was too shaken to call his supervisor immediately after the incident, which occurred just before 2 a.m., but planned to eventually do so. He also said he was acting as a citizen, not an employee, and shouldn't have been punished for trying to protect himself and others. He never fired the shotgun.

"I was expecting work to give me some kind of commendation," said Bruley, 24. "I was totally blown back. It was a crisis that most people don't go through."

Andrea Roebker, the company's director of public relations, said "We're not in a position to discuss any employment issues outside of [with] the employee.

She declined to comment further, citing confidentiality rules.

A complaint Bruley said was given to him by his supervisor Tuesday said he violated several company policies found in an employee handbook. Those procedures were also explained in a recent meeting and an e-mail, the complaint said. One policy prohibits any type of weapons being used in the workplace. The complaint cited him for "gross misconduct."

"Colin demonstrated extremely poor judgment in responding to this situation," the complaint said. "Colin's failure to immediately report this incident ... could have serious ramifications to the property, its associates and residents."

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 d Tuesday's pre-dawn
 shooting at her Jacksonville
 apartment, and her sister
 and a neighbor praised
 Bruley's actions. But his
 employers, the same people
 who own the Arlington
 complex where Bruley
 lives, reacted differently.
 They fired him.

Bruley, a leasing agent at
 the Oaks at Mill Creek,
 said he lost his job after
 being told that brandishing
 the weapon was a
 workplace violation, as was
 failing to notify supervisors
 after the incident occurred.
 He'd worked at the

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A police report said the shooting followed a domestic quarrel involving Lee, 24, and her boyfriend. Bruley said he was dozing off in his apartment when he heard Lee's screams. He said he then grabbed a 12-gauge shotgun he uses for protection and hunting.

Bruley said he found the woman bleeding heavily. He handed the shotgun to a neighbor, tied a tourniquet around her right leg and waited for police and rescue to arrive.

"I was kind of in a state of shock. I had blood all over my body," Bruley said.

After emergency officials took Lee to the hospital, Bruley returned to his apartment and tried to settle down, eventually falling asleep. He said he could have called his supervisor but didn't think she could do anything at the time. He said he was called into the office about 9:30 a.m., gave his account and then left. He said he was called back that afternoon and told he was fired.

Neighbor Kevin Courson joined Bruley at the crime scene when he saw Bruley had a gun for protection. Courson said he is incensed by the dismissal.

"Here was a guy trying to do a good deed. He wasn't trying to hurt nobody," said Courson, 31.

Erica Jenkins, Lee's sister, said Bruley should still have a job. Lee couldn't be reached to comment despite several messages left with her sister and mother.

"If it wasn't for him ... she could have lost her leg or died," said Jenkins, 19. "He put his life in jeopardy for someone else."

Bruley said he is considering contacting a lawyer about his dismissal, but will first look for another job and possibly another home. He promises he won't shy away from aiding others in need.

"If I'd lose my job again for helping some girl's life ... I'd do it over and over," Bruley said.

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