



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on September 14, 2011

Man Sues Walgreens for Wrongful Termination After Self-defense Shooting

When Jeremy Hoven put his concealed carry permit to use for self-defense purposes during an armed robbery last May, he was fired by his employer, Walgreens. Though Hoven defended the use of his weapon by asserting he feared for his life, and while no one was injured during the encounter, Walgreens issued a pink slip, prompting Hoven to file a wrongful termination lawsuit.



At a Walgreens in Benton Township, Michigan, two armed robbers wearing masks burst in at 4:30 am with weapons drawn. Pharmacist Jeremy Hoven was working behind his counter when he saw the attackers grab the Walgreens store manager as a hostage. The men also jumped behind Hoven's counter, with their weapons drawn. While one of the masked men held a gun to the head of one of the Walgreens' employees, the other attempted to shoot Hoven three times, but his gun would not fire.

Hoven attempted to call the police, but came to realize his best defense was to return fire, and drew his own weapon, for which he possesses a concealed carry permit. He fired at the attackers, scaring them off. Hoven not only saved his own life that day, but the lives of two of his co-workers. A mere 42 seconds passed, from start to finish.

Hoven explains, "I feared for my life, and in self defense, I fired my weapon as I continued to move from him."

"The adrenaline was taking over. You could have probably taken my pulse from my breath, because my heart was beating that much," he adds.

Walgreens lawyers have denied most of Hoven's claims, and even asserted that there was not an armed robbery in progress at the time Hoven fired his weapon. They claim that the company, which operates 8,000 stores in the United States, had a "plausible and legitimate business reason to justify the firing."

However, [video footage](#) of the incident corroborates all of Hoven's statements, and will certainly play a prominent role in the lawsuit against Walgreens.

ABC News [reports](#):

Though Hoven was licensed by the state of Michigan to carry a gun, Walgreen discourages its pharmacists from packing pistols. A spokeswoman for the drug chain told ABC News in an email



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that while Walgreens would not be able to disclose its policies, they were written to protect the safety of customers and employees.

Walgreens released a statement defending Hoven's termination, which read, "Store employees receive comprehensive training on how to react and respond to a potential robbery situation. Law enforcement strongly advises against confrontation of crime suspects. Compliance is safer than confrontation. Through this practice, we have been able to maintain an exemplary record of safety."

Ironically, Hoven reports that he obtained a permit to carry a concealed weapon after that same Walgreens was robbed while he was working in 2007.

One of Hoven's lawyers, Peter Kosick, has released a statement against what he believes to be an unreasonable violation of Hoven's right to defend himself against a lethal weapon.

"[My client] was as exercising his reasonable right of self-defense in the face of a gunman who attempted to pull a trigger three times and shoot him," said Kosick.

He explains further, "The criminal had jumped over the counter and was on the same side of it with Jeremy. Hoven fired only to maintain a safe zone for himself."

Kosick indicates that Walgreens should have commended Hoven on his bravery and quick thinking, rather than punishing him for his actions. Similarly, township police Lieutenant Delman Lange said, "If it was me, I would have done the same thing."

According to Kosick, Hoven has the support of most of the community. "I'd say 95 percent are in favor of what he did. It's really outraged people. Not just gun advocates but people on the street. They stop and tell me they've have done the same thing, only they wouldn't have missed. They've outraged what Walgreen has done. They're talking boycott, saying they will take their business to CVS or Wal-Mart."

In addition to whether Hoven had a right to self-defense in the incident, the court must decide whether Hoven should have told his employer about the gun, notes Daniel Swanson, another lawyer for Hoven. Swanson declined to assess whether Hoven should have reported his weapon or not, but contends that the right to self defense is significantly more important in this case.

"Do you, as an employee, have a right to attempt to defend yourself, or submit to the situation and basically risk you life," Swanson asked.



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