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Rabbi Fired After Museum Shooting Blog

Rabbi says she wrote with victim's family's ok

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By MATT ACKLAND/myfoxdc

WASHINGTON, D.C. - She lost members of her own family in the Holocaust. But when she wrote about her experience dealing with the death of a guard killed at the National Holocaust Museum last June, she was fired.

George Washington University told a rabbi chaplain she broke the rules by speaking out publicly.

But the rabbi says she did it with the family's blessing.

It is a day Rabbi Tamara Miller will never forget. Stephen Johns was shot outside the U.S. Holocaust Museum, and the gunman now charged with the shooting had been identified as a white supremacist.

Rabbi Miller was at George Washington University Hospital when Officer Johns' family arrived.

"One of my chaplains called and said, 'Rabbi, you have to come

down. Something terrible has happened,'" Rabbi Miller recalled.

Rabbi Miller offered her support and prayed with the Johns' family. Then, the terrible news got worse. Johns had passed away.

"So then the shock and the crying and the uncontrollable screeching and yelling as you could well imagine," Rabbi Miller said.

Rabbi Miller had helped countless people deal with their grief over the years, but this tragedy hit close to home. You see, she had lost several family members in the Holocaust.

"I felt that Mr. Johns was defending all of us," she said.

Later, Rabbi Miller decided to write about her feelings on that day. She sent her essay to the Washington Post and it was published on a faith blog.

"I felt compelled to do it," Rabbi Miller explained. "I felt I needed to get it out into the world."

Miller tells us weeks had passed and administrators at the hospital called her in. They suspended her first, and then fired her.

"I was shocked that she wouldn't compliment me and say this is a wonderful article," Rabbi Miller said.

Hospital officials told Rabbi Miller she had violated the law and hospital rules. But Rabbi Miller disagrees. She believes administrators were upset with her because she had been asking for a wage increase. Miller hired a lawyer

"It couldn't have had to do with writing the blog because the family itself said that there was no invasion of their privacy," said attorney Lynne Bernabei. "In fact she had been a very healing force in their lives."

A spokesperson with George Washington University Hospital says the hospital has no comment about this particular case, but Rabbi Miller's attorney says if the hospital does not give Miller back her job with backpay, a civil suit will be filed.

The Johns' family pastor wrote a letter to hospital officials saying Rabbi Miller did not violate the family's privacy.

"On the contrary," he wrote, "we were glad that this viewpoint was put out into the world."

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