

NYPD shoots, kills man who stabbed student in synagogue

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(RNS) A man who burst into a Brooklyn synagogue yelling “Kill the Jews!” before stabbing a man was fatally shot Tuesday (December 9) by police, said authorities and witnesses.

Much of the tragedy was caught on video, including the chilling moments when the man refused an officer’s repeated order to “drop the—knife.” Seconds later, one gunshot is heard. Police said no other shots were fired.

Levi Rosenblat, 22, a rabbinical student from Israel, was hospitalized in stable condition with a stab wound, police said.

Rabbi Motti Seligson of Chabad-Lubavitch Hasidic world headquarters in Crown Heights said synagogue officials were cooperating with police in their investigation.

“While we are very pained by everything that has unfolded, we are very grateful to the police for their quick response and are working closely with the authorities in their ongoing investigation,” Seligson said in a statement. “We commend the heroic efforts of the individuals who were present and took immediate action. If not for their intervention, the outcome could have been, God forbid, far worse. We continue to pray for the young man who is in stable condition.”

According to witnesses, the attacker was heard saying repeatedly “Kill the Jews,” said Chaim Landa, a spokeswoman for Chabad-Lubavitch. Several other people immediately intervened, she said.

A witness flagged down a patrol officer, who confronted the 49-year-old man and told him to put the knife down. More officers soon responded. The actual shooting is not seen on the video, taken by a businessman in the synagogue, but police say the suspect charged at one of the officers, who fired once, striking the man in the torso.

The man was taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead. He was not immediately identified, but police said he was from New York City and had a criminal history.

“It’s a very public building and people of all kinds are always walking in,” Israel Gottdenger, 26, told *The New York Post*, saying he entered the building with the suspect. “He was just going crazy. He said, ‘I want to sit down; I want to get a Bible; who wants to die tonight.’ He kept changing his words. He was either really high on drugs or” emotionally disturbed.