

# David Dao, passenger removed from United flight, a doctor with troubled past

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(Photo: Pat McDonogh/CJ)

When airport security yanked David Dao off an overbooked flight Sunday, bloodying him as they dragged him down the aisle, he was thrust into the international spotlight.

Dao, an Elizabethtown doctor, is familiar to many Kentuckians who recall his convictions on drug-related offenses in 2004.

Dao's removal from Louisville-bound United Express Flight 3411 at O'Hare International Airport in Chicago was captured on video. United has come under scathing criticism for how it handled the situation, ranging from its insistence that passengers give up seats to the level of violence used by officers who yanked Dao from the

aircraft.

In the video taken by passengers, Dao refuses to give up his seat. He screams as three Chicago Aviation officers begin pulling him from his seat. Dao's head strikes an armrest before he is dragged down the aisle by his arms, seemingly unconscious.

As he is dragged, some passengers can be heard admonishing the security officers.

The Chicago Department of Aviation has placed the security officer who dragged Dao from his seat on leave, and said in a statement Monday that it does not condone his actions and that the incident on the United flight was not in accordance with its standard operating procedure.

United's CEO has apologized for the incident, and the U.S. Transportation Department also is investigating whether United complied with federal regulations regarding overbooking.

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Dao, his wife and two other passengers were asked to leave the aircraft because the flight was full and four crew members needed their seats, according to witnesses who were on the flight. The airline had offered vouchers worth up to \$800 for passengers to give up their seats, but no one took the offer. Four passengers, including Dao, were then selected to be bumped.

A Louisville resident on the flight, Audra Bridges, told the Courier-Journal that Dao said he was a doctor and needed to see patients the next morning. Bridges said passengers were "shocked and appalled" by the incident, and thousands of people on social media have expressed sympathy for Dao and outrage over the way the situation was handled.

Dao's wife, Dr. Teresa Dao, has a pulmonary practice in Elizabethtown. Office staff at her clinic said Tuesday that neither Dao nor his wife wished to speak with a reporter regarding the United incident.

Dao, who went to medical school in Vietnam in the 1970s before moving to the U.S., has worked as a pulmonologist in Elizabethtown but was arrested in 2003 and eventually convicted of drug-related offenses after an undercover investigation, according to documents filed with the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure last June.

The documents allege that he was involved in fraudulent prescriptions for controlled substances and was sexually involved with a patient who used to work for his practice and assisted police in building a case against him.

Dao was convicted of multiple felony counts of obtaining drugs by fraud or deceit in November 2004 and was placed on five years of supervised probation in January 2005, according to the documents. He surrendered his medical license the next month.

The Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure permitted Dao to resume practicing medicine in 2015 under certain conditions.



The Elizabethtown, Kentucky, office of Dr. David Dao. (Photo: Pat McDonogh/CJ)

*This story will be updated.*

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Screen shot from a video of a man being dragged off of a United Airlines' plane before it left Chicago and headed to Louisville. (Photo: Video by Audra Bridges)

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