



Exercising the Right

Auto Mechanic Injures Burglar

[AL.com](#) reported on December 2 about a suspected burglar who was seriously injured when he tried breaking in to an auto shop in Birmingham, Alabama. The incident occurred around 5 a.m. when two suspected burglars jumped a fence to gain access to the business. The owner recently had begun sleeping there owing to ongoing burglary attempts and was prepared if any criminals decided to once again target his business. The owner came out of the building armed with his pistol and fired at the trespassers. He injured one of the men, who then fled the scene. The owner also slapped the second intruder and told him to get off the property. Both trespassers ran away, but the suspect with the gunshot wound was dropped off at a nearby hospital, where he was listed with life-threatening injuries. An acquaintance of the shop owner told [AL.com](#) that there have been multiple break-ins at the business, with burglars jumping the fence and cutting the fence in order to steal from the auto shop.

Not a Neighborhood to Mess With

The *Advocate* reported on December 8 about a resident who fatally shot a burglar who had broken in to the man's home in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. The resident was alone inside the house when he heard some noise from a back room. The homeowner armed himself with a handgun and went to investigate. The resident then confronted an intruder ransacking one of his back rooms. The suspected burglar was shot multiple times in the upper torso during the confrontation. Police were called to the scene, and emergency responders took the injured burglar to a hospital, where he later died. A neighborhood resident, Pete Dawson, told the *Advocate* that this "is not really a neighborhood to mess with." Dawson was at home with his wife and children when the shooting took place and never heard the shots, although he did hear the sound of tires screeching when the police cars raced to the scene.

Another neighbor, Randall Thompson, told the *Advocate* that the homeowner who shot the suspected burglar was "taking care of business." Thompson added that a "man has a right to defend his property" and that anyone who targeted his home would likely meet the same fate. "They've got to get through the dogs first.... And then they're going to get shot."

Football Players Charged With Felony Murder

[AL.com](#) reported on December 4 about a shooting that occurred in Montgomery, Alabama, which made the national news. Under the state's felony murder rule, Montgomery police have charged three Faulkner University students in the aftermath of the shooting death of a fellow student athlete and alleged accomplice in a burglary attempt. The deceased student, 19-year-old Ryan Brooks, was shot by a homeowner and Faulkner University student when Brooks and three other Faulkner University students allegedly attempted to break in to the residence to commit a robbery.

Montgomery Police confirmed that the homeowner shot Brooks in self-defense and that three other students involved in the home invasion robbery have been charged with murder. Felony murder is the legal doctrine whereby any participant in a felony can be held criminally liable for any deaths that occurred during the commission of the felony. The felony murder rule in Alabama has been codified by state statute 13A-6-2 (a)(3), which states a person is guilty of murder when "he or she commits or attempts to commit ... burglary in the first or second degree ... [or] any other felony clearly dangerous



Written by [Patrick Krey](#) on January 19, 2015

Published in the January 19, 2015 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 31, No. 02

to human life and, in the course of and in furtherance of the crime that he or she is committing or attempting to commit, or in immediate flight therefrom, he or she, or another participant if there be any, causes the death of any person.”

Brooks and two other of the suspects were members of the school’s junior varsity football team, and the fourth suspect was a member of the school’s soccer team. Faulkner University describes itself as “a distinctively Christian university, where God’s Word is taught and respected, and where students are encouraged to grow in intellect, character and service.”

Faulkner University President Billy D. Hilyer later released a statement about the shooting that acknowledged the four students broke in to the home in an attempt to steal illegal drugs. “Needless to say, I am very shocked and disappointed to discover the involvement of drugs in this already tragic event.... We have and will continue to enforce a comprehensive disciplinary policy for any violations involving illegal drugs,” Hilyer avowed in the released statement. The college administration plans to update many of the school’s policies in the wake of this shooting, including more vigorously vetting prospective students, although initial news reports stated that none of the participants had a prior criminal record.

It’s a Small World

The *Robesonian* reported on December 9 about a shooting in Lumberton, North Carolina, that involved a homeowner shooting a burglar who would later turn out to be a distant relative. The homeowner, 36-year-old Sanford Hardin, was working at a chicken farm down the road from his home when he received a call from his wife, who told him there was a suspicious vehicle parked outside their house. Suspecting foul play, Hardin left work and went home to investigate. Upon arriving on the scene, he observed a man sleeping in a car near the house. When he tapped on the car window, the person woke up and quickly drove away. Hardin then entered his house to discover two masked intruders. One of the intruders was armed and fired at Hardin, hitting him in the shoulder. Thankfully, the injured homeowner was armed and was capable of firing back at the violent burglars. Hardin fatally shot one of the intruders, and the other intruder fled the house. Hardin then dialed 911 to report the crime and shooting. The deceased intruder was later described by authorities as having the same last name as Hardin and as being a “distant relative,” according to [WRAL.com](#).



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