



Exercising the Right

Stun Gun Meets Real Gun

WUSA 9 reported about a stunning example of how armed self-defense can mean the difference between life and death. On December 11, a clerk from a gas station in Woodbridge, Virginia, was grateful that he had his Glock 9mm on him when he became the victim of an attempted car-jacking. It was around 10 p.m., and he locked up the gas station for the night and walked to his car to go home. The clerk called his wife to check in and let her know he would soon be home, but unbeknownst to the hard-working clerk, two thugs with bad intentions watched from nearby.

The would-be robbers must have assumed that the clerk would be an ideal target because he either would have a substantial amount of cash on him or could retrieve it from the store. Once the clerk sat down in his car, the two men sprang up, stormed the car, and pulled open the doors. One of the robbers shocked the victim with a stun gun. The clerk described the terrifying situation to the news: "Two guys opened my door and immediately started hitting me in the arm with a stun gun."

Not only was the clerk scared, but so was his poor wife, who overheard the violent attack over the cellphone. She heard him yelling to the attackers to stop, but then the phone cut off. Thankfully, the clerk, who has had a concealed carry permit for four years, was well-prepared for such a situation and pulled his weapon out. "I drew my pistol and shot two shots in self defense," he said. At least one of the suspects was hit, and both scurried away from the scene. One of the suspects was later apprehended; the police are still looking for the second man.

Authorities said the clerk won't face any charges because he was acting in self-defense.

When Is It No Longer Self-defense?

Newschannel5.com out of Nashville, Tennessee, reported on a story that raises the above question: "When is it no longer self-defense?" Pizza deliveryman Blake Wilson, who has a valid Tennessee carry permit, testified in a preliminary hearing that he shot and killed one of three men who had just robbed him.

Wilson had been delivering pizzas on the night of December 3, 2010 when three armed men approached him and demanded his money. According to court records, Wilson told the judge, "I stuck my hands up in the air and I said ya'll can take whatever you want. Just don't kill me." The criminals retreated on foot after Wilson gave the men his money and cellphone. Wilson retrieved his pistol from his car and followed. "My intention was to follow them to see if they were to get into a car, or if I could find out what the license plate was or if they were going to another building."

Things did not go as planned. One of the robbers turned around and saw Wilson following, carrying his pistol. "As soon as he turns around and sees me he throws up his hand with the gun in his hand and that's when I fired," Wilson claimed. The two men exchanged gunfire, and the other criminals joined in on the gunfight. "There were a lot of gunshots going off, and basically in fear of my life, I shot back."

The storm of bullets resulted in the death of one of the armed robbers, and now his friends and family members are asking for charges to be filed against the victim of the robbery. Nick Edmondson, a friend of the slain violent criminal, who wore a shirt in honor of the fallen hoodlum, told the news that while



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the robbery was wrong, the pizza deliveryman should also face charges. "If he chased them ... the case was already over and he went and chased them to try to shoot them, so he killed my brother. That ain't self defense."

Sadly, Edmondson's barely coherent ramblings do contain some relevance to the American legal system. In many jurisdictions, there is a duty to retreat from danger if possible before using armed self-defense, but even without a duty-to-retreat requirement (which was repealed by the Tennessee legislature in 1989), deadly force is only justified when the person is under imminent danger of death or threat of serious personal injury. In this case, Wilson actually followed the robbers and engaged in a gun battle after the initial threat was over. This might remove the shooting from the realm of self-defense, although an argument could be made that Wilson acted in self-defense in the second encounter because when the robber raised his gun toward Wilson, he was again threatening Wilson's life.

The local district attorney's office is still reviewing the case and has not announced whether charges will be pressed against Wilson.

Rocker Stops Robbery

You might have never heard of the band "Parmalee" based out of Greenville, North Carolina, or even be a fan of their type of heavy metal music, but a September 21 incident involving their drummer illustrates why the right to self-defense should never be taken away. The band had retired to their RV/bus after playing at a local bar in Rock Hill, South Carolina, when two armed suspects, Dytavis Hinton and Demario Burris, barged into the vehicle flashing a handgun and demanding money.

Scott Thomas, the drummer for the band, was in the back of the vehicle when the commotion broke out. Thomas grabbed his pistol, came out from the back, and told the two criminals to leave. Burris, the robber armed with the handgun, opened fire and shot Thomas in the chest and across the abs and buttocks, severing a major artery. Even though he was seriously injured, Thomas was able to return fire, hitting and killing Burris and injuring Hinton.

Thanks to Thomas' quick thinking and selfless action, none of the other members of the band were injured. Thomas has undergone a series of life-saving surgeries to repair injuries sustained in the attack. Even though he is now going through physical therapy, the injuries are making it difficult to play the drums like he did before.

Scott did an interview with the ABC affiliate in New Bern, North Carolina, recounting the details of that crazy night. "I can't really get into [the details of the actual shooting] because of legal reasons. But I will say I've thought about it before it happened. I said anytime someone could think that we have thousands of dollars and they say 'well, let's get them.'"



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