



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 7, 2011

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## **The Goodness of America**

### **Woman Offers Serenity to Dying Teen**

When Kitty Genovese was stabbed to death before dozens of witnesses who failed to offer or seek proper aid for the young victim in 1964, Americans began to question whether the days of good Samaritanism were gone. However, stories like that involving Officer Quathisha Epps of the New York Police Department reaffirm that goodness continues to pervade this sad world.

Two summers ago, Police Officer Epps was off-duty and spending time with her family in her Eldridge Street apartment when she heard gunfire outside of her home. Immediately, she secured the safety of her own children before she ran outside in her nightgown, carrying towels, to provide last-minute comfort to a dying 17-year-old boy who had been shot.

“Baby, who did this to you?” she asked the young victim, Vincent Cruz, who was shot in the neck. She applied towels to Cruz’s bleeding neck and applied pressure to his wounds, but knew that there was no hope for the child. The wound would be fatal.

Aware that she would be the last person with whom Vincent Cruz took his final breaths, Epps wanted Cruz to feel an overwhelming sense of comfort. She explained, “He’s bleeding. He’s gurgling. I told him, ‘I’m here with you. You’re not by yourself. You’re very loved. Just hold on for me.’”

The *New York Post* reports, “As she held the boy, Epps called 911. She also realized there was a large knife lying on the pavement behind her. Still cradling the boy, she stretched her foot behind her, so she could hold her toe against the knife, and keep anyone in the gathering crowd from picking it up.”

As sirens could be heard in the distance, Epps continued to comfort the boy. “See, baby? They’re coming for you.”

Epps could sense that she was losing the young victim. She started chanting, “I love you. I love you. I love you. I love you,” to the stranger.

When asked if she knew the victim, she explained, “I’m talking to a victim. I don’t know a name, just someone lying in the street, dying.”

She added, “I just hope that, if the last thing he heard was that he was not by himself, and somebody genuinely loved him — if that’s all he heard before he closed his eyes — I’m happy.”

Vincent Cruz’s murderer, Ricardo Martinez, is currently on trial in Manhattan Supreme Court for the death of Cruz.

Despite the tragic ending to the story, the final moments of comfort Police Officer Epps provided for that young boy are truly a personification of Christian love.

### **Hit-and-run Hero Is Honored**

Mark Brown knew exactly how to respond when he witnessed a violent hit-and-run accident on February 3. He followed the 48-year-old, intoxicated driver, Rolando Aliaga, and used his truck to nudge Aliaga off the road as Aliaga tried to get away.

NBC Miami reported of the crime, “Police say Aliaga struck Charles Williams and 21-year-old Tyron Richemond as they were waiting for a bus in the area of Northwest 79th St. and 27th Ave. in Miami-



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Dade.”

Brown describes his emotional response to what he witnessed. “First disbelief, I guess, that was the first thing, like ‘wow, is it real?’ It was a sad day for all of us.”

Charles Williams is in serious condition and receiving treatment at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

Richmond, who was reportedly heading home from class at Miami-Dade College, unfortunately did not survive the accident. However, Richmond’s father, Vincent, is comforted by the knowledge that the person responsible for his son’s death has been brought to justice as a result of Brown’s heroic actions.

“He’s a hero.... He did a good job,” said Vincent. “God Bless him.”

Rolando Aliago is facing a number of charges, including DUI manslaughter, DUI property damage, and leaving the scene of an accident involving death and serious bodily injuries.

Richmond’s death notwithstanding, police and local community residents are celebrating the heroics of Mark Brown. Miami-Dade Police Director James Loftus remarked of Brown’s efforts, “We expect it from our cops, but when our citizens do that, it’s truly phenomenal.”

Hesitant to be treated as a hero, however, Brown responded, “I’m just an average citizen who’s working and concerned about the family.”

## **Men Rescue Woman From Fiery Vehicle**

The heroic efforts of off-duty state trooper Michael Carroll and good Samaritan Marcus Michael are the reasons Jennifer Wooster is alive today.

After having lost control of her vehicle in LaGrange County, Indiana, Wooster crashed into a utility pole. Her van instantly caught fire, drawing the attention of state trooper Carroll, who was driving through the area. Meanwhile, Wooster was pinned inside her vehicle, unable to escape.

Carroll explains, “As I got up there, I ran up and tried to take her out of the vehicle the best I could, but I just couldn’t do it. I just couldn’t do it by myself.”

Fortunately, Carroll didn’t have to do it by himself; local resident Marcus Michael was making his way through town as well. Marcus Michael immediately came to Carroll’s aid.

“Anything I could do to help her get out was common sense for me to do,” said Michael.

When Wooster was pulled from her vehicle, the men discovered that her legs were on fire, and immediately rolled her around in the snow to quell the flames.

Carroll refuses to be treated as a hero, asserting that he was doing his job, regardless of the fact that he was off duty at the time of the incident. Of Michael’s assistance, however, state trooper Carroll said, “Without Mr. Michael’s help, there was no getting her out of that vehicle. He was instrumental in helping me take her out of that vehicle, and to me, he’s the true hero in all of this.”



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