



## Exercising the Right

### Violence Engulfs Neighborhood

The NBC affiliate in Houston reported on March 1 about a violent home invasion that left a suspect dead. The neighborhood had recently experienced a sharp spike in crime, but things took a deadly turn on March 1. Authorities say that a man, who had just moved in, heard someone break the glass next to his front door. The man grabbed his firearm and went downstairs to investigate. The homeowner found a man trying to break in to his house and fired at him. When police arrived, they discovered the suspect dead at the scene. Danny Triplett, a neighbor who heard the shots, described the sound to KPRC 2. "It was pretty big. Boom," Triplett told Click2Houston.com.

Neighbor Jeffrey Hamby told Click2Houston.com that when he heard the shots in the middle of the night, he "thought someone was banging on my door." Sadly, Hamby thinks this is not an isolated episode of crime and violence that the community will experience. "This is not the end of it, it's just getting closer and closer to our front door," he said. Hamby did express regret over the senseless killing, saying, "It's a sad shame somebody loses their life over a handful of 20, 25, 30, 50 dollars."

Triplett said that the community might join resources and enlist private security, which they had done in the past. "We're going to the homeowner's association at our next meeting and we're going to get security out here again," Triplett told Click2Houston.com.

### No Other Choice

In another news story out of Houston, Click2Houston.com reported on February 26 about a family man who was forced to fire on an intruder in order to defend his wife and children. The homeowner heard a strange sound coming from the back of his house. "I saw a man trying to break in. He had two duffle bags with him. I screamed at him to leave several times and I heard him say 'I'm sorry.' I also heard him on the phone trying to call someone to come pick him up," the man told Click2Houston.com. The intruder actually left but then soon returned. The father did not want to take any chances, so he fired his shotgun at the burglar. "I have my family to protect. This is my home, so at that point I had no other choice," he said. The injured suspect fled from the home and was apprehended nearby by arriving police officers. The suspect was transported to a medical facility for treatment, is listed in stable condition, and is expected to survive.

### Savannah Self-defense

The *Savannah Morning News* reported on February 27 about a recent increase in armed self-defense among residents in Savannah, Georgia. Savannah-Chatham police spokesman Sonny Cohrs told the *Savannah Morning News* that although "we certainly do not want people taking the law into their own hands in a vigilante mind-set, responsible gun ownership to protect oneself is a constitutionally protected right."

Kim Lyles told the *Savannah Morning News* how her gun saved her life and the lives of her four children when a burglar broke in to her house the prior month. "I jumped up and grabbed my gun and I ran down the stairwell and I screamed 'I have a gun, I will shoot!'" she said. "I'm just a gun owner, and I keep it loaded.... I've always had one. I'm from Texas. I've always had a gun since I was 19 years old."



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It was difficult because I've never had to use a gun like that.... You don't know if he's coming up the stairs and what he's going to do. It's scary. If I hadn't had a gun, I don't know what I would have done. I have kids that were in the house." This incident was only one among many that involved everyday citizens using their firearms to stop lawbreakers and defend themselves.

Another Savannah resident held a 14-year-old teen at gunpoint with his handgun until police arrived. The man caught the young criminal breaking in to his vehicle and initially chased the suspect. He chased him down the street while on the phone with 911. "Instinct just kicked in, like, 'What do you do?... I grabbed (my wife's) phone, a pair of shorts and my pistol. It's got my ID, my license and my concealed permit and all that — it makes me legal," the man told the *Savannah Morning News*. The man eventually cornered the suspect in an alleyway and held him until the police arrived. "I followed everything by law, and as soon as the policeman told me to put the gun down, I went ahead and unloaded it," he said.

Earl Shadley, a salesman at Ortiz Custom Guns, told the *Savannah Morning News* that he has been witnessing a surge in sales over the past six months. "A lot of women are coming in and purchasing because they feel preyed upon.... They're perceived as easy targets. The ages range from 21 to 75 years old," he said. Shadley explained that his customers express disgust at what they view as a failing criminal justice system. "The government practices the method of catch-and-release.... Law enforcement is doing their job. You can read in the paper and see someone got a life sentence. But life doesn't mean for life (anymore). Our government is not protecting the citizens and people want to protect themselves," he added.

## **Liquor Store Robbery**

The Associated Press reported on February 22 out of Tampa about a robbery attempt at a liquor store that ended with a deceased suspect. Authorities say two men wearing ski masks and hoodies burst into the store and pointed guns at the clerk behind the counter. The armed robbers demanded cash, but the clerk was able to pull out his own gun. One of the criminals fired at the clerk, who returned fire, fatally wounding one of the robbers. The other suspect ran from the store, leaving his accomplice bleeding to death on the floor. The robber succumbed to his injuries and was found dead at the scene when responding officers arrived. Investigators believe that the shooting was in self-defense, but the case is being referred to the State Attorney's Office for a final determination.



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