



## Exercising the Right

### Retired Special Forces

Kens5.com reported on July 22 about a 78-year-old San Antonio homeowner who was forced to take an intruder's life. Seventy-eight-year-old Bill MacWithey is a retired Special Forces lieutenant colonel and author of over a dozen military-themed novels. MacWithey was home with his wife when they heard someone pounding on the door. The veteran explained to News4 in San Antonio that he had only seconds to react. MacWithey's wife grabbed the phone to call 911 to report a possible break-in. The pounding got louder, and the door handle broke from the force of the intruder beating on it. MacWithey's wife handed him a loaded gun and his military training kicked in. With the intruder in the doorway, MacWithey fired at the man, whom he described as a "huge guy." MacWithey told News4 that there "was no way to stop him but to shoot him." The bullet hit its mark, and the intruder collapsed at the scene only to later succumb to his injuries. Police soon arrived and discovered the body of the suspect. MacWithey regretted the suspect's death but felt that he was left with no other choice. "You have a right to protect yourself," MacWithey told News4.

Retired San Antonio Police Officer Gilbert De La Portilla explained that using deadly force in a self-defense scenario such as this requires rapid response skills. "It's just very quick, you need to make that decision," De La Portilla told News4. "When fear kicks in we just don't know how we are going to react," he added. De La Portilla suggested that homeowners should make sure their homes are secured with good locks and proper lighting, as well as practice using their guns at least three to four times per year.

### Have Faith

FOX59 in Indiana reported on July 6 about a 17-year-old girl whose quick thinking might have saved her life. Faith Shilkett was home alone in the middle of the day when the sound of her dog's barking alerted her to a stranger standing in front of her house. Faith described the man as "big." "He was muscular. He looked like he could do damage if he got a hold of you. I was scared if he got in, he could've hurt me," Faith told FOX59. She quickly ran through the house and made sure all of the entrances were locked. The young girl also went into her mother's bedroom and grabbed a gun. By that point, the man had gone around to the back of the house and tried opening the deck door. After the suspect couldn't get it to open, he went to the garage door and began moving the handle. Faith yelled at the man from inside the house while he entered the garage. "I stayed back here and I started yelling 'I'm here. I have a gun. I'm going to shoot,'" she told FOX59. Faith immediately called 911 and waited for police to arrive. She heard the sounds of the man moving around in the garage, and then saw him flee to a nearby vehicle and drive off.

Faith also called her mother, Amy Shilkett, to tell her about what was going on. The terrified mother left her work as quickly as possible. "Your child is your life. I couldn't even think straight.... All I was thinking is 'how quickly can I get here?'" Amy told FOX59. When the mother arrived home, the police were already on the scene, and she was grateful to find her daughter unharmed. Police did say that the suspect made off with some tools and a generator from the garage. Faith's mother was not upset about the stolen items though: "Items can be replaced, but obviously your daughter can't be. That was my biggest worry." Amy also said everyone should be prepared to make sure their loved ones are secure



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and able to defend themselves.

## Deadly Domestic Dispute

WHAS11, the ABC affiliate in Louisville, Kentucky, reported on July 19 about how a once-romantic relationship turned deadly. Police say growing threat culminated last October when Patrick Decker allegedly defied a restraining order and broke in to his ex-girlfriend's house. The woman, who wished to remain anonymous, grabbed her .22-caliber pistol and fired at Decker, hitting him in the chest. Decker would later die from his injury. The Grayson County sheriff said the shooting was a justifiable homicide owing to previously issued protective orders and evidence that showed Decker busted down the woman's door. The woman, who says she suffered physical abuse at the hands of Decker when they were in a relationship, told WHAS11, "Nobody deserves all the terrorizations [sic] that I went through, nobody knows everything and I honestly did love him, I just want[ed] him to go away." Despite having a court order to stay away from the woman, Decker allegedly tried breaking in to her home while she was there with her son. The woman's 10-year-old boy called 911 while she grabbed her gun. "All I can tell you is I have one brave little boy, when this whole situation happened back in October, he's the one who called 911," she told WHAS11. The woman cautioned other women in abusive relationships. "He hit me one time, [he] said I'm sorry, it's okay because he loves me and I love him. It ain't okay, not the first time is it ever okay," she told WHAS11.

## Toy Gun

The *Miami Herald* reported on July 27 about an attempted break-in that occurred in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, which resulted in the death of the suspect. Fifty-one-year-old Gary Peterson was known in the area as a drifter who battled with drug addiction. That long battle came to an end when he allegedly tried breaking in to Curtis Traylor's house.

The Broward County sheriff's office told the *Miami Herald* that Peterson was wearing a mask and forced his way into the house while armed with what appeared to be a gun, but was, in fact, a toy. Peterson began struggling with Traylor and their fight spilled into the house. At some point, Traylor broke free and was able to retrieve his own gun. Traylor fired one time, fatally injuring Peterson, whose lifeless body was discovered by officers who arrived on the scene. A nearby neighbor said that Peterson's actions were not unusual for him. "I've known him since high school.... He was always doing crazy stuff like that," the neighbor told the *Miami Herald*. Peterson's criminal record was littered with the types of charges you would see from a drug addict.

— Patrick Krey



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