



Exercising the Right

Housesitters Fend Off Intruder

The ABC affiliate in Omaha, Nebraska, reported on August 6 about a man who broke in to a house that was being watched by two housesitters. The incident happened around 2:15 a.m., when the two housesitters woke up to the sounds of someone kicking in a door to one of the bedrooms. One of the housesitters, 19-year-old Zachary Schmid, grabbed a pistol he kept nearby and fired at the intruder. The injured assailant fled the scene, but was found by authorities not far from the house. The suspect, 26-year-old Darrick Minner, was taken to a nearby medical facility for surgery and is expected to survive. Police would later say that Minner was an ex-boyfriend of the homeowner and that charges are pending.

Deranged Man Shot by Homeowner

Michigan Live (MLive.com) reported on August 5 about a home invasion that involved a deranged intruder who claimed to have just killed a police officer. The occupants of the house were bothered shortly after midnight by the sounds of someone entering through an unlocked door. One of the residents grabbed his 9mm pistol, confronted the trespasser, and yelled for him to leave, but the man refused. The intruder also made a terrifying claim about killing a police officer. The residents called 911 to report the intruder, and police were already in the area owing to a single-vehicle accident that had occurred just down the road a few moments previously. Law enforcement would later learn as part of their investigation that the car crash and the home invasion were linked, as the intruder was allegedly the driver of the vehicle.

Clare County sheriff's deputies arrived on the scene and entered the house while the suspect was still there. At that moment, the suspect began running through the house and broke in to one of the bedrooms. A resident then fired his pistol at the intruder one time, and hit the suspect in the neck. The injured suspect was transported to a local hospital for treatment. There were no other reported injuries.

Michigan State Police Lieutenant Gary Green told MLive.com that the suspect was in "stable condition." Green said the suspect had an outstanding warrant from the Department of Corrections and had been in a car crash down the road prior to the home invasion. "He didn't want to go back to prison, and so he fled from that crash," Green said to MLive.com. "This was kind of an isolated incident.... He just picked a house at random to try to get away. I don't know how you could prepare for that as a family," he said. Green did advise homeowners to verify their doors are locked and to always be prepared if trouble rears its ugly head. Green also told CNN, "If you feel like your life is in danger, you do have the right to defend yourself. I'm not saying that's what happened, that's part of this investigation."

Alabama Open Carry

The *Cullman Times* out of Alabama reported on August 2 about public reaction to the state's open carry laws. You can openly carry a firearm in Alabama without any special licensing requirements, but concealed carry still requires special authorization. The 2013 law also expanded the rights of gun owners to open carry in most businesses.



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Reporter David Palmer interviewed people on their views about the law and got varying responses. Cullman Police Chief Kenny Culpepper told the *Cullman Times* that “some people may want to make a point that they can do this by law and certainly we recognize the right to own guns.... One of the concerns under the law now is that if you were drunk and carrying a gun you could have your license revoked. Under this law you can carry a gun, provided you’re not a felon and get drunk and you don’t lose the right to carry it. The old adage guns and alcohol don’t mix still holds merit.”

Sheriff Matt Gentry described himself as “very pro Second Amendment” and told the *Cullman Times*, “I want citizens to be able to protect themselves because law enforcement may be minutes away, and a citizen may only have a minute.... The most important thing to me is that you know how to properly handle your firearms so that you and others are safe.”

Cullman resident Jerry Parker is a strong supporter of the law, and he told the *Cullman Times* that he carries a gun “for self-preservation.” Parker also stressed that our increasingly violent times require fast action. “The world has changed and there are some crazy people out there. You don’t have just radical Islamists, you have people targeting police officers and that’s nuts in our country.” Parker added, “I know owning and carrying a gun comes with an immense responsibility.”

Smith Lake resident Lee Hart feels that open carry helps discourage criminal activity. “In a lot of ways I feel like if more people open carry it would put an end to some problems. I think it could be a deterrent to some crimes.”

Reverend John Richter, pastor of St. John’s Evangelical Protestant Church in Cullman, was one of the law’s few detractors, who felt that more people carrying arms will not reduce gun violence. “My guess is open carry will not make us a safer society. I understand people need to feel safe.... We do have a spiritual problem and a culture that has an increasingly secularized world view. I’m more concerned about the problems that cause us to feel this way.”

The longtime owner of Wilborn Outdoors, Dennis Wilborn, told the *Cullman Times* about how his business model has changed almost totally to self-defense weapons and accessories. “I started my store as a place to get things to enjoy life, for hunting and fishing.... Now, just about everybody is here for self-protection — guns, ammo and the accessories. It’s really sad, but people are worried because of so many things that have happened in our country.” Overall though, Wilborn was grateful for the changes in the law that made it easier to carry firearms: “The way it is now I’m glad people can carry guns. I know someone can get to their gun if all hell breaks loose.”

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