



Exercising the Right

Off-duty Cop Shoots Knife-wielding Intruder

The Associated Press reported out of Laurel, Maryland, on August 9 about a criminal who picked the wrong home to burglarize. The suspect, 31-year-old David Bartholmew, broke in to a house in the middle of the day. The homeowner, who was actually home at the time, unbeknownst to the intruder, was an off-duty Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission police officer. The officer's training served him well, as he quickly retrieved his service firearm and called 911 when he heard the sounds of someone breaking in to his home. The officer then went to investigate and encountered Bartholmew, who threatened him with a knife. The officer fired his gun and struck Bartholmew in the arm. The injured suspect attempted to run from the house, but was apprehended by authorities responding to the 911 call.

Black Bear Lives Matter

The *Redlands Daily Facts* reported on August 8 out of Forest Falls, California, about a series of home invasions by a black bear that was finally ended by an armed man.

Julie Strauja had a problem with a black bear that was repeatedly breaking in to her house looking for food. The late summer and early fall is the time of year when bears are most likely to intrude on human dwellings looking for food. Part of the problem is that once a bear learns that human habitations typically offer easy access to food, they will continually return to the scene of the crime. Kevin Brennan, a biologist with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, gave a speech to a community meeting at the Valley of the Falls Community Church after the shooting. "A fed bear is a dead bear," Brennan told the gathering. "It's a cliché, but it's true.... The same problems tend to occur over and over again: intentional feeding, unsecured garbage or pet food left out," Brennan said in the community meeting.

The local San Bernardino County sheriffs were familiar with the black bear that began terrorizing Strauja's house long before it ever targeted Strauja, but something made the creature become more aggressive, and it began repeatedly breaking in to Strauja's home in late July. The woman and her family employed many non-lethal methods to drive the creature away, such as spraying it with mace and shooting it with bean bag rounds, but the creature kept returning. "You can spray a bear with pepper spray, but he's going to come right back if he knows there's food there," biologist Brennan said in the community meeting.

The bear committed home invasions on three consecutive nights, with the animal becoming more aggressive with each incident. The bear just ate some food the first night, but on the second night, the beast attacked the family dog. The pet was not fatally injured, but Strauja realized this was becoming an increasingly dangerous situation. When the animal returned on the third night, a friend of Strauja's shot and killed the bear. The friend had a depredation permit from the Department of Fish and Wildlife, which is something that is granted by the State of California to allow the permittee to kill a nuisance bear. Strauja thought her terrifying ordeal was finally over, but then she faced an online barrage of criticism including death threats. "That's what made the situation so horrific: It wasn't the bear dying, it was the way people responded," Strauja told the *Redlands Daily Facts*. One local resident went so far as to post Strauja's address online and invite others to harass the woman. Overall though, Strauja had no



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regrets. "I don't regret what I did.... My kids come first."

Biologist Brennan suggested residents take extra precaution when bagging their garbage and locking their dumpsters. Brennan also said it's a good practice to take in their bird feeders and dirty barbecue grills. "People who are attracting bears to their home, we can't issue a depredation permit until they clean that up," Brennan said. Brennan also said that residents should never feed bears on purpose, which is extremely dangerous. "Intentional feeding is probably one of the most selfish things you can do," Brennan said in the community meeting. "That bear ends up dead."

Burglar Shot With His Own Gun

The Fox Affiliate out of Kansas City, Missouri, reported on August 9 about a homeowner who turned the tables on a thug who broke in to his home. Authorities were called to the home after an ADT alarm went off in the middle of the night because a motion sensor detected movement in the garage. The homeowner was alerted to the intruder by the same alarm and hopped out of bed to confront the burglar, who turned out to be armed. The two men got into a scuffle, and the homeowner was able to wrest the pistol away from the intruder and shoot him with it. The injured suspect attempted to flee the scene, but collapsed outside the house. The homeowner was in a state of shock from the incident and ran to a neighbor's house to ask for help. The neighbor then called police to report the shooting. Authorities arrived shortly afterward and discovered 30-year-old Monte Hill in the front yard of the house suffering from a gunshot wound to the stomach. Hill was transported to a nearby medical facility, where he was listed in critical condition. Jackson County prosecutors charged Hill with burglary and armed criminal action.

15-Year-Old Shoots Intruder With Shotgun

The CBS Affiliate in Coos Bay, Oregon, reported on August 5 about a self-defense incident in Myrtle Point. A 15-year-old boy was home alone when an intruder broke in to his house. The boy feared for his safety and grabbed a loaded shotgun and fired at the intruder, hitting him in the leg. Coos County District Attorney Rob Frasier said the brave young boy's actions were justified under state law. "That's clearly what happened here.... This guy was committing a burglary and the young man in question was obviously scared about what was going on and so, no question in my mind that this was justifiable." Fraiser told KCBY. The suspect was taken to the hospital for non-life threatening injuries and is expected to be charged shortly.

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