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Exercising the Right

Caught in the Act by an App

The CBS affiliate 10News reported on August 30 out of Tampa, Florida, about how new technology is changing the way security companies notify their customers of break-ins. Twenty-five-year-old Jordan King was away from her house when an alert on her cellphone notified her that her home was being broken in to. The burglary suspect had unknowingly tripped a motion sensor, which alerted the security company that provides the app. This caused a video camera in the house to begin recording the suspect, while simultaneously sending a live feed to Jordan's phone. Jordan was able to view a real-time video of an intruder rummaging through her house. The young woman immediately called both 911 and then her father, Jerry King, for assistance. King, who lives near his daughter's house, grabbed his pistol as soon as he learned what was happening and ran to the scene of the crime. Jerry King confronted the suspected burglar in the fenced-in backyard and shot him after King said the suspect made menacing motions. Authorities are still investigating, but they believe the suspect may have had something in his hand that put the father in fear for his life and resulted in the father shooting the suspect. Authorities arrived on the scene shortly afterward, and the injured suspect was transported to a nearby medical facility with serious injuries.

10News interviewed 90-year-old Samuel Sanders, who lives down the street from the crime, and Sanders explained that, at first, he didn't realize that the gunshot he heard was related to a break-in. "When I heard the shot, I don't know, I thought somebody might have been shooting at a possum."

Tampa Police spokesman Steve Hegarty spoke with 10News about technological advances that have greatly improved dealing with burglaries. "The technology has really come around.... We've had some burglaries where video was very helpful. But that was helpful after the fact.... In this case, the woman was actually able to see someone as they were inside her home."

College student Corey Thompson also spoke with 10News about the appeal of security cameras that can send video to your mobile device. "We're always on our phones too ... you know this generation ... so this would be something nice for kids like us living in the house. It's definitely something we should do.... That's something that's good for college students with us not being at the house all the time and with us being on campus for long portions of time that would definitely help out."

Burglary Ain't What It Used to Be

This column previously reported on 33-year-old ex-NFL player Stanley Wilson II, who was shot by a homeowner during an attempted break-in in Portland, Oregon. Wilson was completely nude at the time and was discovered in the home's backyard water fountain by police. According to the police investigation, Wilson had broken in to multiple homes the day he was shot.

In an article covering the most recent developments in the case against Wilson, as well as other high-profile shootings related to home break-ins, the *Oregonian* featured an interview with a law professor on August 19 about the economics of home break-ins. Lewis & Clark law professor Doug Beloof explained that burglars typically don't break in when residents are likely to be home or returning home soon, but if they do, it might be a sign that the burglar is even more unhinged than usual. "One could infer that people who are mentally ill or addled by drugs might be more likely to take that risk than



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professional burglars would be.” Beloof stressed that, financially speaking, home break-ins are rarely very lucrative and that the risk to the potential criminal if a victim is home is not worth the slim chance of recovering anything of value. “If you’re going to be a criminal, breaking into a house is a really bad idea,” Beloof said. Besides the fact that you might encounter an armed homeowner who may kill you, home break-ins are not as profitable as they once were. Beloof cited stolen electronics as an example. Electronics used to garner substantial money on the black market, but now they don’t fetch as much since electronics have become more affordable and technology changes so fast. Beloof added that the reduced financial reward might mean that people willing to break in are more likely to be desperate. “Then the question is why is someone breaking into the house?... If it is not a very good opportunity to get things of value, it makes the person more dangerous, (because then) why are they there?”

Knife-wielding Intruder Stopped by Armed Homeowner

The NBC affiliate in Los Angeles reported on August 9 about a terrifying break-in in Norwalk, California, that involved a suspect armed with a knife. Lt. Jeff Dusky of the Los Angeles County Sheriff’s Department told NBC that the homeowner was home with his wife and five children when the incident occurred. The father heard someone attempting to break in to the house and went to investigate. “The suspect attempted to enter the residence by breaking through some doors at the rear of the house,” Lt. Dusky told NBC.

The intruder was able to enter the house through the broken doors and was walking through the house when the father shot the man. Police were called to the scene by the man’s wife and discovered the injured suspect fleeing the scene. The suspect was taken to a nearby hospital for treatment of his gunshot wounds. The sheriff’s department said it appears likely the father’s actions were in self-defense.

A neighbor talked to NBC about hearing the gunshot, which she initially thought was a firework going off: “It did scare me,” Lizbeth Campechano said. “My window was open, so my dad had to come and try to close it.” n

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