



Exercising the Right

“Devastated”

The *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported on November 2 that an elderly homeowner who was forced to shoot two burglars was overcome with remorse after the incident. The 73-year-old retired fireman was working in his garage when two armed intruders barged in and demanded his vehicle. The man had a pistol concealed in his pocket and quickly pulled it out and fired at the two men. The shots hit their marks, and the two injured men stumbled to the ground, where they were pronounced dead by arriving authorities. Captain Mary Warnecke, supervisor of the homicide unit of the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department, told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* that “it appears the homeowner acted in self-defense.” Law enforcement later identified the deceased suspects as two young men from nearby Florissant and Ferguson.

Neighbor Peggy Armbruster, who lives across the street from where the shooting occurred, told the paper that the homeowner who fired the fatal shots had lived in the area with his wife for a long time and that both are “super, super nice people.” Armbruster explained that the man would routinely remove snow from her porch or assist another “neighbor who is blind.” Armbruster did say that the man had been the victim of a burglary in the past, and she also knew he was an avid hunter.

The homeowner was very upset over the incident, even though he fired because he feared for his life, regretting that he was forced to end two lives: “I wish it had never happened.... I am devastated over it.”

Intruder Killed in Pizza Hut Robbery

WSOCTV.com reported on October 31 about a late-night attempted robbery of a Pizza Hut that ended with one deceased suspect. The crime occurred in Charlotte, North Carolina, where three armed men tried breaking in to a Pizza Hut store after it had closed. One of the employees still in the place had his own pistol on him, and he fired it at an armed suspect. The injured criminal fell to the ground as his accomplices fled the scene. Police soon arrived and found the deceased body of the suspect lying not far from where he was shot. Authorities also discovered the handgun that the suspect was carrying. Pizza Hut released a statement following the shooting that explained “that the employee involved in the shooting has been placed on a leave of absence following further review.” WSOCTV.com contacted Pizza Hut’s corporate offices to determine if Pizza Hut had a company-wide policy on carrying guns, and a spokesman explained that it varied by franchise.

Accomplice Faces Felony Murder Charge

WTHR.com out of Muncie, Indiana, reported on October 8 about a shooting that resulted in the death of a burglary suspect trying to break in to an apartment. A female resident was home alone when she heard the sounds of someone breaking her door down. Two armed, masked men broke through the door and fired into the apartment, but the fast-acting woman returned fire at the intruders. The woman hit both suspects with her fire. She shot one of the suspects, Trayvon Turner of Indianapolis, in his head, and he died at the scene. The other suspect fled, but was apprehended by police.

The *Star Press* later reported that 21-year-old Delon Martez Owens, also of Indianapolis, was the



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masked intruder taken into custody by police. Owens, who was also Turner's cousin, was arrested after he checked in to a medical facility for treatment of his bullet wounds. The strange detail in this story is that Owens had attended a party at the victim's apartment a few hours earlier. Owens is facing charges for burglary with a deadly weapon, two counts of robbery, and carrying a handgun without a license. He might also be charged with felony murder in his cousin's death. Chief Deputy Prosecutor Eric Hoffman said he's exploring the application of a felony murder charge in both Owens' case and a similar case involving an accomplice of a deceased suspect. "We're considering that," Hoffman told the *Star Press*. "I've conducted research. It's a possibility and it may happen in the near future in those cases.... What the Supreme Court has said is that you can charge and convict somebody of felony murder (when an accomplice in a criminal conspiracy has been killed)." Hoffman explained to the *Star Press* that the burden for the prosecutor is to answer two questions: "Did the defendant engage in dangerous conduct? And was it reasonably foreseeable that someone's death could occur?"

Pyromaniac Threatens Family

The *Lubbock Avalanche Journal* reported out of Lubbock, Texas, on October 23 that a father was forced to shoot an intruder after the suspect broke in to the family's house in the middle of the night. The family of six was fast asleep when one of the children was awakened by the sound of someone breaking in through a back door to the home. The child alerted his father that someone was in the house, and the father armed himself and went to investigate while his wife dialed 911. The father confronted the intruder in a lower level of the home and yelled for him to leave. Instead of heeding the homeowner's warnings, the suspect became irate and began pouring lighter fluid onto the floor and tried setting the house on fire. The suspect repeatedly tried to set the lighter fluid on fire with his lighter, but he couldn't get it to light. The father yelled for the deranged intruder to stop, but the suspect refused. The father fired one shot, which hit the intruder in his abdomen. Police soon arrived on the scene and found the injured man lying on the floor. The wounded intruder was taken for treatment to a nearby medical facility and charged with burglary of a habitation with intent to commit a felony (arson). He is being held on a \$200,000 bond and faces a potential sentence of five years if convicted.

— Patrick Krey



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