



Written by [Patrick Krey](#) on March 19, 2018

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## **Exercising the Right**

### **Off-duty Customs Agent Shoots Intruder**

U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) is the largest law-enforcement agency operating within the Department of Homeland Security. CBP agents are normally tasked with enforcing U.S. regulations related to trade, customs, and immigration. On February 12, one CBP agent was forced to use her training to defend her own home.

According to the ABC affiliate in Pembroke Park, Florida, a break-in occurred at the Pinecrest, Florida, home of a female CBP agent. The incident unfolded around 1 a.m., when police say an intruder broke a sliding glass door to gain access to the woman's house. The woman was jarred from her sleep by the sound of the shattering glass and quickly retrieved her government-issued .40-caliber pistol. The off-duty agent confronted the intruder and fired at him multiple times. Police were soon called to the house, where they discovered the body of the deceased suspect.

Neighbor Steve Leonard told ABC10 he was "a bit surprised, a bit shocked, but you know, it's a very quiet neighborhood around here." But he added, "Well, it is Miami, so it can happen, but not in this neighborhood. This tends to happen in other neighborhoods. But this area has scared me always a bit because we're so close to U.S. 1, so it's a quick getaway."

CBP is investigating the break-in and shooting, as is the Miami-Dade Police Department. The female agent, who has been with CBP for 25 years and is the branch chief for the Miami CBP office, was placed on administrative leave, which is standard protocol after a government-issued firearm is used.

### **Prison Grudge Carried Over**

In a similar story out of Philadelphia involving an off-duty law-enforcement professional having to resort to armed self-defense, NBC10 reported that a corrections officer who was just getting off work was violently attacked by a recently discharged inmate from the same correctional facility!

Twenty-six-year-old Jamal Bennett was discharged from the Curran-Fromhold Correctional Facility, and instead of leaving the site, Bennett apparently stuck around and, after a 45-minute wait, confronted a prison guard who was getting off work. Sixty-six-year-old Michael Maratea, who is a veteran correctional officer with 27 years on the job, told Bennett to stop approaching his car, but Bennett did not comply. Investigators say the two men then got into a physical altercation. Maratea broke free from the struggle and ran to his vehicle, but Bennett followed and allegedly tried climbing into the car. Maratea grabbed his service gun, and Bennett reached for it at the same time. Maratea fired his gun and shot Bennett one time in the chest. Maratea called 911 to report the deadly altercation. Both Maratea and Bennett were taken for treatment at a nearby medical facility. Maratea was released after being treated for head and neck pain, but Bennett was listed in critical condition.

Philadelphia Police Chief Inspector Scott Small told NBC10 that Bennett had had multiple run-ins with the law prior to the latest incident and was in custody for two weeks on probation and gun violations but was just released owing to a court order. "It seems like he was starting his life of crime over again within minutes of being released."

The local union for correctional officers, AFSCME District Council 33, expressed frustration to NBC10



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about what happened, and they claimed the attack was the result of poor parking-lot security. “These inmates, they don’t like corrections officers inside the walls and they don’t like them outside the walls.”

The commissioner of Philadelphia prisons, Blanche Carney, told NBC10 that she takes her responsibility to protect correctional officers from exactly this type of threat very seriously. “I’m responsible for them and when we see a situation that presents itself and we’re able to correct it and address it, we do.” The correctional facility in question recently upgraded the lighting in the area where the attack occurred, but there are currently no surveillance cameras in that location.

## Shooting Out Tires?

Victor Valley (California) News reported on February 5 about some proactive neighbors who actually stopped a burglary in progress and held the suspects until police arrived. The crime occurred in the early morning of February 3 when two home invaders forced their way into a house in Apple Valley, California. The two burglars were only in the house for a few minutes before an armed neighbor burst in and stopped them. The alert neighbor heard some commotion and grabbed his firearm to assist as best he could. The armed neighbor herded the two suspects out of the house and shot out the tires on their escape vehicle. Another neighbor heard the gunshots, armed himself with a shotgun, and ran over to help. The two armed neighbors then held the suspects while they called 911 to report the crime. Sheriffs soon arrived and arrested the two suspects for burglary, and booked them into the local detention center on \$75,000 bail.

Police investigators were soon able to link the suspects to previous burglaries at the same house, which occurred late last year and early this year and involved thousands of dollars’ worth of property being stolen. It appears that the criminals returned to the scene of the crime, hoping to repeat their past success. These prior crimes also explain why the neighbors were so alert and prepared to intervene this time. After getting a search warrant for one of the suspect’s residences, deputies were able to retrieve the majority of the stolen property as well as “22.4 grams of suspected Methamphetamine, four guns, and ammunition.” The two suspects had additional charges added to their growing list of crimes, which included possession of drugs for sale, possession of guns with drugs, and possession of stolen property. Both suspects also had their bail increased by \$50,000.

The sheriff’s office did state that firing a handgun at the tires of the getaway vehicle was overzealous. The sheriff’s office indicated that the San Bernardino County District Attorney’s Office is exploring possibly charging the neighbor for “reckless discharge of a firearm at an uninhabited vehicle.”

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