



Exercising the Right

Road Rage Leads to Deadly Shooting

One of the most important things a gun owner must learn is to never let his emotions dictate his actions. A tragic story out of Covington, Kentucky, drove home that point when a fender-bender turned deadly. WTVQ.com reported on October 12 about the incident, which occurred on Interstate 75 in Fort Wright, Kentucky. What happened next was caught on a 911 call.

Investigators say that 43-year-old Joshua G. Taylor, of Cincinnati, called 911 right after the accident occurred and told the dispatcher that he just had a collision with another vehicle in what he described as a “road rage” incident. Taylor’s voice got increasingly louder as he stated that he could see the driver from the other vehicle approaching him with a rifle drawn. There was a brief verbal interaction between the two men, shouting at each other, before Taylor fired multiple shots at the other armed man. Taylor then told the dispatcher that he shot the other man, and he began administering first aid.

Fort Wright Police and a Kenton County Sheriff’s Department deputy soon arrived on the scene and found 41-year-old John Patrick Abell suffering from multiple gunshot wounds. Abell was transported to a nearby medical facility, where he was later pronounced dead. Taylor was taken into custody and questioned but was released based on guidance from the commonwealth’s attorney. Investigators recovered the rifle at the scene that, they say, Abell was carrying. Investigators determined that the gun was not loaded and had a trigger lock in place, but this didn’t matter, as the commonwealth’s attorney explained. Commonwealth’s Attorney Rob Sanders publicly announced that the homicide was justifiable and explained, “Kentucky law states an individual is justified in the use of physical force upon another when the individual believes such force is necessary to protect against the use of unlawful force by another person.... The investigation by Ft. Wright and Kenton County Police Departments conclusively found the shooter was reasonably in fear for his own life and responded lawfully.... There was no way for Mr. Taylor to know the rifle being stuck in his face was inoperable.... So that does not make his reaction unreasonable or unlawful.... In fact, anyone who has a gun pointed at him should always assume the gun is loaded.”

Neither man had a criminal record, although investigators did locate multiple empty liquor bottles in Abell’s vehicle, and witnesses stated that they believe the man was intoxicated based on his erratic driving prior to the collision. Investigators interviewed more than a dozen witnesses who corroborated Taylor’s version of the event. Multiple witnesses also took photos on their cellphones that showed Abell holding his rifle and pointing it at Taylor while Taylor was still in his vehicle. One witness, Taylor Wirthlin, shared her own thoughts on what she thought was a pointless but inevitable shooting. Wirthlin told WKRC, “We think in that same situation, we would have done the exact same thing, self-defend. You have family; you have kids. We aren’t thrilled that we witnessed the whole thing. I mean, it was pretty crazy to see that, but, I mean, it just happens. Stuff like that happens and people need to be careful with what they’re doing and slow down and think.”

With Friends Like This

Facing constant attacks on the Second Amendment, defenders of gun rights will usually welcome any other like-minded advocates, but an October 2 story by the *Hartford Courant* (Connecticut) reminds us



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that we need to be careful about who we align with. The *Courant* profiled an activist by the name of Cornell Lewis, who organized a demonstration in the north end of Hartford to inform the general public that black people like him “will embrace the Second Amendment, if we have to, to defend ourselves.” That sounds great, of course, as every American should embrace our Second Amendment rights, regardless of their race, but then Lewis followed that up by stating, “People may say that guns are not the way to go but it’s not their arse that is being threatened. Black people are being threatened and abused by the system, by the police.”

That statement is problematic in itself because it seems to imply that black people should be arming themselves to use their guns against the police. This obviously would only result in increased violence, and is a reckless statement to make. Lewis then also said, “If white people don’t like it they can always go back to where they came from and be white there.” These remarks are obviously racially inflammatory, not to mention also extremely confusing. Besides the fact that if such a statement was said in the reverse by a white person there would be national outrage and a targeted harassment campaign against the speaker, Lewis seems to be endorsing some type of racial separatism. When Lewis says that white people can go back to “where they came from,” is he referring to Europe? And, if so, is he suggesting that white people who disagree with them should leave this country and make a homeland in Europe somewhere?

These remarks are alarming, but they weren’t the only things Lewis said that were eyebrow-raising. The *Hartford Courant* story concluded by noting that Lewis had organized his demonstration to be racially segregated, with only “people of color” being allowed to walk in the streets. White people were shunted to the sidewalks. Lewis explained his rationale to the *Courant* as being retaliation for what he perceived as unfair treatment he received for demonstrations in areas that are majority white. “When we go to protests in the suburbs, they say ‘This is our neighborhood, get out.’ But this is our neighborhood.... You can’t tell me we can’t do what we want in our neighborhood.”

Lewis was able to get around 200 people to march in a demonstration that ostensibly was directed toward supporting gun rights, but Second Amendment supporters should not be rushing to praise him without scrutinizing the totality of his words and deeds.



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