



A Hero Emerges From the Horror of the Las Vegas Shootings

In the haste to cover a story that appeared initially to mesh with the anti-gun agenda, at least two media outlets [covering the ghastly murderous attacks](#) in Las Vegas on Sunday skipped over the real hero: Joseph Robert Wilcox. *USA Today's* initial reporting of the incident made only passing reference to the man who likely cut short what was planned to be a massive attack on innocents, referring to Wilcox as just “another man” who was shot in the Walmart melee. But the paper gave Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, the senior senator from Nevada, plenty of ink: “All of Nevada mourns the tragic loss of our neighbors, our friends, and in the case of Officers Alyn Beck and Igor Soldo, our protectors.”



Failing to note the other protector who gave his life in the attack, the paper instead reported that Reid called once again for universal background checks for gun purchases as “a good start ... to prevent deranged individuals [like these] from carrying out such savage acts of violence.”

Deep into its report, *USA Today* finally noted Wilcox’s actions, summarizing Deputy Sheriff Kevin McMahill who told a press conference that “Joseph Wilcox, 31, was in the store and was carrying a concealed weapon. Wilcox walked past Amanda Miller and confronted her husband. Amanda Miller then fatally shot Wilcox.”

Nothing was said about the fact that Wilcox’s actions probably thwarted what was planned to be a broad attack on civilians, not only at the Walmart store but at the county courthouse nearby. Nothing was said about how the heavily armed murderers were carrying a shotgun and four handguns and more than 200 rounds of ammunition to complete their mission. Nothing was said about Wilcox recognizing the threat and, rather than retreating from it, moving toward it in an attempt to neutralize it. Nothing was said about Wilcox exhibiting the traits of a sheepdog protecting the flock.

The *Los Angeles Times* was equally oblivious to the real hero, reporting instead that when the police arrived they “found a dead shopper at the front of the store ... who [had been] innocently going about her [sic] daily life.”

It took a local paper, the *Las Vegas Review Journal*, to do a proper job of explaining what happened, and how Wilcox’s actions likely prevented the attack from escalating dramatically. Late Sunday morning Jerad Miller and his wife Amanda entered a pizza shop where two police officers were having lunch. After walking past them, Jerad turned back and murdered both of them and then removed their weapons and ammunition from their bodies. They then left the shop and ran across the mall to the nearby Walmart store.



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 10, 2014

Jerad entered the store, fired a round in the air and shouted “This is a revolution!” As panicked shoppers ducked behind counters or headed for the exits, Wilcox instead turned toward the threat. Before he had time to end the threat with his own weapon, Wilcox was gunned down by Amanda, who got behind him unnoticed by posing as a shopper pushing a cart. She shot Wilcox at point blank range, and he instantly collapsed.

But that brief interlude gave Las Vegas police time to arrive and confront the attackers. Amanda shot her husband and then turned her gun on herself, ending the attack.

The *Journal*, to its credit, reported Clark County Sheriff Doug Gillespie saying, “Joseph died attempting to protect others.” Deputy Sheriff McMahill added, “[Wilcox] was carrying a concealed weapon and he immediately and heroically moved toward the position of Jerad Miller.”

That Wilcox was no “ordinary shopper” was confirmed when his uncle, John Wilson, learned of his heroism: “He heard the threat to everyone and was trying to stop it. He wasn’t trying to be a hero. He was trying to do what he thought should be done.”

Wilcox was in the store returning a modem that he had purchased in his attempt to fix his parents’ Internet connection. He didn’t always carry a sidearm, but on Sunday he did. With the means, and the will, Wilcox was the unsung hero that day, all but ignored by the national media. As Dan Cannon, writing at [GunsSaveLives.com](#), expressed it:

The actions of this carrier may have allowed other shoppers to escape the area unharmed. He may have also put an early end to a killing spree that the couple planned on lasting longer. We know that the suspects took the slain officers’ weapons and ammo. We also know, based on the report above, that the female suspect seemed to be attempting to pose as a shopper.

Based on these facts, it’s possible that the pair of suspects planned to ambush responding officers inside the department store. The time it took to engage this concealed carrier as well as the fact that their shots gave away their positions, may have very well allowed responding officers to more effectively engage the pair, ensuring no other officers were shot or killed.

This is what sheepdogs do. They don’t want to, but they’re willing to. Joseph Robert Wilcox was a “sheepdog” that day, protecting the flock. One will be hard-pressed, however, to find any such explanation of what happened in Las Vegas on Sunday from the national media. What happened in Las Vegas sounded too much like NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre when he remarked following the Newtown, Connecticut, massacre: “The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.”

For the national media, Wilcox was invisible on that dreadful Sunday. For those who were there, Wilcox was a hero.

Photo of Las Vegas Metropolitan Police on the scene of the shooting on June 8: AP Images

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