



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 18, 2014

Armed Business Owners Scare Away Looters in Ferguson

The night after Michael Brown was shot by a policeman in Ferguson, Missouri, some business owners realized that their stores — their very livelihoods — were in danger. They also [discovered](#) that the police were busy elsewhere, or had been ordered to “stand down” in the wake of the looting that followed the shooting. They had two choices: run away and leave the fate of those businesses to the tender mercies of the looters, or stand and defend them.



For Adam Weinstein, the owner of County Guns in a Florissant strip mall about 10 minutes from where Brown was shot, the decision was easy: “We didn’t want them coming in here and then running around with a bunch of free guns,” he asserted. So he enlisted the assistance of his next-door neighbor, Mike Gutierrez, owner of Riverfront Tattoo, and together with some friends and employees, they stood guard in front of their businesses.

The fact that they were armed — some with handguns, others with semi-automatic rifles — was enough to discourage looters, who had a change of heart and instantly revised their “victim selection process.” Instead they headed across the mall and ransacked a women’s clothing store, Up N Up Fashion. According to news reports, owner Silas Chung was unarmed and unable to defend his store, even though it had been burgled twice before in the nine years he owned it. Chung lamented: “They never break in like this before, so big like this.”

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Early on in the melee police were arresting looters, including a miscreant attempting to break into the Shop ‘n Save just down the road. Others were let go, or else were just ignored by the police. A nearby Cricket Wireless store was undefended, and with the police otherwise occupied, it was plundered.

When Target, Dollar General, and Walmart stores were attacked and looted and a QuikTrip convenience store was burned to the ground, this got the attention of the owner of Mally’s Supermarket, who lined up some people to help him defend his store. Once again, the mere presence of half a dozen armed citizens was enough to alter looters’ initial plans, and they left Mally’s alone.

By Saturday there were photographs all over the Internet of business owners dressed for success, armed with all manner of firearms, wearing shirts proclaiming “All Damn Day” and other slogans warning looters to buzz off.

As a local Fox News affiliate was looking into the matter, it learned that due to orders from some police officials, officers had been ordered to “stand down” and let the looters pillage to their hearts’ content. When the affiliate pressed for details, they confirmed that Missouri State Highway Patrol Captain Ron Johnson had issued that order to members under his command who had been enlisted to help out in Ferguson. He said, “We had to evaluate the security of the officers there and also the looters. We just felt it was better to move back.”

Translation for business owners: You’re on your own.



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When Missouri Governor Jay Nixon joined with Ferguson Police Chief Tom Jackson to announce a state of emergency and a curfew on Saturday, reporters pressed them with questions about those business owners and whether their stores would be protected by the police.

Nixon and Ferguson [ignored the questions](#).

This was eerily familiar to the experience of Kee Whan Ha, owner of the Hannam chain stores and a supermarket in the heart of Los Angeles' Koreatown. He was there during the riots of 1992 and appeared on National Public Radio (NPR) 20 years later to tell what happened then. The dialogue has been modified slightly for clarification:

Ha: April 29 was a Wednesday. All the riots are happening in the South Central area. On Thursday morning, I expect something [is] going to happen in Koreatown, so Koreatown is closed ...

I assembled my people, all the store owners, people who [have] a big rifle or the hunting rifle, everything. So we see that our — next door is [a company] that's American-owned. The [owners] just go home. Then the riot people came inside, and they steal everything. They [pour on] gasoline, then they [set it on] fire, so whole building's on fire.

NPR: Why did you feel you had to defend the store yourself?... Why didn't you feel the authorities would do their job?

Ha: From Wednesday [on], I don't see any police patrol car whatsoever. That's a wide-open area, so it is like the Wild West ... We are the only one[s] left, so we have to do our own [defense].

NPR: Well, you just told us that the security guard at your store was killed. This must have been very traumatic for you. Do you mind telling [us] how this happened?

Ha: I was standing a few feet away, so I see that his body has fallen down on the ground, but I was so scared. I — we tried to call the fire department. Please help us. But nobody listen. Then maybe after five or six hours in the evening — [we started calling in] the afternoon, about 1:00 or 2:00 p.m. But actual[ly] — the fire truck [came] about 7:00 o'clock, late evening. So five hours, of course, is sitting between us and them.

NPR: Did you have to fire your weapon?

Ha: Yes. Actually, we are not shooting people. We are shooting ... in the air ... [to] make afraid ... these people coming to us. [We're] not actually targeting people, so...

NPR: Sure. You were trying to create a sort of a protective barrier, and you did succeed in saving your store?

Ha: Yes.

Thanks to the Second Amendment, armed business owners in Ferguson, Missouri, in the spirit of Kee Whan Ha, are successfully protecting their businesses merely by showing up armed and determined.

A graduate of Cornell University and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at www.LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics.



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