



Written by [Michael Tennant](#) on November 19, 2012

## Florida Man Tasered by Police While Fighting House Fire

“It was horrible,” recalled Daniel Jensen of Pinellas Park, Florida. “I was laying in a puddle of water being electrocuted here by the people that are supposed to protect us. I’m trying to protect my family, my neighbor, and they bring harm to me. I don’t understand.”



Jensen’s bewilderment is easy to understand. Around 6 p.m. on November 8, Jensen was awakened from a nap by his wife, who informed him that their neighbor’s house was on fire. Seeing the flames approaching his own abode, Jensen grabbed a garden hose and began spraying down his own house. Within minutes, he found himself — with no warning — on the receiving end of a Pinellas Park Police taser. Burn marks from the incident remained on his body for days; the painful memories will last a lifetime.

As soon as his wife told him there was a fire, Jensen said he ran outside, grabbed a fire extinguisher, and sprayed it until it was empty. Then he went for the garden hose.

“I was calling for my daughter and getting no response. I came out, grabbed the hose and sprayed her room until I heard she was out. I was always taught to help when you can; help is what I tried to do,” Jensen told [WTSP-TV](#).

After his daughter had safely exited, Jensen proceeded to hose down his fence and the back corner of his roof, hoping to keep the fire from spreading to his property.

“He was basically just protecting his property,” neighbor Luis Rosa told [WTSP](#). “He was hosing the fence down making sure the fire didn’t jump to the other side, and he was doing a good job.”

The police, however, did not see it that way. Rosa told the station that officers pulled Jensen away from the fire “several times.”

“They kept telling me, ‘Let it go, that’s what insurance is for,’” Jensen said. “That’s not acceptable to me.”

His insurer undoubtedly would agree. And, of course, some things are truly irreplaceable, insurance or no.

Firefighters, meanwhile, had yet to appear on the scene. Officials told the [Tampa Bay Times](#) firefighters responded in six minutes — probably not an unreasonable amount of time, assuming that is an accurate accounting. But six minutes can seem like an eternity when flames are licking one’s house.

Jensen saw the fire leap onto his back roof and was determined to prevent it from damaging his house.



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He picked up the hose, which police had taken from him earlier, and headed back to battle the blaze. That's when the cops decided they'd had enough of this upstart who'd dared to protect his own property rather than waiting for the government to get around to doing it for him.

Jensen told WTSP: "As I went to grab the hose, I hear an officer on this side. There was a boat here; he was just behind it. He said, 'Hit him, hit him! Take him down, tase him!' I didn't know they were talking to me, or about me. I was concerned about putting water on the fire, and the next thing you know I'm being tased."

"[Electricity] was all over me," he told the *Times*. "Crawling all over me."

Afterward, reports WTSP, "several officers picked him up, carried him to the front yard, threw him on the ground and handcuffed him." Then he was put into a police cruiser.

Needless to say, Jensen is far from pleased with the whole series of events. While police argue that Jensen was endangering himself and officers and could have been charged with obstruction for failing to heed their orders, Jensen told WTSP, "I wasn't doing that. What I was doing was what any home owner would do to protect a family and home." He called the actions of the police "brutal" and said they had "no compassion."

Rosa agreed, saying, "I thought it was totally abusive, and they did not have to do it. You get emotional when these things happen; he reacted the way he's suppose[d] to react — rather than handle the situation they said here [is] this short cut." He said that the officers spent most of the time chatting with each other rather than trying to defuse the situation by talking to Jensen.

If Jensen's actions really did pose any danger to the officers, tasing him certainly was to their benefit. Jensen himself, however, was arguably put in greater danger from being shot full of electricity while standing in a pool of water than he would have been from fighting the fire. (Even without the presence of water, tasers are hardly risk-free for those subject to them; the United Nations has gone so far as to [declare](#) that tasers are "a form of torture" that "can even cause death.")

Moreover, even if the officers' actions were justified, Pinellas Park Police policy requires an officer to warn a subject before tasing him — something that Jensen says never happened.

"He was trying to protect his home, protect his neighbor's home," Jensen's attorney, Heidi Imhof, told WTSP. "He was tasered while standing in a puddle of water. This is clearly an excessive use of force case."

Jensen and Imhof are considering legal action against the police department.



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