

First Time in 30 Years

WTAE.com reported out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on November 4 about an 81-year-old man who was the victim of a home invasion. The man, who lives with his invalid sister, was awakened in the middle of the night by the sounds of someone breaking in to his home. After the burglar broke in to the house, he entered the homeowner's bedroom and demanded that the homeowner give him money. The elderly homeowner told the burglar that he didn't have any money, and the suspect became irate and physically attacked the homeowner. Fortunately, the senior citizen kept a handgun by his bed on his nightstand, and had for 30 years. He was able to grab his handgun and fire it at the suspect. Lt. Tom Kolensic of the Uniontown Police Department told WTAE.com that the homeowner said the suspect was wearing a “skeleton mask with gloves” and “he demanded money” from the victim. The homeowner grabbed his “firearm off his nightstand and fired one shot, and the actor ran out of the house.” Authorities soon arrived on the scene and discovered the body of the suspect, who had died due to his gunshot wound. The 46-year-old attacker, identified as Franklin Schrouf, has an “extensive” criminal record.

Saving the Day

NBC-2 out of Fort Myers, Florida, reported that a high-speed car chase in Estero, Florida, on November 14 resulted in an injured sheriff's deputy, a dead suspect, and a bystander credited with saving the day. The drama began when 53-year-old Edward Strother started to swerve and speed recklessly down a Florida interstate, reaching speeds estimated at more than 100 miles per hour, according to witnesses. Deputy Dean Bardes, a 12-year veteran, was assisting an unrelated crash on the interstate when Strother's car veered toward the deputy and narrowly missed hitting him. Bardes, suspecting that the driver intended to hit him, jumped into his patrol car and began to chase Strother's car. The car chase ended when Strother suddenly stopped on an interstate offramp, exited his vehicle, and approached Deputy Bardes' car. The suspect then forcibly pulled the deputy out

of his patrol car and began to attack him violently, throwing the man to the ground and repeatedly punching him.

Kimberly Jenkinson, a Florida woman, witnessed the scene as she was driving in her car. “He just started punching him and hitting and hitting,” she told NBC-2. “I was afraid for the police officer. I thought he was going to kill him.”

Another passerby, who has not been publicly identified as he wishes to remain anonymous, saw Deputy Bardes being brutally attacked and decided to take matters into his own hands. This “good Samaritan” had a concealed weapons permit and his firearm. He pulled his car over onto the offramp and approached the scene as Strother was beating the deputy and slamming him into the ground. The man then aimed his gun at the attacker and warned him to stop hitting the deputy. The warnings went unheeded, and witnesses say the deputy yelled out, “Shoot him! Shoot him! Shoot him!” The man fired three shots, hitting and killing the suspect.

Lee County Sheriff Mike Scott expressed gratitude for the passerby “who engaged the crazed assailant and stopped the imminent threat of great bodily harm or death to our deputy.”

The suspect's brother, however, was less impressed with the passerby's heroic actions. Louis Strother, brother of Edward Strother, questioned whether lethal force was necessary. “They are calling him a Good Samaritan?” Louis asked the *News-Press*, insinuating that the only time deadly force should be necessary is when criminal culprits are armed. “Was my brother armed?” Edwards asked the *News-Press*, seemingly unable to comprehend that his brother's brutal attack on the officer was deadly enough to warrant lethal force.

Momma's House

WDRB reported out of Louisville, Kentucky, on November 18 about two men who tried breaking in to a house but were stopped by an armed mother. The Louisville Metro Police told WDRB that two men attempted to gain entrance to the house by breaking out a rear window. The woman, who was home at the time with her son,

armed herself and fired down a hallway toward the rear of the home where the two men were breaking the window. Her shots hit one of the men, mortally wounding him. The other suspect fled the scene but was apprehended by authorities soon thereafter. The suspect who was shot by the mother was pronounced dead at the scene. His body was discovered by law enforcement lying on the ground outside of the house. The mother's son spoke with WDRB and explained that his mother was shaken up by the incident. The son also explained that his mother had purchased the gun 18 months ago and had learned how to shoot it fairly recently. The investigation so far has shown that the mother had acted lawfully, and no charges will be filed against her. The surviving suspect has been charged with the murder of his accomplice under the state's felony murder statute, as well as burglary.

Preying on the Weak

WSAZ.com reported out of Kanawha County, West Virginia, about a trio of criminals who thought they had found an easy target but ended up dealing with the opposite. The victim in this story is in his late 70s and, according to his daughter, has health issues that have plagued him for years. The daughter said the suspects entered her father's house and assaulted him before throwing him to the floor. The criminals then began looking around the house for cash while the father, unbeknownst to the burglars, grabbed a pistol. He fired a warning shot, which caused the suspects to flee from the home. A female suspect in the group was arrested and charged with burglary and robbery and may be facing up to 10 years for each charge. The police were able to quickly identify the female suspect because the father knew her. She is a former relative by marriage. The daughter told WSAZ.com that burglars had victimized her father this past summer and stolen about \$20,000 in cash, as well as personal financial information. The daughter had no patience left for criminals. “Shoot 'em,” she told WSAZ.com. “That's what I've told him from the get-go. Shoot 'em. Then we'll call the cops and we'll sort it out.” ■

— PATRICK KREY