

Stand Your Ground in Georgia

CNN reported on September 17 about an incident in Conyers, Georgia, that occurred when three would-be burglars with bandannas covering their faces tried robbing a man standing outside his house shortly after 4 a.m. At the time the three suspects surrounded him, the homeowner was talking to another person who lives with him. One of the burglars was armed with a handgun; he repeatedly fired it at the two people but missed. Fortunately, the homeowner was also armed and returned fire, striking all three suspects and fatally wounding them.

The quick action by the homeowner and the fact that all three suspects died contributed to the newsworthiness of the story. The fact that all three suspects were under the age of 18 added to its dramatic nature and made it quickly go viral. The investigation is still ongoing, but because the shooting occurred outside the residence means that Georgia's Stand Your Ground law, which permits deadly force if a person believes his life is at risk, will most likely apply, not the Castle Doctrine, which has a presumption of innocence for a homeowner who uses lethal force against an intruder inside his residence.

Darryl Cohen, a prosecutor-turned-defense attorney, gave his analysis of the situation to First Coast News and said, “I see this as assault — several crimes, felonies being committed — and the person, the homeowner, did exactly what he needed to do, which is protect himself, protect people in his house and protect his property.... As soon as you see that weapon pointed at you, you have the right to defend yourself and obviously once it's been fired you have the right and a duty to defend yourself.” Cohen added that the 4:00 a.m. timing of the incident helps to explain why the homeowner shot all three suspects, even though investigators later learned that only one of the suspects was armed. “When you take the dark and you add that to the scenario it makes it even more credible for the homeowner.... You don't know where the shot came from, you don't know which of the three fired the weapon, so you have a right to defend

yourself — self-defense. If you've been shot at you have every reasonable expectation that they're trying to kill you.” Cohen did state that his analysis was based on the facts as they are presently reported, and if more details are revealed that substantively change the case, his analysis might change as well but, as it stands now, he told First Coast News, he considers this a “strong self-defense case.”

Should You Be Carrying a BUG?

A September 16 column posted on Guns.com by its editorial staff explored whether civilians should be carrying a “BUG,” which is short for “Back Up Gun.” People who don't have a background in law enforcement might not be familiar with the concept, but the idea of carrying a smaller backup gun, or BUG, has, according to Guns.com, “steadily crept its way into the lives of civilian concealed carriers offering a few benefits for those willing to pack an extra gun.”

As the column explained, these smaller guns are easily concealable and are not intended “to shoot long-range or pack an overwhelming amount of rounds but simply stand as a secondary tool to see the concealed carrier out of whatever dangerous spot they've suddenly encountered.” Guns.com broke down three major reasons why someone would consider carrying a smaller backup gun. The first reason is because your primary conceal-carry firearm could malfunction. “If that primary gun fails in the middle of a fight or a bad guy wrestles it away a BUG ... suddenly becomes a viable ticket out of a bad situation. The second firearm grants the concealed carrier one more option in the fight. More options mean more opportunities to live another day.”

The second reason is that an extra firearm allows you to have more shooting capacity. Even if you're carrying an additional magazine to give yourself supplemental rounds, you could find yourself in a situation where you need to get off a few additional shots, and that's where a BUG could come in handy. “When facing multi-

ple attackers, concealed carriers may find themselves in need of even more ammo than they're packing in their primary gun. In this defensive situation, a second setup proves advantageous.”

Finally, the article argued, having a BUG might be useful if you have someone with you who can aid you in your armed self-defense. “Facing off against multiple attackers, a concealed carrier with a BUG and a buddy can reasonably hand the spare to a friend thereby introducing another armed citizen into the equation. Word of caution, though, a BUG should only be handed to a trusted individual or someone you are certain possesses the training and wherewith-all [*sic*] to tackle a defensive shooting situation.”

As the piece concluded, it explained that a BUG won't be a panacea, but having one definitely gives those interested in armed self-defense “a solid second option for those that want a little extra help when things go sideways.” ■

— PATRICK KREY

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