

Be Ready

There are two key components to successful armed self-defense: (1) be prepared, and (2) have a quick response time. The CBS affiliate in Philadelphia reported on August 26 about an incident that perfectly exemplified these points, and it was all caught on surveillance camera. It occurred at a phone store in southwest Philadelphia when an armed burglar wearing a hoodie strolled into the store and tried holding up the store employee who was working behind the counter. The burglar tossed an empty bag on the counter and told the employee to fill it with phones. Unbeknownst to the burglar, the employee was armed, and he wasted no time in pulling out his own handgun, firing it at the suspect multiple times. A witness later told CBS that there were roughly 10 gunshots in quick succession.

The wounded suspect collapsed to the floor, and the store employee called police, who soon arrived on the scene. The suspect was later pronounced dead, and police determined that the store employee was lawfully licensed. Investigators reviewed the video of the deadly encounter, which only lasted 12 seconds and showed the lightning-fast reflexes of the store employee.

Police explained that one of the reasons the employee was prepared and ready to react might have been the fact that the store is located in a high-crime neighborhood, and it had been robbed multiple times in the past. Philadelphia Police Captain Scott Drissel told CBS that the employee “discharged his firearm at the robbery suspect numerous times, striking him.” Drissel added that the store was so frequently targeted for robberies that police maintained a logbook on-site. “There’s a police logbook inside there. Officers will typically go inside the store and meet with the employees in there and sign the logbook.”

Red Flag or False Flag?

AmmoLand reported on August 18 about the inherent danger of “red flag” laws, which shift the burden of proof from accusers to the accused. The case happened in St. Cloud, Florida, where Jonathan Car-

penter received a letter from the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services notifying him that his concealed handgun permit was suspended. The exact wording of the notice stated that on “August 12th, 2019 in Osceola County, Florida, an injunction was entered restraining you from acts of domestic violence or acts of repeat violations.”

Carpenter was floored because he had no prior criminal record. Carpenter spoke with AmmoLand and explained that when he read the notice, he was “shocked and confused.” He contacted the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services to find out what happened.

The first step, he learned, was that he had to get paperwork from his local clerk of the courts stating that there weren’t any criminal actions against him. To clear his name, he quickly contacted the courts, only to learn that it was a case of mistaken identity: Someone with his same name had gotten himself in trouble. But fixing the mistake would not be that easy. After the county clerk referred him to the Sheriff’s Office, and the Sheriff’s Office provided Carpenter with details of the injunction against him, it took only a brief review to see that the accused man in the injunction had a completely different physical description than him and the events described did not involve Carpenter at all. But that was not the end of the story, with him getting the injunction removed.

The Sheriff’s Office still ordered him to turn over his guns. Carpenter couldn’t believe what was happening! He was presumed guilty and had to give up his Second Amendment rights without even getting a chance to formally defend himself before a judge. “The last thing on my mind was me having to turn over my gun.... I was upset when the Sheriff told me that I need to surrender my gun before any due process,” Carpenter told AmmoLand.

Not only was Carpenter told to surrender guns before due process, he was also told that he had to go to court for the accuser to see him and confirm for the judge that he was not the same Jonathan Carpenter she had sought the injunction against. If this all happened smoothly, then Carpenter would have to petition the court

for the return of his firearms at his own personal expense! AmmoLand explained that the law that enabled this travesty of justice to occur was passed after the Parkland school shooting and is Florida’s version of a red flag law.

The story did have a happy ending: AmmoLand reported on August 22 that Carpenter got his gun rights restored. AmmoLand reported that since it first broke the story, pro-Second Amendment organizations such as Gun Owners of America and Florida Carry got involved, and through their network of allies put the police directly in touch with the woman who filed the injunction. The woman confirmed that Carpenter did not match the description of the person she sought the injunction against. The Sheriff’s Office then quickly got the restraining order removed, and Carpenter’s gun rights were restored. But his story is a dire warning of the danger facing gun owners across the country who may someday be presumed guilty until they’re proven innocent.

The Heroic Neighbor

The ABC affiliate in Tampa, Florida, reported on August 21 about a domestic-violence incident in Pasco County that ended when a neighbor intervened. The Pasco County Sheriff’s Office is still investigating, but it says a neighbor heard the sounds of a woman crying out for help and ran to her aid. When the neighbor arrived at the source of the screams, he witnessed a badly beaten mother trying to escape from the second story of a house with her three small children. Pasco County Sheriff Chris Nocco said the neighbor quickly helped the woman to lower the children to safety. Then the man accused of beating her emerged from the house, pointed a gun at the neighbor, and fired at him. The neighbor was also armed and quickly returned fire at the armed attacker. The abusive man was fatally wounded and died at the scene. Nocco held a press conference where he praised the neighbor as “a hero” and said, “Protecting somebody’s life is a priority.” ■

— PATRICK KREY