



“... the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

EXERCISING THE RIGHT

Gun Battle Brewing in Minnesota

The *Star Tribune* (Minneapolis) reported on January 20 about a political fight over gun rights in Minnesota that has the potential to become a major issue in an election year. The state legislative session begins on February 11, and Republicans, who are in the majority in the Senate, intend to pass a series of pro-Second Amendment measures that includes “constitutional carry” and “stand your ground” laws.

This column has previously written on the concept of “constitutional carry,” which refers to making it lawful for gun owners to carry their firearms on them without first seeking a permit from the state. “Stand your ground” laws refer to laws that regulate the justified use of lethal force, removing the duty-to-retreat requirement before one is allowed to initiate self-defense during a deadly attack. The Minnesota Democratic-Farmer-Labor (DFL) Party plans to take the opposite approach and is urging the passage of so-called red flag laws, which take away a person’s guns based upon the sometimes unfounded accusations of others, and expanded background checks for gun purchases. State lawmakers gathered in Hibbing to debate the various proposed gun laws, but no votes were taken. The *Star Tribune* described it as “a roiling political fight that is likely to play out throughout the coming legislative session and the November elections, when control of both the state House and Senate will be up for grabs.”

The state House is under the control of the DFL, which passed gun restrictions in the last legislative session that were eventually blocked in the Senate. Republican Senator Warren Limmer told the *Star Tribune*, “I’m interested in solutions that work, and in a divided government ... that we have now, those types of extreme proposals just aren’t going to pass.”

On a similar note, the GOP proposals for “stand your ground” and “constitutional carry” seem likely to stall in the House and not garner bipartisan support. But that’s not deterring Minnesota Gun

Owners Caucus political director Rob Doar, who is confident that his side will ultimately prevail, especially if the DFL continues to pursue an anti-gun agenda. Doar referred to the pro-gun rally in Virginia as an “excellent indicator of what we can expect in Minnesota if there is total control in the hands of anti-gun Democrats.”

The Sight of a Gun Gets the Job Done

Your Hometown Stations, a FOX/NBC/ABC/CBS-affiliated television station located in Lima, Ohio, reported on January 15 about an armed robbery at a store that ended as soon as the suspects saw that the store clerk was armed. The Allen County Sheriff’s Department is still searching for the two suspects, who wore masks over their faces but were recorded on video in the store.

The incident occurred a little after 8 p.m. when two masked men with guns ran into Hermies Party Shop and ordered the person working behind the counter to hand over all of the store’s money. It was at that moment that one of the suspects realized the cashier was armed, and both men immediately fled from the store without taking anything.

Detectives are searching for the two men and believe they are the same people who robbed a Little Caesar’s pizza shop a few hours earlier. In that case, the employees were not armed, and the robbers made off with some cash they stole from the cash registers. This story shows that in some cases, just being armed might be enough to scare off criminals who want to avoid a gun fight at all costs.

Other Times, the Criminals Will Try to Kill You

A story out of St. Louis reminds us that armed criminals can have deadly intent, regardless of whether you do exactly what they demand or not. KPLR11.com reported on January 13 about how a carjacking might have turned deadly but for

a gun malfunction. The St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department spokesperson stated that a carjacking occurred around 5:50 p.m. and that the 22-year-old victim did everything that was demanded of him by the armed suspect who commandeered his vehicle. In a terrifying moment after handing over his car keys, the victim observed the suspect point his gun right at him and pull the trigger.

Thankfully the gun jammed, and the victim was able to retrieve his own firearm from within his car and fire several shots at the suspect. The armed suspect fled the scene, and the victim told police that he didn’t believe that any of his shots hit the man. Police are still looking for the suspect, but the scary ordeal is a reminder that simply doing what a criminal asks is no guarantee that he will spare your life. In this case, the victim was wise enough to be armed and defend himself, but there’s no telling what the outcome would have been if he hadn’t been armed.

Cook Out Shoot-out

The Fox Affiliate in Dallas reported on January 11 about an armed robbery attempt that was thwarted by a gun owner who was carrying concealed. It all started at the scene of a front-yard cookout among neighbors and friends. Everyone was enjoying themselves on a patio near the grill in the front yard of a residence when three men approached the party and tried robbing them. Two of the suspects were armed and demanded cash and other personal property of the partygoers under the threat of deadly force.

Unbeknownst to the armed burglars, a guest at the get-together was armed and knew how to handle his gun. The man, who was licensed to carry a handgun, pulled out his own gun and shot at the suspects, wounding one of them. The three suspects ran from the scene, but the injured man later was dropped off at a nearby hospital, where he was pronounced dead. Law-enforcement officers are still investigating and are looking for the two other suspects. ■

— PATRICK KREY