

## Racer Involved in a “Clear Case of Self-Defense”

Autoweek.com reported on April 27 about a self-defense shooting in Las Vegas that involved a well-known driver in the world of motorsports. B.J. Baldwin made a name for himself competing in SCORE (Southern California Off Road Enthusiasts) desert racing and has also found success as a trophy truck driver, but he recently made news when he was involved in a parking-lot shootout.

The incident occurred on April 22 at 2 a.m., when Baldwin and his girlfriend were standing outside their car eating a late-night meal in the parking lot of an In-N-Out Burger in southwest Las Vegas. Baldwin posted a video, produced in conjunction with the NRA, to his Instagram where he explained what transpired that night. In the video, Baldwin explains that two men wearing hoodies approached the vehicle, and one of the two men had a gun drawn. Baldwin said that he was in an unfair fight that night: “When I say I was in an unfair fight, it wasn’t unfair to me — it was unfair to him.”

Baldwin regularly carries concealed and practices self-defensive shooting. In a 2019 interview with LetsGoShooting.org, Baldwin explained his passion for shooting, saying he initially picked it up from his father, who was a professional gambler in a time when that profession was very dangerous. His father regularly carried a gun for self-defense because, as Baldwin explained, “People were constantly trying to rob you and kidnap you or kidnap family members and stuff like that, so he always had a pistol on him.”

The LetsGoShooting.org article further explained that Baldwin “focuses most of his shooting energy at close range, combining speed with accuracy in defensive scenarios.” Baldwin added that he regularly dry fires his gun at home to practice effectively drawing his gun in a defensive scenario in order to build up muscle memory. “Ninety percent of my skills set and honing that skills set I’ve done in my living room with an empty gun.... When I’m so busy I can’t go to the range for a couple of months, when I show up, it’s like

I never left. You don’t have to be shooting every single day to make yourself better every single day.... People are out there trying to get better or they can’t afford to fire 5,000 rounds though their gun a month. You can always get better through dry-firing practice.”

Returning to that fateful night, Baldwin explained in the Instagram video that the armed assailant pointed his gun at Baldwin before turning it to aim at his girlfriend. The man opened fire. “He took two shots at [my girlfriend], six shots at me — he didn’t get a single hit on either one of his targets because I got all of my hits, all 10, nine in the chest, one in the central nervous system, and that’s what it took to neutralize the threat and save both of our lives so that we could make it home to our families.” The wounded suspect collapsed at the scene, where he was later pronounced dead. Baldwin explained that the accomplice fled from the scene as soon as he saw Baldwin was armed.

Baldwin further explained why he carries and trains so vigorously:

No matter what gets in my way, I’m going to make sure that I’m there to walk my daughter down the aisle.... To make sure that I’m there at my son’s graduation. I don’t care who gets in the way or who puts me in danger. I will fight to the death to make sure that I make it home and that I am there for my family, no matter what cost. And that’s why I put so much effort into my training so that if I’m ever in danger and somebody ever tries to put us in harm’s way, it’s an unfair fight in my favor.

He added, “Thankfully I had my firearm. Thankfully I had a concealed carry permit and thankfully I was trained.... It is my belief that had I not ... had my firearm with me, this person would have put a bullet in my girlfriend’s head just to see the look on my face and probably killed me as well.”

The video ended with Baldwin calling out gun-control politicians by name and supporting the National Rifle Association. “Joe Biden and Beto O’Rourke are totally comfortable with my girlfriend and I lay-

ing face down dead in that parking lot as long as it doesn’t interfere with their gun-control agenda. The simple fact is, a good citizen with the ability to defend their lives and to defend the lives of their families, they are a tremendous asset to society. Criminals are not interested in getting in gunfights, they’re interested in preying on the weak and defenseless, and that’s what this person thought I was, and he was definitely surprised to find out I wasn’t. Use my story as an example of how important it is to continue to fight for our rights. It’s more important now than ever to join the fight to preserve our rights so that we may ensure the safety of ourselves, the safety of our family, and preserve the right to do so.”

The *Las-Vegas Review Journal* reported on May 4 that Clark County District Attorney Steve Wolfson did a full review of the shooting and explained that it was “a clear case of self-defense.”

The police report showed that the girlfriend of the deceased suspect came to the scene before police did and took the criminal’s gun and hid it. She later confessed to hiding it.

The deceased suspect’s brother, Kevin Smith, told investigators that his brother started the shootout, and went so far as to admit that Baldwin had acted in self-defense in the shooting and should not face any charges. These developments made it crystal clear that Baldwin acted lawfully and what transpired was definitely a justifiable homicide, but imagine if the girlfriend had been successful in hiding the gun and the brother never told the truth. It’s not unrealistic to think the media and left-wing agitators might rewrite what actually happened to portray Baldwin in a negative light. As we have seen many times before, even if the forensics analysis of the crime scene eventually corroborated that the suspect was armed and Baldwin’s actions were justified, a biased media working closely with left-wing activists could have created a false narrative on social media that would have unfairly vilified Baldwin. We should all be grateful that Baldwin acted heroically and then was proactive in getting his story out. ■

— PATRICK KREY