

Smokey the bear says, **“Only YOU can return fire!”**

In November 2016 a couple of my friends (lets call them *Bill* and *George*,) and a visiting friend, (we'll call him *Jim*,) rode 4-wheelers from the house to their shop. The shop was across a 100+ acre field that was part of the family property here in Virginia and would've taken 20 minutes to walk so they routinely rode 4-wheelers.

As they rode into the clearing where the machine shop stood they saw a late model SUV in front of an open bay door. The empty SUV was facing back the way it had come and the engine was running. My friends didn't recognize the vehicle and became suspiciously alert. George, in the lead, dismounted immediately and entered the shop through an open bay door as the others dismounted.

As soon as he entered the bay door a black man stepped from behind some machinery in the shop and without a word began firing a handgun at George. Luckily for George the criminal possessed typically poor shooting skill. At a distance of less-than 30-feet the man fired many shots, only 2 of which struck George in the lower legs *after* first glancing off the floor or other objects. George was sent to the floor by these hits. He was down and his assailant was advancing to finish him off when Bill and Jim entered the shop with their guns firing. Bill had a 22-revolver from a pouch on his 4-wheeler and Jim had a small 38 revolver. Two other bad-guys (a white man wearing a mask and another black man,) emerged from hiding in the shop and began shooting. Within seconds the scene had become a fully involved gun-battle. After his revolver was empty Bill obtained a 22-rifle from in the shop where it was kept for shooting vermin around the place. The gun-battle continued for several minutes. Jim had called 911 in the early moments of the battle but it took **over 10 minutes** to get local deputies on the scene. In fact he had to call again to ask if help was coming at all. The gunshots could be heard on both 911 recordings when played in court months later. George was the only one without a gun, a fact that he corrected the day he left the hospital.

During the gun-battle, no one else was hit by gunfire. Two of the bad-guys escaped in the SUV. A third fled the scene by running into the woods. While in the woods he called for a “homey” to come and pick him up at the farm entrance and both were apprehended there by a Deputy who was responding to Jim's 911-call.

The others were picked up within a few days as the captured criminals typically began ratting each other out. None of the criminals were known to the victims and vice-versa. The ensuing police investigation established that this event was a totally random thing and couldn't have been foreseen or prevented. If there hadn't been some kind of returned gunfire it is reasonable to presume all three of these men would have been shot and killed that day. **They're alive because they shot back.**

Naturally, there are *many* details that have been left out of this narrative. These few bare facts are all that matter when being viewed through the lens of personal readiness. Tho technically armed, the good-guys were not *ready* for such a thing. They were just very lucky. This story also underscores the fact that this kind of thing **CAN happen to *anyone*!** These guys live out in the country. There is no reason for them to think they would ever have “gangsta” type criminals invading their property. Even now, years after the trial, the police say that it's not really clear why those guys were there. What *is* very clear is that if the intended victims hadn't returned fire they'd have certainly all been killed or badly shot-up. **Returning fire is what saved them!**

A very important detail of the running gun-battle was that the participants were never farther from each other than 30 to 50 feet. Even so, nobody was hit after the initial shots. The fact that Bill was able to enter the building and get a 22-rifle, and continue a running battle with one of the criminals for several minutes seems to indicate that if a *more-suitable* firearm had been gotten in hand things may have gone very differently for the bad-guys. It's hard to say. I talk with these guys about that day all the time. Even now, years later, they're still remembering little forgotten details that help them fully understand just how lucky they were. **They survived because they shot back!**

After this experience all three of these guys have taken some steps to become much more *ready* for such things. Now they all have high-capacity handguns on their person or close at hand at all times. What's more, they have various types of shotguns and semi-auto rifles positioned around their property so they're never far from serious firepower if they ever have another situation like the one described above. They know they were lucky but don't intend to rely on luck if another similar event develops. They know first hand that shooting back is how they survived the surprise of an unexpected criminal assault. **Returning fire is how they survived that situation.**

To this day they wonder why that scene occurred. However, the subject of “*why*” never entered their minds when the gunfire began. They were far too busy trying to defend George and not get killed to be concerned with *why* those bad guys were there. They had to survive in order to learn the *why* of the matter. But they're all very sure of one thing. **They're only alive because they returned fire!**

In our discussions we raise the idea of “what if” a repeating shotgun had been the gun Bill retrieved in the shop. Bill is very sure a shotgun would've helped him *get* one or more of those bad guys. However, given the way the laws have been worked by the liberals that infest all levels of government, we're quite certain that Bill and Jim would be in prison, along with those bad guys, when the dust fully settled on that event. That sad fact is the result of the govt education system creating a general ignorance in the

American “publik” when seated in a jury box to decide such things. But that's a subject for a different essay. Just remember, the why of the matter has never been learned and that it took over 10-mins for local Law Enforcement to get to the scene. Ask yourself, how long does it take to get shot and killed by a criminal that surprises you? With a 10 Minute response time *after* the 911 call how will you occupy that time if you don't have a gun? Remember, **Only *you* can return fire!**

SMOKEY THE BEAR SAYS



**ONLY YOU...
CAN RETURN FIRE.
BE PREPARED!**