

Friday, November 7, 2003

Mugger goes free, victim arrested
80-year-old fends off attacker with unlicensed gun

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He survived a violent mugging, but now 80-year-old Lester Campbell faces criminal charges for defending himself with an unlicensed gun.

The frail octogenarian told WABC-TV he relies on the .38-caliber pistol given to him by his mother for protection when he cashes his Social Security checks.

After cashing his latest check, Campbell pocketed the \$262 and went to the supermarket. A mugger apparently spotted Campbell's wad and followed him home to his apartment building in the Bronx and jumped him inside the elevator.

A fierce struggle ensued, reports the news station, during which the assailant ripped Campbell's pants to snatch the wallet.

The gun went off, sending the bullet ricocheted into the ceiling.

"He tried to keep the barrel away from him, twisting and turning," Campbell told WABC. "And when I was going to pull it, see, I lose some grip. And that's when he started twisting and twisting."

When the elevator car stopped at the third floor, the attacker fled with Campbell's money, leaving him bruised and bloodshot.

Police officers arrived on the scene some time later, confiscated Campbell's pistol and another gun from inside his apartment and arrested him. He's due to appear in court next month on charges of misdemeanor criminal possession of a weapon.

Campbell complains the wrong man is getting punished.

"He had no business doing that. I was minding my business. I don't bother nobody," WABC quotes him as saying.

Campbell's neighbors had mixed reaction to the incident.

"The way I feel, if he didn't have the gun probably something would happen to him, serious," said Ernest McKenzie. "And at the same time, he has to be licensed."

http://www.worldnetdaily.com/news/article.asp?ARTICLE_ID=33011

'Defend your family, go to jail' - Dad who saved son from intruder incarcerated for unregistered gun

Posted: June 11, 2003, 1:00 a.m. Eastern © 2003 WorldNetDaily.com

A Brooklyn man who shot and wounded an intruder while defending his family will spend three days in Rikers Island, the same jail housing the burglar who terrorized his home, because he owns an unregistered gun.

Ronald Dixon, a 27-year-old father of two, caught an intruder rifling through drawers in his son's room early on Dec. 14.

"I went in. ... I looked in his face. I didn't know this guy; I was so shocked. ... In a nervous voice I said, 'What are you doing in my house?' and he ran toward me yelling, 'Come upstairs!' like there were other people with him. I shot him 'cause I thought more people were in the house," Dixon told the New York Daily News.

Dixon fired two shots from his .9 mm pistol, wounding the suspected burglar in the chest and groin.

"The only thing I could think about was my family – there was no telling what he would do to my children or girlfriend," he told the paper.

Authorities charged Dixon with illegal possession of a firearm when they discovered his gun was not legally registered in New York, a charge that carries up to a year in prison.

When Dixon proved he had obtained the firearm legally in Florida and tried to register it in New York, the prosecutors agreed to a charge of disorderly conduct.

Dixon pleaded guilty to the disorderly conduct charge, which will allow him to do time without carrying a criminal record. Sentencing is scheduled for June 27, WINS Radio reports.

The intruder turned out to be Ivan Thompson, a career criminal with a 14-page rap sheet. Thompson has been arrested 19 times and been convicted of criminal trespass, burglary and attempted assault. He currently is on parole until 2004 on burglary charges.

"Clearly [Dixon] was justified in shooting this burglar, and the burglar is going to get as much jail time as we can get him," Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes told the News.

But Hynes will not budge from his tough anti-gun policy.

"If you get caught with a gun in Brooklyn, you're going to do jail time," said Hynes, who has held that stance since taking office in 1990, when, he says, "Brooklyn was like Dodge City."

Dixon's case has attracted widespread attention and many letters addressed to Hynes, including this anonymous letter, which sums up the feelings of many supporters:

"If you were in the same position that Mr. Dixon was in, I would be willing to wager that you would also use whatever means you had on hand to defend your loved ones, as any of us would.

"By prosecuting Ronald Dixon on spurious charges, you are sending a very dangerous message to the residents in your jurisdiction: Defend your family, go to jail. You are also sending an equally dangerous message to the criminal element, who would realize that law-abiding citizens would now be hesitant to defend themselves for fear of criminal prosecution, and therefore make prime targets for violent crime."

A Jamaican immigrant, Dixon served in the Navy from 1994 to 1997 in weapons ordnance and holds down two computer-related jobs.

"I work seven days a week. I have been doing it for three years, because I wanted a safe haven for my family," he told the News.

"I thought the house would give me a safe haven. Now I'm thinking if I didn't buy this house this never would have happened."

Source: The Morning Journal, Lorain, Ohio
<http://www.morningjournal.com/site/news.asp?brd=1699>

9-year-old arrested for waving toy gun
<http://www.zwire.com/site/10419957.html>

by MICHAEL C. FITZPATRICK , Morning Journal Writer, 10/28/2003

LORAIN -- A 9-year-old boy was arrested at gunpoint and handcuffed Saturday because he was waving a toy gun over his head while seated on a bench outside a store, according to a Lorain police report.

His mother, Tamyka Saunders of Sheffield Lake, said her son, Thomas Clark Jr., told Lorain police when they approached him outside a Broadway business that the gun was a toy. An officer aimed his weapon at the boy's head, ordered him to the ground, handcuffed him and arrested him for juvenile delinquency by reason of inducing panic, according to the police report.

Saunders, 28, was also charged with obstruction of justice and resisting arrest when she pleaded with police not to arrest her son and to give him a warning, according to a police report.

"He doesn't deserve this. He is not a bad kid at all. That's what I was trying to explain to the officer. It's just not fair," Saunders said.

Saunders was getting her hair done at the Northern Institute of Cosmetology on Broadway near Seventh Street when the incident began.

Saunders said she and her son were spending the day together . Saunders said her son got his hair cut first, and then he went outside to play while waiting on her.

A passer-by who saw the boy playing just before noon with a gun -- described by police as a black plastic toy gun -- called police, who responded to the scene and found the boy "waving what appeared to be a black handgun above his head," according to a police report. The report said the gun was spray painted black and resembled a genuine gun.

At that point, Officer Joe Novosielski confronted the boy at gunpoint, ordering him to drop the gun and then lie on the ground, the report said.

Thomas, who his mother said has been diagnosed with attention deficit disorder, said he was frightened by the incident.

Lorain police said Novosielski handled the situation properly.

"Obviously, someone got scared and called the police. Nobody driving down the street could tell it was a toy gun, so that's where the panic comes in. We charge that to anyone doing that," Lt. Robert Poli said.

"We're not going to tolerate anyone walking down the street, sitting on a bench ... if he's waving a gun around," Poli said. "You don't know it's a toy gun."

Saunders said police were not even going to come inside the cosmetology institute to tell her they were arresting her son. She said she learned from another woman her son was being arrested.

Saunders, wearing curlers in her hair, said she raced out to the police car to attempt to intervene on her son's behalf.

"He (Novosielski) snatched me by the arm and cuffed me. People were just walking down the street shaking their heads. I did not cuss at him, and I did not yell at him, because I'm not that type of person. I feel I'm the one that was disrespected," Saunders said of her arrest.

When informed her son was being arrested, Saunders attempted to pull her son away from the officer but moved away when told to, according to the report.

Police said Saunders pleaded with them not to arrest her son and to "just give him a warning," according to the report. She also told police her son "was just playing" and that he didn't point the gun at anyone before asking police, "Don't you have anything better to do?"

Saunders was eventually arrested after refusing to move away from the cruiser where her son had been placed, the report said. The officer told her to finish her business at the beauty salon and then come to the station to pick up her son, according to the report.

She is free on \$750 bond and is scheduled to appear in Lorain Municipal Court today. The report of Thomas' arrest was forwarded to the juvenile court system, according to the police report.

Lorain County Prosecutor's Office spokesman Mark Hastings said the report had not been received yet.