

Shot Four Times, Bottle-Wielding Good Samaritan Says He'd Fight Robber Again

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Armed robbers commit hundreds of violent crimes in corner shops, drug stores and gas stations across America every day and the chances are pretty good that security cameras are catching them in the act. Footage of efforts of clerks and customers who turn the tables against dangerous armed robbers has become a viral video bonanza, garnering millions of hits for YouTube and other video sharing websites – and making stars out of everyday people, like Ted Edmond, of Maryland.

In 2010, Edmond walked into a rural Virginia gas station during an armed heist. The female clerk was cooperating with the gunman's demands, but Edmond, former Marine and Vietnam veteran, had a bad feeling.

"I saw the gun, and he was pointing it dead at her, and he seemed to be... out of his head, extremely agitated, and I just knew he was going to kill her," Edmond said.

Edmond's instincts kicked in and he decided to try to incapacitate the robber. Searching for a weapon in the store shelves, but with time running out, he settled on a large glass beer bottle. With cameras rolling, Edmond smashed the bottle squarely on the gunman's head in a shower of foam.

Edmond didn't exactly have a plan as he tried to take stop the robber, but what happened next shocked him.

"There was nobody more surprised than I was when he didn't go down," he said.

Edmond failed to incapacitate the robber and the tables quickly turned. Enraged, the gunman shot Edmond and four bullets pierced his body.

The gunman got away but he and an accomplice were later caught and convicted of the crime. A sentencing hearing for the two men is scheduled for Dec. 12.

Today, Edmond has recovered from his injuries, and video of the robbery and Edmond's beer bottle attack gained him instant fame. Edmond told ABC News, "I don't consider that a heroic act. I consider that as a human act." But the clerk on the other end of the robber's gun said she was sure she would have been killed if he hadn't stepped into the fray.

Watching videos of victims fighting back against their assailants is satisfying -- even thrilling, but criminologist Rosemary Erickson says fighting back is usually just not a good idea. Erickson has spent years studying the behavior of convicted armed robbers. She says 83 percent of robbers "don't think they're going to be caught. Their motivation is robbery, not to kill people. Now, you're going to have some gratuitous violence among robbers, but in general, they are not there to kill the people."

At the top of the robber's wish list is an easy escape route, she adds – and when clerks fight back, robbers are "much more likely to hurt" them.

It may seem counterintuitive, Erickson said, but if an armed robber has his gun pointed at you, putting up a fight just means "you're much more likely to be injured or hurt."

The choice to resist an armed attacker carries a risk of personal injury, but it can even get you fired. Jeremy Hoven, a Michigan pharmacist, fought back against attackers in his drugstore by firing a gun and chasing them off. But instead of congratulations, his company fired him. It may not seem fair, but Erickson says "it comes down to [corporate] policy. If they don't enforce that policy, then everyone would carry guns. In the long run, you are saving lives by not having your employees armed."

In Oklahoma, another pistol-packing pharmacist, Jerome Ersland, paid a price for taking on his store's unarmed robber. Ersland fired one round into the man, who prosecutors say rendered him unconscious. But then Ersland obtained a second firearm and emptied five more rounds into Antwun Parker, 16.

Ersland is now serving a life sentence for first-degree murder.

For Erickson, the bottom line is that resisting armed robbers just isn't worth it. In one study of homicides linked to robberies, she says "82 percent of the deaths were caused by resistance."

While fighting back may rarely be the right move, don't tell Ted Edmond that. Even with four bullets still lodged inside him, if a life is threatened, he says, sometimes there's no choice but to get involved.

"It's your job. If you're a citizen, it's your job to not just stand around and do nothing. Next time, it might be you," Edmond said. "If everybody does their job, we'll get thugs off the street."