

6 Awful Things I Learned Surviving A Double Homicide

The average American will witness 1,600 murders in movies and TV before they're legally old enough to buy guns or liquor. Usually, it goes down one of two ways: with the bloodless violence of a PG-13 superhero movie, or with the over-the-top gore of a flamboyant killer slashing throats while he cracks wise.

In reality, murders are messy, clumsy affairs that happen for incredibly stupid reasons. We talked to a woman named Megan Crocker, who watched two people get murdered right in front of her. And it all resulted from an idiotic string of accidents ...

It Started With A Bizarre Accidental Death ... And A Quest For Revenge

Here's how the local Oklahoma news sites reported on the murders Megan witnessed:



You've probably seen more than a few headlines like it, regardless of where you live. At the time, the police believed the killings might have been drug-related, because one of the victims -- Megan's boyfriend, Randy -- was a mid-level weed dealer. And while calling the killings "drug-related" is technically not inaccurate, what actually happened is much weirder. It started the day before, when Randy was hanging out with some dudes and gave weed to a guy who said he'd never smoked before (pretty standard dealer behavior so far). What followed is a cautionary tale right out of some anti-weed propaganda short from the 1950s. According to Megan:

"This guy smokes two blunts back to back and it sent him into a little psychosis ... he was like, telling God and Jesus to keep these people away from him, he was speaking like that. My boyfriend lived in these condos in downtown Tulsa, really expensive ... and this guy's running up and down the halls at like 4 a.m. screaming '*JESUS, KEEP THESE PEOPLE AWAY FROM ME.*' So they locked the apartment and called me to pick them up."

We can all probably agree that "run away and leave this dude freaking out in an apartment building" wasn't the most responsible solution. But as we mentioned, Randy was a drug dealer and thus didn't feel particularly inclined to call the police. Unfortunately, the guy managed to stumble to an outside stairwell and fell nine stories to his death.

"He fell into a dumpster," says Megan, "and got cut up by broken glass, so at first it looked like he'd been stabbed." In other words, it looked like the poor fellow had been murdered, which is exactly the conclusion that the guy's cousin, Mario, arrived at. He blamed Randy for the death, and before Randy even learned the guy had died, Mario and some armed friends came to get revenge.

You're Never Truly Prepared For An Armed Attack

It went down on November 7, 2009, at around 10 p.m. Megan was doing her makeup in the bathroom, while Randy and two other friends were in the house. Everyone was smoking weed. "I remember I'm doing my eyeliner and I heard three loud thumps, and my first thought was ... when my boyfriend laughed he'd bang his hand on the coffee table sometimes ... So I thought, 'You jerk, you just busted my table.' Then I hear another thud and wood cracking."

Mario and his friends burst through the door while using a distressingly common home invasion tactic: pretending to be the police. They announced themselves with, "TPD, get on the ground!"

"My boyfriend was pretty high on the distribution level for marijuana here in Tulsa. So hearing that, I was like, 'Shit, we're getting raided.' But my mom is a Tulsa police officer, and she'd told me that if anyone tries to say they're the police and you have doubt, always look for that badge ... I'm like, it's 10 at night. That doesn't sound right."

Now, Megan's house wasn't what you'd traditionally call a "soft target." She owned both a Doberman and a gun. Her mother was a veteran police officer. In short, she was about as prepared for an attack as any 19-year-old could be without an Iron Man suit. "But guess what?" she says, "They got past my Doberman and caught me when I was doing eyeliner."

Here's the ugly, un-action-movie reality of being attacked by armed bad guys: They usually get the drop on you. Having a gun, or even professional training, is no guarantee that you won't be pooping, or drunk, when some grief-stricken, gun-toting maniac kicks down your door. For instance, in 2013 the FBI reported 26 police officers shot dead in the line of duty. Only six of them succeeded in firing their weapons, and only nine total had the presence of mind to go for their guns. And those were trained police officers. Megan and her friends never had a chance to react: "I peek my head around [the corner], I'm expecting to see uniforms. Instead I see three guys with hoods on their heads and guns out ... My heart fell to the floor. Time just froze, right then."

The invaders spotted Megan right away. Two of them went for Randy and her friends, and one came to drag Megan out of the bathroom: " ... he had a gun pointed right at my face, and the first thing I start doing ... it's like a horror movie. I was like, 'Please don't kill me, please don't shoot.' He said, 'Shut up or

I'll blow your brains all over this wall.' I had a tank top on, so he grabbed basically my hair and one of the straps of my tank top and proceeded to drag me through the kitchen."

But while it's important to emphasize how difficult it is to react effectively when violence suddenly comes exploding into your house like a cursing tornado, we should also note that ...

Some People Fight Back

There are no guarantees when unhinged people burst into a room waving firearms. But if you've got enough physical strength and act before you've really thought anything through, then rash, aggressive behavior can save your life. This is another way of saying that one of Megan's two friends in the house was an angry giant: "My friend is like 7'2, a big big guy. Tall as a NBA player. And these guys were shorter than me -- I'm 5'9. These were not men who came into my house ... Boys, not men. My friend, he bum rushes one of them ... pushes him out the door, I can hear them start fighting for the gun."

Mario and his people hadn't been expecting resistance, least of all from The Mountain Who Rides. One of the other gunmen dragged Megan out of her room and into the living room, while Mario kept his gun on Randy and the other friend, both of whom were laying on the floor. Megan recalls thinking, "If he tries to get me outside, I'm going to make them shoot me, because I am not going to be kidnapped and raped and tortured."

Tragically, the distraction caused by Megan's titanic friend didn't halt the violence for long.

Even Stick-Up Men Can Have A Crisis Of Conscience

"So he puts me in the living room," Megan says, "approximately 10 to 20 feet from my boyfriend and friend, being held down on their backs in the corner ... [Mario's] standing over them with the gun ... asking, 'Where's the weed, where's the money?' Randy shakes his head no. I'm thinking, 'Just give him whatever he wants!'"

Mario knew that Randy, being a drug dealer, probably had a sizable stash of cash and pot on hand, and he was very much up for taking it. But that would just be the icing on the cake -- Mario's real purpose there was revenge. Then, "... as this is happening, you can still hear my friend and the other gunman wrestling. The next thing you know, there's a pop."

As soon as he heard that gunshot from outside, Mario knew the jig was up, regardless of whether his comrade or Megan's friend The Mountain had fired it. Mario made the decision to execute everyone: "... I barely had enough time to register, 'That was a gunshot,' and I hear pop-pop-pop more times than I could count. And that's when I go fuzzy ... I'm more than halfway deaf right now. Everyone sounds like the teacher in the Peanuts cartoon."

And when we say they decided to execute "everyone," that includes Megan: "[Mario] looks over at my guy and says, 'What the hell are you doing? Kill her. We made her watch.'" But most people aren't willing to commit straight-up murder, even if they're the kind of person who thinks being part of an armed revenge posse is an awesome way to spend their evening.

The horrifying reality of what was happening struck the gunman holding Megan, and it saved her life: "My guy just leaves. He runs out. And then I passed out. I curled into a fetal position, fell over ... I feel this presence go past me, and hear my screen door slam twice. Which means two people ran out. The music on my boyfriend's iPhone was still playing. I had to physically pinch myself, because I didn't know if I was actually dead."

Death Is Not A Quick Thing

In movies and TV, guns seem to work one of two ways: Either the shot immediately drops the bad guy as if his "off" switch had been flipped, or it hits the hero in the shoulder and has no more effect than a bee sting. In real life, even fatal shootings take time -- victims linger for minutes, or even hours. So in a movie, if you don't expire the moment you hit the ground, it probably means you're going to be fine.

... I look over to my left and I see my friend ... he didn't die right away, but he was unconscious ... He was flat on his back. My boyfriend was fetal, protecting his organs a little better. They shot my friend in the heart and lungs ... I see my boyfriend try to move. He's trying to get up. I decide I'm not leaving him. I can't stress enough that this man was the love of my life. I was only 19 ... but I still love him more than anything. I'd do anything for him, I still would ... When I saw him trying to get up, I ran over, said, 'Baby don't move, are you OK?' He said, 'Call 911.' He's holding his stomach. Of course, blood is profusely pouring out of him."

Megan called 911. Their first priority was to know if Randy was lucid, so they asked Megan if he could hear anything. "I said [to Randy], 'If you can understand me, look me dead in the eyes.' He does. So I tell her, 'He can understand me' ... [then] he closes his eyes and faded away, and I just fucking lost it. I'm screaming at him, 'You have to wake up! You can't leave me here!' ... Blood is coming profusely out of his mouth. I can tell he's suffocating [on it], and at that point I said, 'Ma'am, don't disconnect my call ... but I'm going to put this down because my boyfriend is dying. He needs to hear my voice.'"

911 dispatched an ambulance, but it didn't arrive fast enough. It's entirely possible they couldn't have arrived in time, even if they'd flown in on jetpacks. Both Randy and Megan's friend died right there on the floor.

"I just remember putting my phone down, holding his head, kissing his head ... telling him, 'I love you, I love you so much. I'm not going to leave you.' I kind of lay over him, to try and give him a hug, kissing his head and hair. And that's when he passed away."

That was the end for Randy, but not for Megan. If real life were an episode of CSI, this is where the opening credits would've started. Unfortunately, in the case of a multiple homicide ...

The Lone Survivor Is The First Suspect

Megan's giant friend survived, having managed to overpower his assailant and take his gun. The shot that had gone off during their struggle (the one that prompted Mario to execute the two people inside) didn't hit anyone. The Mountain re-entered the house after Mario and his crew left to make sure that Megan was OK, at which point he heroically ran like hell and took the first bus to Dallas.

This meant Megan was the sole living person at the scene of a shooting, in a house full of pot. Consequently, the police immediately suspected her involvement extended further than being a horrified bystander. "They thought I set this up, because they couldn't comprehend why those guys would come in, kill two people and leave me."

One of the only pieces of good news in this whole nightmare story is that Megan's giant friend came back as soon as he heard she was under suspicion. He testified, backing up her story and clearing her name. It also helped that Mario hadn't bothered to cover his face during the murders (he hadn't expected to leave witnesses), and he'd also made the familiar but unfathomably dumb decision to brag around about what he had done. So it didn't take long for the authorities to find his dangerous, but entirely stupid, ass at his apartment.

But then Megan had to testify in court, which was a whole new nightmare for her: "Testifying is just as traumatic as living it again. I had to listen to the 911 tape. I had to hear myself screaming, and my boyfriend in the background dying and moaning and trying to talk through all this blood ... I hear maybe two seconds of the tape and I couldn't do it. I got up and ran out of the courtroom. I ended up in a men's bathroom, just hysterically bawling because I had to relive that."

Mario's attorney argued that Megan was putting on a show to try and sway the jury. Obviously he was trying to provide his client with the best defense possible as guaranteed by the Constitution, but seriously, what a piece... Megan wasn't present for the rest of the trial, but she was allowed to show up for the verdict, which handed Mario two consecutive life sentences for aggravated murder.

Justice had been done. You'd be surprised at how little that matters when a person you loved is no less dead for it. Megan went from a Saturday night hanging out with friends to holding her dead boyfriend in six minutes. The event is over, but the trauma lasts for a lifetime.

"And then you spend the rest of your life processing what happened during those six to seven minutes. I still don't know."