



## One gun, no hands: the Marcus Young incident".

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- Situation: The criminal emptied a .38 into you, leaving your gun arm paralyzed and your other hand torn apart--and now, he's reaching for a machine gun.
- March 7, 2003. Sgt. Marcus Young is midway through an evening shift, working patrol for the Ukiah, California Police Department. He's a Navy vet, second-degree black belt in Shorinryu karate, 18 years on the force. With him is a 17-year-old police cadet named Julian Covella. A devoted husband and father, the 40-year-old sergeant serves as president of a local school board. His own young son is thinking about going the police cadet route and Marcus is particularly interested in how it's working out for Julian. Then comes the seemingly routine call: a shoplifter at the Wal-Mart Superstore. Young wheels the patrol car in that direction

- In the next few minutes, he and his young cadet ride-along will save each other's lives.
- The Incident - 2148 hours, 9:48 PM.
- As the cadet watches, Sgt. Young takes custody of the wan-looking suspect. Monica Winnie is only 18, but she could pass for 10 or 15 years older. Wal-Mart security guard Brett Schott watches as Young politely escorts her to the patrol car and puts her into the back seat.
- Now comes a medium-sized man who moves rapidly and purposefully toward them through the darkened parking lot, his hands ominously thrust into his jacket pockets. He wears the face of Satan and it's not a trick of the light.

- Neal Beckman, Winnie's companion, is a 35-year-old Caucasian with a long, bad history. He is a member of a gang called the Nazi Low Riders and is wanted in connection with a \$100,000 home invasion robbery. He has carefully cultivated the Satanic image, his sculpted mustache and goatee set off by small devil horns tattooed on his forehead. Unseen by the cop is his full backpack tattoo of the devil himself. In his pockets, also unseen by Young, are a fixed-blade hunting knife in his left hand and a late Smith & Wesson Model 637 stainless Airweight in his right, all five chambers loaded.
- Beckman has made it to close range when Young says in command voice, "Take your hands out of your pockets." There is no response. Young repeats the command and Beckman answers, "I have a knife."
- The blade comes out, held as if its wielder means business. Young reacts instantly in accordance with his training as both policeman and martial artist. He grabs the knife-hand and pivots off mid-line, wrenching the suspect's arm into the double-ninety-degree configuration known in California police circles as a twist-lock. He can feel something snapping and popping in the arm, but the knife-wielder does not let go. Both of them slam into the side of the car.
- And suddenly, there is a bright flash and a searing heat and Sgt. Marcus Young realizes he has just been shot in the face at close range.
- Near-Fatal Flurry
- In the swirl of movement that follows, things happen fast even though it seems to the cop as if everything has gone into slow motion. More bullets hammer into him. The burning sensations tear through his right arm and his back, and something smashes into his left side as if he has been struck in the rib cage with an aluminum baseball bat. Through it all, the sergeant is aware of the young woman screaming wordlessly in the back seat of the patrol unit.

- Brett Schott, the unarmed security guard, leaps into the fight. He barrels into Beckman, grabs the revolver and wrenches it away. He does not realize he is holding an empty gun. Beckman has fired all five shots and four of them have struck the cop.
- The man with the face that mimics Satan shifts the hunting knife from his left hand to his right and sinks it viciously into the side of the security guard. The blade plunges deep into the left side of the guard's chest, almost immediately collapsing the lung and opening a wound so big that lung tissue is visible. He levers the blade and tears the wound wider, completely severing the deltoid muscle.
- Schott disengages, instantly weakened by the massive wound, realizing he is hemorrhaging massively and perhaps fatally. He tries to make his way to another car for cover.
- Meanwhile, Young has regained his feet and reached for his own gun. Yet it does not rise into line of sight in the movement he has practiced so many times. He tries again and realizes his right arm is not responding to his mental command. The humerus has been shattered and there is nerve damage. His gun arm is paralyzed.
- The Ukiah PD firearms instructors are thorough. They have taught Young how to draw weak-handed if his gun arm is taken out. He makes the attempt but his left hand isn't working right, either. Glancing down, he sees that it has been ripped open, literally torn apart, its separated tendons visible through the opened skin.
- And now, the suspect is on his feet, tearing open the right front door of the patrol car and closing it behind him as he jumps in. He's not trying to drive away. Instead, he drops down on the seat on his left side as he claws for the switch he knows is hidden there somewhere. The switch that will release into his murderous hands a fresh weapon and a deadlier one.

- Ukiah PD keeps two loaded long guns in each patrol car. One is a Remington 870 pump shotgun, loaded with 12 gauge 00 buckshot. The other, secured to the ceiling of the front seat, is an HK33. It's not just a .223 autoloading rifle. It has a selector switch. The man who has just attempted to murder two uniformed officials is about to access a true assault rifle, literally a machine gun, and the price of poker has just gone up.
- Where There's A Will ...
- Through it all, the young cadet, Julian Covella, has stood nearby, torn between obedience and his own strong sense of duty. Police cadets are told that under no circumstances are they to join in fights involving sworn officers, and this training has held him in check, yet every fiber of his being has been telling him, do something!
- Now, his chance comes.
- As Beckman tries furiously to free the heavy weapons and turn them on his victims, Young turns to the boy and says, "Take my gun out and put it in my hand." Julian fumbles, but only for a moment, releasing the thumb-break safety strap of the Level One duty holster. He carefully withdraws the pistol, a Beretta 96G, and places it into the bloody left hand that the wounded lawman extends to him.
- It's the "G" model, decocker only, no safety to disengage. Young will later thank God his firearms instructors drilled him intensively in weak hand only shooting. Kneeling to steady himself, he raises the gun to eye level, not trying for a sight picture, just visually superimposing the gun over where he knows he has to shoot. The center mass of his antagonist's body is shielded by the car door, but Young has been told that .40 caliber service pistol bullets can punch through auto bodies, so he fires. The first shot goes double action and he sees it strike where he aimed it. No reaction. The gun has cocked itself and he squeezes off a second shot single action. Again, the bullet goes where aimed, and again, the jacketed hollow point .40 bullet fails to make it through the door.

- Time for Plan B. He raises the pistol higher. Startled by the first return fire, the man who tried to kill him turns and looks at the officer, and he is staring down the gun barrel when the first shot smashes through the closed window of the car and into his face. He jerks and moves violently, Young fires a fourth time and now the attacker goes limp and still.
- Young keeps him covered for what seems to him a very long time before he realizes it's over. He knows he has been shot multiple times, in the torso and the head and doesn't know how long he will remain conscious. He can see the guard is down, bleeding profusely. Only young Julian remains able-bodied on the side of the good guys.
- Knowing both his hands are badly disabled and the cocked gun is covered with blood, Young decides not to try to decock his privately owned, department approved Beretta. He doesn't want to hold a cocked pistol in an injured hand, or drop one if he passes out, so he sets it gently on the ground where he can keep an eye on it.

- He tells Julian to get on the radio and call in. Then, remembering what he had learned in classes he had taken from Col. Dave Grossman, Young begins deliberate controlled breathing exercises to keep calm, conscious and alive.
- Aftermath And Lessons
- Emergency Medical Service response was swift, but the receiving hospital was only equipped to perform emergency surgery on one patient at a time. The heroic guard who had jumped into the fight unarmed to save the embattled officer was near death and went onto the table first. He had lost about half of his blood and it took three hours for the surgeons to stabilize him and save his life.
- During that time, Sgt. Young waited without pain-killer, because he had lost two pints of blood and his blood pressure was low; doctors didn't dare give him depressants. The pain didn't really hit him until 45 to 60 minutes after the shooting.
- The first .38 Special slug had struck Young in the left cheek and exited the back of his neck, fortunately missing the brain. He had never lost consciousness. He does not remember the exact sequence of the following hits, but one had smashed the right arm. Another had gone past his armor and punched into his back, causing serious injuries which, like the right arm wound, have required multiple surgeries since and will probably need more. The blow to his right side had been a bullet stopping in his Point Blank Level III-A bullet-resistant vest. It left a massive bruise, but caused no serious damage. Doctors said this projectile, had it not been stopped by the Kevlar, would have killed the policeman. They determined that he had not been shot in the left hand, but it had been so badly mangled during the fight it took hours of surgery to repair the tendon damage.





- The would-be cop-killer was DOA. Young's third shot had caught him square in the forehead. Because Beckman was down on the seat with the head back the ogive of the bullet had caused it to skid off the skull beneath the scalp, emerging at the crown with a big, ugly exit wound, but inflicting no life-threatening damage. As he convulsed and twisted to get away from the return fire, he had presented his buttocks toward the policeman. Young's final shot, the officer's visibility impaired by the broken glass of the door window, had struck Beckman there and ranged up deep inside him, piercing the liver and lodging in his neck. This had been the fatal shot.
- Both men had been shot in the face and head and actually sustained fairly minor wounds. The "fatal" hits--potentially on the good guy, decisively on the bad--had struck each in the trunk of the body.
- On that fateful night, the sergeant had not been wearing a backup gun. He realizes now a second weapon carried in a manner readily accessible to the non-dominant hand might have allowed him to neutralize his lethal attacker more swiftly.
- Young wore his concealed body armor religiously and it saved his life. Some 700 of us watched as Young was inducted into the Kevlar Survivors' Club in January '04, at the American Society for Law Enforcement Training annual conference in St. Louis. He joined more than 2,500 brother and sister officers who owe their lives to that technology. Young was officially pronounced Save Number 2,751

- He credits the training he received from his department and from outside resources, ranging from Col. Grossman to his various sensei in the martial arts, for his ability to endure incredible punishment and be able to think creatively and respond when the terrifying curve ball of seeming helplessness in the face of death came at him. The ability to stay calm and keep thinking served him well. At the same ASLET conference, giving a talk on the FBI/Miami shooting in 1986, Dr. French Anderson made a telling statement which applied directly to Young's incident: "If you can think and if you can move, you can still fight."
- Be Prepared
- The order Sgt. Young gave to the man who was planning to murder him--"Take your hands out of your pockets"--was intuitive for any cop in the same situation, yet it resulted in what the medical community euphemistically calls "a negative outcome." I suspect the next time Young confronts a hostile man with hands concealed, he will take him at gunpoint and specifically order him to let go of anything in his pockets, and then very slowly withdraw his empty right hand and then his empty left hand. The weapons Neal Beckman held in each of his hands each almost ended the life of a protector of the public on the night of March 7, 2003 in that dimly-lit Wal-Mart parking lot.
- More departments are carrying their long guns up front these days where they belong and more are using patrol rifles, even select-fire .223s as issued by Ukiah PD. This is all to the good. Care must be taken, however, not to cut corners and to make sure each such weapon is secured in such a manner it's readily accessible to authorized personnel, but relatively inaccessible to perpetrators such as Beckman. Fortunately, Ukiah PD kept its long guns securely locked in overhead racks, the means of instant release known to the officers but not immediately apparent to an invader in the patrol car. The potential of a machine gun in the hands of someone like Beckman does not require much imagination.

- Be prepared to deal with distorted perceptions during the fight and other phenomena later. With one of the nation's leading experts on "post shooting trauma," psychologist Alexis Artwohl, at his side, Young told ASLET attendees of what he had experienced. Things went into slow motion early. At times he fought "on auto pilot." He experienced some memory loss, such as the sequence of the wounds he sustained subsequent to the first.
- Interestingly, it was the third time in his career a criminal had put a gun to his head. From the time of those incidents through March 2003, he had suffered occasional nightmares in which he relived the incidents, or in which he fired his gun and it didn't work.
- Since the night in question, when he survived a gunshot wound to the head and then killed his attacker with a perfectly functioning Beretta, those nightmares have stopped.
- Epilog
- In the vehicle occupied earlier by the shoplifting suspect and the would-be cop-killer were several pipe bombs. Case investigators suspect the suspects had planned to use the explosives in a robbery. She pled guilty to misdemeanor theft, possession of explosives and grand theft, the latter on a subsequently discovered outstanding warrant.

- The heroic security guard Brett Schatt, and the courageous young police cadet Julian Covella, received numerous awards for valor. These included heroism citations from the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion, and dual Citizen of the Year awards from the California Narcotics Officers' Association. Covella has since been accepted as a cadet at the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis.
- Sgt. Young, now 41, is on light duty at the department, still recovering from his severe physical injuries and facing more surgery. A NRA member, he was awarded the National Rifle Association's honors as Police Officer of the Year for 2003, and the Mayor's Medal of Valor. He has also been nominated for the Presidential Medal of Valor and that of the California Attorney General's Office. Marcus Young's incident will be included in the curriculum of a new course from the California Police Standards and Training council devoted to the management of fear and anger in crisis.
- Young himself feels he owes his survival not only to Julian and Brett, but to the many instructors who trained him over the years. "They taught me to shoot from awkward positions if I was wounded," he says, "and they taught me to be resourceful and keep thinking and keep fighting no matter how I might be injured. They taught me to never give up. And I want to thank them publicly for that."
- There have been death threats against Marcus Young. He is concerned. But he is not afraid.



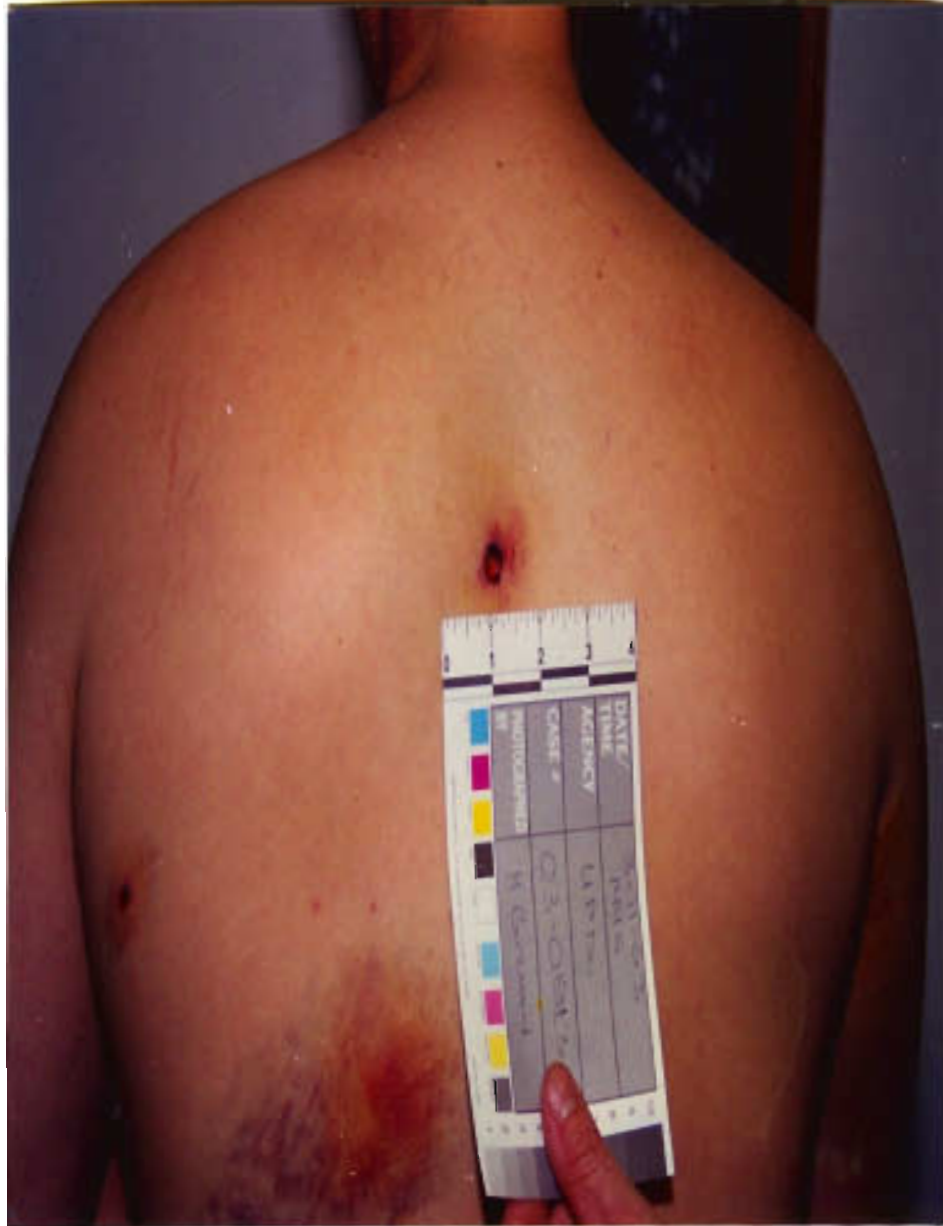


- Critically wounded and unable to draw his weapon, PARADE's Police Officer of the Year, Sgt. Marcus Young of Ukiah, Calif., refused to give up. Officer Down...But Not Out (Sgt. Marcus Young)
- ***When the Ukiah Police Department needed an officer to fill a patrol shift vacancy on the night of March 7, 2003, Sgt. Marcus Young was happy to volunteer. An administrative sergeant who normally supervised the dispatch center, coordinated training and looked after the schedule, he often worked overtime when another officer was needed on the streets. But this shift would be unlike any other. Before the evening was over, Sgt. Young, 42, would save at least three lives, including his own. Young will be recognized in Los Angeles on Nov. 16 as Police Officer of the Year by the International Association of Chiefs of Police and PARADE. Ten other outstanding policemen also will be honored. Young's ordeal began when he was called to the local Wal-Mart to arrest an 18-year-old female shoplifter. He was accompanied by Julian Covella, then 17, a high school student and police cadet. During the arrest, Young was approached by the shoplifter's boyfriend, Neal Beckman, 35, a violent felon. When Young told him to take his hands from his pockets, Beckman pulled a knife. Young seized the felon's arm and twisted it toward his back. Beckman then drew a .38 Smith & Wesson from his jacket, reached across his body and shot Young five times. Bullets pierced his cheek, back and upper arm. Young's body armor stopped bullets to his chest and back, saving his life. The assailant's gun was empty, but he still had a knife when Brett Schott, the store's unarmed security guard, jumped on his back and knocked him away from Young. Beckman stabbed Schott in the upper chest and ran toward the patrol car, where Young had left his rifle and shotgun. "I was on my knees in a parking space," Young recalled. "My right arm was paralyzed, my left hand had a two-inch tear between the index and middle fingers, and I could not draw my gun. I was bleeding profusely." As terrified bystanders screamed and ran for cover, Young remained calm. He called Covella—who had just radioed for backup—to his side and asked the cadet to unholster his pistol and place it in his left hand. Young fired four rounds, stopping Beckman before he could grab a firearm from the patrol car and start shooting again. When help arrived, Young, Schott and Beckman were taken to the local hospital, where Beckman was pronounced dead. Schott recovered from his wounds; Young continues to struggle with pain and weakness in his bullet-riddled upper body. But he's alive. "I thought the entire time that I was going to die," Young recalled. "I told an officer to tell my wife I loved her, because I didn't think I would get to do it myself." For that chance, he thanks Covella and Schott. "They were the real heroes in this situation," Young said. "They risked their lives to help me, to help an officer out. I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for them."***

[http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/CJST/Training\\_Resources/2007HighLiabilityConf/Marcus%20Young%20Law%20Officer%20October%202006.pdf](http://www.fdle.state.fl.us/CJST/Training_Resources/2007HighLiabilityConf/Marcus%20Young%20Law%20Officer%20October%202006.pdf)







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