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Always a Marine

Plantation, FL

Last week police were called to investigate an attempted armed robbery: The 71-year-old retired Marine who opened fire on two robbers at a Plantation, FL, Subway shop late Wednesday, killing one and critically wounding the other, is described as John Lovell, a former helicopter pilot for two presidents.. He doesn't drink, he doesn't smoke, and he works out every day. Mr. Lovell was a man of action Wednesday night.

According to Plantation police, two masked gunmen came into the Subway at 1949 N. Pine Rd. just after 11 p.m. There was a lone diner, Mr. Lovell, who was finishing his meal. After robbing the cashier, the two men attempted to shove Mr. Lovell into a bathroom and rob him as well. They got his money, but then Mr. Lovell pulled his handgun and opened fire. He shot one of the thieves in the head and chest and the other in the head.

When police arrived, they found one of the men in the shop, K-9 Units found the other in the bushes of a nearby business. They also found cash strewn around the front of the sandwich shop according to Detective Robert Rettig of the Plantation Police Department.

Both men were taken to the Broward General Medical Center, where one, Donicio Arrindell age 22, of North Lauderdale died. The other, 21-year-old Frederick Gadson of Fort Lauderdale is in critical but stable condition.

A longtime friend of Lovell was not surprised to hear what happened. The friend said, "He'd give you the shirt off his back, but he'd be mad as hell if someone tried to take the shirt off his back."

Mr. Lovell was a pilot in the Marine Corps, flying former Presidents John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. He later worked as a pilot for Pan Am and Delta Airlines.

He is not expected to be charged authorities said. "He was in fear for his life," Detective Rettig said, "These criminals ought to realize that most men in their 70's have military backgrounds and aren't intimidated by idiots."

Something tells me this old Marine wasn't 'in fear for his life', even though his life was definitely at risk. The only thing he could be charged with is participating in an unfair fight. One 71- year young Marine against two punks. Two head shots and one center body mass shot. Outstanding shooting! That'll teach them not to get between a Marine and his meal.

Florida law allows eligible citizens to carry a concealed weapon. Don't you just love a story with a happy ending.