

Bethel Baptist Church

Security Training 3/21/2021

Changed In The Twinkling Of An Eye

Anyone who has embarked on safety or security planning understands the risk matrix. The various models all show measures of likelihood (probability) of a specific risk in one direction compared with cruciality (impact) in the other. The process is an attempt to understand the crystal ball of risk.

Some low probability things deserve extra attention due to the high impact they would have. It's no different than life-vests and being trained to use them on an airplane. How many people have ever had to use the life-vest under the seat? Very few. But they are there, and those of us who are frequent flyers could recite the use instructions from memory.

That is why church security operators and trainers should continue training for deadly force incidents. Certain parts of the following really happened.

Here's the scenario;

You've been told by the family of a man outside your church that he has a gun and is making vague threats. You have locked your doors and called 911 (expect arrival in some minutes) but you can't warn congregants pulling into the parking lot.

Through a window, you see him pacing angrily as you watch innocent families parking and getting children out of cars, clueless of the danger.

What do you do?

Think About it

That scene played out with some similarity to what you've just read (though, for one modification as an example, there was nobody at the church when it happened).

Here's the real story;

Modesto (CA) Police had been called by the family of a man (Seever), saying he had told them he had a gun, and was making vague threats.

The first responding officer (Lamentia) saw a man fitting the description outside the Modesto Church of the Brethren in the vicinity. Lamentia exited his vehicle and approached Seever yelling for him to put his hands up and get on the ground. The following still pictures go with the scene. Pay attention to the elapsed time at top of each body cam picture;

TIME: (MIN: 1,000th of min.) 00:000

Both of Seever's hands are up

As Lamentia is approaching with gun drawn



TIME: (MIN: 1,000th of min.) 00:020

Seever's right hand is down

As Lamentia continues to approach with verbal commands



TIME: (MIN: 1,000th of min.) 00:770

Seever is running;
just on other side
of wall

Lamentia is running
after him with verbal
Commands
(Lamentia body cam pic)



TIME: (MIN: 1,000th of min.) 00:780

Seever is running;

Lamentia takes aim
yelling, "Get on the
ground!"

(Lamentia body cam pic)



TIME: (MIN: 1,000th of min.) 00:820

Lamentia fires 1st of
4 shots (see slide in
full ejection phase, casing
in air)

(Lamentia body cam pic)



TIME: (MIN: 1,000th of min.) 00:850

Lamentia fires last of
4 shots (see slide returned
to lock phase, casing
in air)

(Lamentia body cam pic)



In 850 / 1,000 of a minute (51 seconds) it was over.

Seever was unarmed and killed.

Lamentia is now terminated from service and charged with voluntary manslaughter.

Lives and families were changed forever in the blink of an eye.

What would you have done if you were an armed defender at a church where this type of thing happened? Answer very carefully.