

Another Day in New York

By

Gary Beck

It was a nice Spring day. Marge and I went for a walk and took Bessie, our white Lab, a sweet old girl who couldn't run anymore. We were getting close to Queens Boulevard when a big Asian guy in a black coat with a huge killer Doberman off the leash crossed at the corner. The Doberman turned towards us, growling. I yelled:

"Put your dog on a leash, please."

He was looking at me so he wasn't deaf. Macho? His dog came closer, hackles up. Marge said:

"Call your dog, sir," but he just stood there as the monster came closer. "Call your dog!" She said more urgently to no response.

The dog moved faster growling loudly, the guy didn't move and I took out my taser.

"Stop your dog or I'll tase him," and I told Marge: "Video this."

He ignored me, the dog was about to leap at Bessie, so I zapped him and he fell over. The guy screamed, drew a sword and came at us.

"Stop," I yelled, but he kept coming. "Stop. Put down the sword," but he moved faster. I yelled, "Stop!" Once more, drew my service weapon, he raised his sword and when he didn't stop, I fired three times, hitting him in the center mass and he went down.

I called 911 and told the operator there was a shooting, one person down, no other threats and I gave her the address. Marge and Bessie huddled next to me until the first patrol car pulled up. The cops got out, drew their weapons and the older Sergeant said:

"Put your gun on the ground," which I did.

"I'm retired from the job. Can I take out my wallet and show my I.D.?"

"Yeah," Older Sergeant said. "Slowly."

I turned sideways so he could watch every move, slid out my wallet and showed my card with (ret.). He nodded and they holstered their weapons.

“You look familiar, older Sergeant said.

“So do you,” I replied. “I’m John Fogerty. I spent my last seven years at your precinct.”

“I remember you now. I was there for a year or so before you left. I’m Denny Doherty,” and we shook hands. “What the fuck happened?”

“Is it alright if we wait until the detectives get here?”

“Yeah.”

He had his partner start stringing crime scene tape. An ambulance arrived, the EMT’s went to the body, checked his vitals, then told the Sergeant: “He’s dead.” When the second patrol car arrived the Sergeant had them move the gathering crowd back and alerted them not to say anything when the media arrived.

Marge was shivering and Bessie was anxiously poking her head at her. I told Marge:

“Don’t say anything about the video,” and she nodded, still too shook up to talk.

We stood there, my arm around her, Bessie leaning against her, until the detectives arrived. I didn’t know either of them, a big black guy and a short Hispanic woman, who stopped to talk to the Sergeant, then came to us.

“I’m detective Jefferson. This is detective Mendoza. What happened?”

“We were out for a walk with our old dog. This Asian guy came by with that killer dog off the leash. The dog growled and came at us. I asked him to leash the dog. He ignored me. I asked again, the dog kept coming. Marge asked him to call him. He kept coming, growling louder. I told the guy I’d tase the dog if it attacked us. He just looked at me. The dog started to leap, I tased him, the guy screamed and drew a sword and started to us. I told him to stop. He

kept coming. I yelled: 'Stop. Drop the sword.' He kept coming, raised the sword, I drew my weapon, yelled: 'Stop' and when he started to swing at us I fired three times. That's it."

"Did you get off shooting him?" Detective Mendoza challenged.

I recognized the beginning of the good cop, bad cop routine.

"I told you what happened. Twenty two years on the job and I never even drew my weapon."

"So you finally got your chance," she goaded.

"I have nothing more to say without my lawyer," I responded.

They went and talked to Sergeant Doherty, then Detective Jefferson came back.

"Doherty knows you."

"Yeah. Do you know Sergeant Alonso?"

"It's Lieutenant Alonso. He's our homicide commander."

"He knows me."

He stepped aside, probably calling Alonso, talked to him, then said:

"Lieutenant Alonso vouches for you. It looks like a righteous shooting, but the D.A.'s office determines that. You know the routine," and I nodded. "You and your wife can go."

He didn't bother with 'don't leave town', or Mirandize me.

"Thanks."

"Someone'll be in touch. Hey. How can you afford this neighborhood?"

"I grew up here and we had a rent controlled apartment. When my mom died we kept living here."

"Lucky. Take care," and he walked away.

"We just went for a walk, John," Marge remarked. "Is the city completely crazy?"

I shrugged. "Let's go home, Marge."