

Fla. School Shooting Hero's Teary Tale: 'I'm No Hero, Folks'

Security officer Mike Jones thought his friend was dead, then opened fire.

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Mike Jones: Hero of Florida School Board Shooting

A look at the unsung hero who was scheduled to be on vacation.

Dec. 16, 2010— -- The security officer hailed as a hero for taking down a shooter in a vicious gun battle in a Florida school board meeting said today that he opened fire after he thought his friend had been killed, and then cried when he saw his friend alive.

"I thought, 'I let him down.' I love him and the school system... That was the only thing going through my mind," school security officer Mike Jones told reporters in his first public statement since Tuesday's shootout. "I could hear the sirens coming. I was waiting on that backup... but once he shot the superintendent, the gunfight was on."

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The incident began Tuesday when police said 56-year-old Clay Duke disrupted the school board meeting by proclaiming he had "a motion" and spray-painted a large V with a circle around it on the wall and threatening the room with a gun. Apparently intent on avenging his wife's 2008 firing, Duke aimed his weapon at the board members several times and told them he was planning to die that day.

Duke's first shot, which school superintendent Bill Husfelt said was aimed directly at him from no more than 15 feet away, somehow missed. That's when Jones burst into the room and began firing, shooting Duke in the back three times.

When Duke hit the ground still firing, Jones hit the ground too, crawling behind the desks as gunfire erupted around him. By the time he crawled into a position to fire on Duke again, Jones said he saw Duke raise his gun to his own head and pull the trigger.

Despite all the gunfire, Jones' only injury was hurting his knee from hitting the deck. But Jones said he didn't feel relieved until Husfelt, his friend and boss, stood up from where he had fallen behind his desk.

"To see him coming from behind that desk and see that he's OK... When he came around from that desk, it was like seeing a new born baby for the first time," Jones said.

Jones, trying to choke back tears at the memory, said he broke down crying at the sight of his friend.

"I can't get that out of my mind. It's the picture that I see the most. I don't see the shots being fired, I don't see the bullets. I see him and them coming from behind that desk and I knew it was ok," he said.

Since the incident, Husfelt and just about everyone involved or that's even heard the story has called Jones a hero, but it's not a title he accepts.

"I'm not a hero, folks," he said. "I was just doing my job."

Inside the meeting was reporter Nadeen Yanes of [ABC affiliate WMBB-TV](#), who shot the exclusive video of the incident.

Shooter's Wife Believes He Didn't Intend to Harm Anyone, Cops Disagree

Duke's wife said Wednesday that he likely missed all the board members on purpose, but police today contend there's no doubt his intent was to injure or kill.

"He didn't want anyone to get hurt but himself," Clay Duke's wife, Rebecca Duke, told reporters Wednesday. Rebecca Duke, who called her husband a "gentle giant," said he was trying to stand up for her after she lost her job as a special education teacher in 2008.

"Basically ...he loved me, he loved his family, and he was just trying to have people stop as he would say dump on me," she said.

But police aren't buying it and say that while Duke's motive may never fully be known, there's little doubt he went into that school board meeting Tuesday with anything but mayhem on his mind.

"I stick by my point that I believe Mr. Duke went there with a purpose and that purpose was to do harm and possibly kill other individuals," Panama City Police Deputy Chief Robert Colbert told "Good Morning America." "I understand that that may be a part of the reasoning process for her [Rebecca Duke] that he went there to scare people, but I believe law enforcement is operating on the full notion that he went there to harm or kill superintendent [Bill] Husfelt."

Duke's wife said he was bipolar and took medication for mental health issues. Colbert said he could not specifically confirm Duke's condition, but mental issues "probably" played a part.

Police said Duke had planned the attack carefully, carrying two full clips of bullets. The date of the attack, Dec. 14, was circled in red on a calendar in Duke's home, investigators said. Before he was wounded by Jones, police said Duke fired 14 shots -- none of them hitting their targets.

Jones was taken to the hospital with chest pains after the shooting, but has been released.

Gunman Takes Hostages, Several 'Heroes' Step Up

Jones isn't the only person in that room being hailed a hero. School board member Ginger Littleton was given the chance to escape, but instead chose to attack Duke with her purse.

In the video, Duke is seen dismissing the women and children from the room before Husfelt tried to talk Duke out of the attack, or at least letting the other board members go.

But after she was dismissed and given the chance to leave with her life, Littleton stopped and thought about her friends who were still in danger. She turned back, snuck up and swatted his hand holding the pistol with her purse.

"I had the choice of leaving," Littleton told "Good Morning America" Wednesday. "When I turned back around he was up on the level with my guys and they were all sitting there lined up like ducks in a pond ... completely defenseless.

"So I could either walk away, thinking something bad was going to happen and try to live with myself, or I could try to do something to divert or delay.

So my bag was what I had and so that's what I did," Littleton said.

In a video that was recording the board meeting, Littleton is seen sneaking up behind Duke before smacking his arm with her purse. Duke overpowered Littleton but let her go again.

Then, school superintendent Husfelt attempted to talk Duke out of the attack, or at least into allowing others to leave.

"Will you let them go? You're obviously upset at me, so why are they here?" Husfelt said in the video. "This isn't worth it. This is a problem."

Then, when Duke trained his weapon on Husfelt, Husfelt shifted in his seat and asked, "Please don't. Please don't. Please."

Another Hero Saves the Day

Duke fired and Husfelt hit the floor, but he was not shot -- a miracle, he said.

"Right before he pulled that trigger, I knew he was going to pull the trigger," Husfelt told "GMA" today. "There was a miracle that I wasn't shot. He literally had the gun pointed right at me. ... God was standing in front of me. I believe that with all my heart."

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