Girl, 16, Shot to Death by Robber



Sixteen-year-old Shona* didn’t even have time to react to the robber’s demand for money before the bullet from his gun shattered her skull. Her mother was right beside her when Shona’s world stopped forever.

A Little About Shona
She was a part-time cashier at her parents’ restaurant in Wisconsin. She also prepared food and took customers’ orders. The rest of her time was spent studying 10th grade subjects in high school.

What Happened
Shona was standing behind the front counter of the restaurant watching television when a man wearing a bandana over his face entered and stood in front of the cash register. He pointed a handgun at Shona’s face and demanded money from the cash drawer. Before she or her mother could respond, the gun fired, striking Shona in the face. She fell to the floor, and the suspect ran from the building.

Shona’s father was working in the back kitchen when he heard the gunshot. He immediately pushed a silent alarm button to notify the security company, and Shona’s mother phoned for emergency services. Paramedics and police responded within four minutes, but couldn’t do much for Shona, who died of brain injuries. In their grief, Shona’s parents subsequently closed their business.

Security at the Restaurant
About a month before the incident, two men tried to steal the television set from the customer service counter. But Shona’s father stopped the robbery in progress. Three years before that, an armed robbery occurred at the restaurant.

Although the family had a silent alarm security system, a camera that was directed at the counter was not working. After police received information from an informant, three men were arrested, but only two were later convicted of murder.

Workers Take Heed
Employees who deal with the public should follow these recommendations to minimize their risk of being victims of violence on the job:

- Get safety training on how to handle workplace violence, including robberies and assault. Ensure the training covers security measures, cash

handling rules and strategies to defuse tense situations.
- Keep doors locked before and after business hours.
- Have a personal alarm or cell phone handy so you can notify authorities in an emergency.
- Talk to your boss about reducing the amount of cash on the premises, and consider hanging a sign to that effect.
- Avoid working alone. Adopt the buddy system to boost your safety and security.
- Report all suspicious persons and vehicles seen around your jobsite.
- Advise your supervisor or manager of any hazards that need immediate attention.

**The names aren’t real, but the incidents are. These accounts are based on actual fatality investigations.*