



**cnsnews.com**  
THE RIGHT NEWS. RIGHT NOW.™

# Openly Armed Citizens Protect Honest People from Criminals in Ferguson

December 2, 2014

By [Daniel Mitchell](#)

In the postscript of [a previous column](#), I shared some of Ben Watson's wise and prudent counsel about the racial unrest in Ferguson.

Today, I want to share [a feel-good story](#) to come out of that town's troubles.

Rather than looting, some citizens served as protectors of property.

“Since looting first erupted following the August police shooting of black teenager Michael Brown, nearly all the businesses in a two-square-mile area of this St. Louis suburb have had to board up. All except one — a Conoco gas station and convenience store. ... On Tuesday night, as police and soldiers took up positions in the parking lots of virtually every strip mall and big box store around it, the forecourt of the brightly lit gas station was busy with customers. One, a 6-foot-8-inches man named Derrick Jordan — “Stretch,” as friends call him — whisked an AR-15 assault rifle out from a pickup truck parked near the entrance. Jordan, 37, was one of four black Ferguson residents who spent Tuesday night planted in front of the store, pistols tucked into their waistbands, waiting to ward off looters or catch shoplifters. Jordan and the others guarding the gas station are all black.”

If this was simply a story about armed citizens protecting property, it would be a feel-good story. But it's even better than that.

“The station's owner is white. ... “We would have been burned to the ground many times over if it weren't for them,” said gas station owner Doug Merello, whose father first bought it in 1984.”

Yes, you read correctly.

Black men protected a gas station/convenience store owned by a white man.

“At times, Jordan and his friends were joined on Tuesday night by other men from the neighborhood, also armed. None of the men was getting paid to be there. They said they felt they owed it to Merello, who has employed many of them over the years and treats them with respect. ‘He's a nice dude, he's helped us a lot,’ said a 29-year-old who identified himself as R.J. He said he, like the other volunteers, had lived a short distance away from the store for most of his life.

He carried a Taurus 9mm pistol in his sweatpants and drew it out to show another customer, an older man at a pump who was brandishing a MAC-10 machine pistol. Missouri allows the open carrying of firearms.”

There are two heart-warming features of this story.

First, it’s nice to see that there are people who judge by character and not by race. And I’m not just talking about the black guys who showed up to guard the store. It also seems self-evident that Mr. Merello must be a stand-up guy who treated black customers with decency and respect. Our society would be better if more and more people copied the behavior of Mr. Jordan and Mr. Merello.

Second (and this is the part that must distress former Mayor Bloomberg), isn’t it great that citizens have the right to own guns (particularly blacks, given the [racist origin of many gun control laws](#)) and that Missouri even allows open carry! The statist said such laws would result in more crime, but instead openly armed citizens are protecting honest people from criminals.

*Daniel J. Mitchell is a top expert on tax reform and supply-side tax policy at the [Cato Institute](#). Mitchell is a strong advocate of a flat tax and international tax competition.*