

Against All Odds: Disabled Army Vet Survives Brutal Grizzly Attack

A disabled Army veteran recounts a terrifying grizzly bear attack he survived this week—by playing dead and clinging to his can of bear spray—in a series of Instagram posts.

Shayne Burke describes the attack by a mama grizzly last Sunday as the “most violent thing I have ever experienced.” Reflecting on his ordeal, Burke shares, “I’ve experienced being shot at, mortared and IED explosions.”

Burke was navigating the woods of Grand Teton National Park’s Signal Mountain in western Wyoming, hoping to photograph a great gray owl. His wife waited in the parking lot, and Burke was heading back to her location when an uneasy feeling overcame him. “I was breaking branches, singing and talking to myself aloud. These are some things that can help prevent a ‘surprise encounter’ with a brown bear,” he says.

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In what would be much to the dismay of any hiker, he spotted a bear cub in front of him. “I knew this wasn’t good,” he writes. Instinctively, Burke unholstered his bear spray just as the mother bear began charging. “I stood my ground, shouted and attempted to deploy the bear spray but as I did she already closed the gap,” he writes.

With seconds to react, he dropped to the ground, lying on his stomach to protect his front and interlocking his hands behind his neck to “protect my vitals.” The bear bit him on his shoulder, legs and buttocks; slammed him to the ground; and stood on his back before aiming for his neck for a “kill

bite.”

“I still had my hands interlocked and my arms protecting my carotid arteries,” he writes. Despite the agony, Burke never let go of the bear spray. “As she bit my hands in the back of my neck she simultaneously bit the bear spray can and it exploded in her mouth. This is what saved my life from the initial attack. I heard her run away, I looked up and instantly ran in the opposite direction up a hill.”

Burke texted his wife, “attacked” and applied improvised tourniquets to his legs. As they awaited rescue, Burke filmed a video saying goodbye to his loved ones in case the worst happened. But soon, a helicopter and ambulance arrived, rushing him to a hospital.

“The No. 1 thing that kept me alive during the attack was reading and understanding what to do in the event of a bear attack and being prepared with the bear spray,” he writes. “Though I am not sure if I got to spray any at the bear, having it on me and keeping it in my hands while protecting my vitals 100% is the only reason I am telling my story now.”

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Burke expresses deep gratitude to the “Jenny Lake Rangers who saved my life.” He harbors no resentment towards the bear, recognizing the attack as a natural defense of her cub. “In fact, the second thing I said to the park rangers was please don’t kill the bear, she was defending her cub,” he writes, adding, “I love and respect wildlife.”

A Divine Shield in Life’s Storms

Through his harrowing experience, Shayne Burke’s survival underscores a profound truth: The Lord watches over and protects us, even in the most unexpected and perilous moments.

In times of danger, His guidance and presence can turn the tide, offering hope and deliverance.

The Bible reminds us of God's constant protection in Psalm 121:7-8: "The Lord shall protect you from all evil; He shall preserve your soul. The Lord shall preserve your going out and your coming in from now and for evermore."

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