

Holy Spirit Gives Officer a Last-Minute Instruction That Saved His Life

He was shot in the line of duty. The St. Louis police chief called it an ambush.

Sunday, the officer shot in the Central West End in July spoke for the first time on television. NewsChannel 5 interviewed the officer in silhouette and he asked that his name not be used out of concern for the safety of his family.

“It was a hot St. Louis July night like so many others I’ve worked before,” the officer recalls. But while it may have started out ordinary, his overnight shift on July 14 was nearly his last.

Working his side job providing security in the Central West End, after a long regular shift for the department, the heat was taking its toll and the officer had taken off his bullet proof vest. He had done “rounds” in the upscale entertainment district for about two hours, checking doors and locking gates, when he noticed some individuals on the street around 4:30 a.m.

“They were just walking. There was nothing particular about them but the hairs on my neck stood up,” he recalls. “And at that point there was a voice that told me grab my vest. I know it was God.” He put the vest back on and says the decision saved his life.

According to police, the 39-year-old sergeant was sitting in his personal car, in full uniform, when he noticed three suspects walking down the street. A short time later, a silver vehicle occupied by the three suspects, as well as another, pulled up directly in front of the Sgt.’s vehicle. A man

wearing a black bandanna exited the passenger side of the vehicle and opened fire on the Sgt., striking him in the chest. The sergeant returned fire as the shooter fled on foot and the vehicle drove away.

The 16-year veteran won't talk specifics of the shootout that followed because four suspects are still facing charges. But he believes they saw his police uniform and targeted him because of it.

The official department account is that the suspects pulled up next to the officer's vehicle and one opened fire on him. The officer fired back and more than a dozen shots in all were exchanged. The officer chased his alleged attacker long enough to get a description – knowing he had been hit.

"And my prayers were answered," he said.

The vest he decided to put on had stopped the bullet near his ribs.

Doctors have cleared the officer to return to work as far as any physical injuries are concerned. But he says counseling continues for wounds that are deeper and hopes to be back on the beat by September.

"I know it sounds funny, but I'm glad that I stood in the gap of someone else not being a victim of these individuals wanting to cause crime in the neighborhood. I'm glad I was there to stop them from doing that and make an arrest on these guys before they hurt anybody else."

When asked if he would stand in that gap again he says without hesitation, "absolutely."

The officer says he has had some welcome support from the community including from the Central West End Business Association and from the Metro East clothing store "Glik's." The officer was working his secondary job out of his personal

car and it was shot at least 14 times. He says Glik's donated a replacement car.

"I realized I was shot." And he says that's when he began praying for "the peace of mind to stay alive" for his young son and his wife.