

My Scariest Moment, from Thomas Cannon

My sniper team which consisted of my spotter John and I conducted operations on what seemed like a large island in between Fallujah and Rhamadi Iraq. We spent a lot of time searching for enemy mortar teams and high value targets in the area. On a night mission we were moving through a wood line that was on the edge of the Euphrates River and heard a noise in the river. We took a lot of pride in the fact that we had never been spotted and although the enemy was searching us out, they never had any luck. The noise sounded a little like a boat. We froze in our positions intently listening for other sounds. Has someone found us or heard us from the river? As a couple of splashes rang as loud as thunder and we quietly moved to a covered position. These new sounds are footsteps in the edge of the river. These footsteps were moving and getting closer. We have positioned ourselves so the only way anyone can get near us is to move in front of us. Reality was setting in, and my heart began to pound hard.

In a normal gun fight, it usually happens without notice or hesitation, and as a sniper you have complete control of the fight. Now I have time to think about our situation, and it is not good. John has an M-4 with a 203 grenade launcher, and I have a most impressive bolt action rifle. It is the best tool for its intended purpose, but not a gunfight at 10 feet. We are not wearing body armor or helmets, and preparing to engage at least a couple of men with AK-47s. So the reality is, we are in trouble. The footsteps are getting closer and my heart is pounding harder. Once they round the end of the brush it is game on. My rifle is up and John is at the ready. At that moment we hear a strange squawking noise. It was loud, and we weren't sure what to make of it. We then saw a large crane come around the corner and make that squawking noise again. I almost yelled at that stupid bird, and I still think it might have been justified if I would have shot it.

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