

The Bus Driver Did WHAT?!?

I read a news item a few weeks ago about Shawn Brim, a bus driver in Washington who stopped his bus, got off and adjusted his side-view mirrors, and then proceeded to punch a nearby McGruff the Crime Dog in the face! What was he thinking? He thought it would be funny, he said. Understandably, everyone failed to see the humor in punching a children's hero in front of a crowd of horrified kids, and the bus driver was arrested.

On the other side of the coin and the world, there was another bus driver whose actions can only be described as heroic. Seems Brim has something to learn from Meher Mohammad Khalil:

LAHORE, Pakistan (CNN) – His job was to drive the bus. But Meher Mohammad Khalil is now being hailed as a lifesaver. When gunmen jumped out of bushes and began spraying bullets at the bus carrying the Sri Lankan cricket team Tuesday, Khalil quickly sized up his options and got everyone to safety.

“First I thought there were some firecrackers going off. Then, when I saw the elite force cars in front of me taking fire, I immediately lost my voice,” Khalil told CNN on Wednesday.

“At that time, the other elite car that was with us gave me cover, and then, when I saw he was giving me cover, my courage and my patience returned. I decided to take the vehicle from there, and one way or another, even if I had to drive over someone, I would take this bus and escape.”

Khalil returned to the scene of the attack in the Pakistani city of Lahore on Wednesday to honor those who were killed and to place flowers in their memory.

One of the dead was Zafar Khan, a friend and fellow bus driver who had been in a vehicle behind Khalil.

“My eyes filled with tears that these were people that I was

eating with and who died in doing their duty.”

Khalil had been part of a convoy heading to Gaddafi Stadium, where the Sri Lankan cricket team was to continue a match against Pakistan.

Six police officers were killed, in addition to Khalil's friend Khan who was driving a bus with the match umpires.

The Sri Lankan cricketers praised Khalil's quick thinking and action, saying he saved their lives. Six team members were injured by broken glass and shrapnel.

Team captain Mahela Jayawardene wrote on his Web site of Khalil: “He probably saved our lives, showing remarkable bravery in the face of direct gunfire to keep the bus moving.”

Crowds mobbed Khalil as he paid his respects at the place where his life changed in an instant.

“He is a hero, a real hero, a real man of the people,” a man in the crowd said.

Private donors in Lahore have rewarded Khalil with 300,000 rupees (more than \$3,000) – a small fortune for a Pakistani bus driver.

Today, Khalil says all he can feel is pain of the loss of life. And he called on the attackers to recognize that their victims are humans just like them, with mothers and sisters.

“For God's sake, please stop this terrorism and let this nation breathe a sigh of relief,” he said.