

State of Arizona v. Jones
("Nobody Did Anything
Wrong But Me")

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Wrong But Me”)

The Second Amendment and the Horrific
Consequences of “Stand Your Ground” in
Public Spaces: The Story of the Northern
Arizona University Mass Shooting,
October 9, 2015

Gary L. Stuart

Foreword by

A Craig Blakey

Judge of the Arizona Superior Court, Ret.

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Foreword

*Bang bang, I shot him down
Bang bang, he hit the ground
Bang bang, that awful sound
Bang bang, I shot their baby down.*

The paraphrase of the 1960s pop hit aside, what must Steven Jones be thinking as he sits in prison? Is it about Colin Brough's parents; his own? Author Gary Stuart has added to his string of fascinating true crime books with a unique insight into the tragic night of October 9, 2015, when Steven shot down Colin, his fellow Northern Arizona University student. In *State of Arizona v. Jones* (*"Nobody Did Anything Wrong But Me"*), Stuart doesn't just explain what caused Steven's cold blooded reaction to a minor, physical confrontation, but how America's fascination with guns made such a response possible.

An NAU alumnus, I remember well the fall nights in Flagstaff, Arizona. The weekend evenings began with beers at the local bar and ended with a leisurely walk back to campus. While there were occasional testosterone and beer fueled scuffles between the "indies" and the frat boys, they were rare and mostly an exchange of empty threats. No one ever conceived that there would be weapons involved or the possibility of serious injury. But that was years before, as Stuart notes, the NRA usurped the Second Amendment, striking fear into the American right and promoting the worship of violent weaponry.

As one who has presided over trials like Stephen Jones's, I have witnessed the tragic toll both the underlying incident and the subsequent legal proceedings have on the victims, the defendant, and their families. But there was rarely a satisfactory conclusion as to what allowed things to escalate out of control. Stuart's book poses an explanation and expertly exposes how America's gun culture has allowed disproportionate responses to become the norm and not the exception.

Thank you Gary Stuart for a wonderful case study and your scrutiny of gun usage and the NRA. To all who are tired of gun violence, *read this book!*

A Craig Blakey,
Judge of the Arizona Superior Court, Ret.

Author's Note

The mass shooting on the Northern Arizona University campus on October 9, 2015 was heavily documented. There were scores of witnesses, one shooter, one death, and three wounded students. The Coconino County Superior Court files are voluminous. They include thousands of pages of transcripts, legal pleadings, photographs, videos, interviews, interrogations, indictments, and court orders. Because the shooting took place close to a large university dormitory, there were scores of students who saw parts of the altercation, shooting, and crime scene activity. There is an incalculable number of private images partially documenting what happened before, during, and after the maiming and killing occurred. Three law enforcement agencies accessed and documented the crime scene. Only one person was arrested and charged. The Flagstaff Medical Center treated three wounded students. The County Medical Examiner performed one autopsy.

And yet, despite the prodigious efforts of students, faculty, university and city leadership, law enforcement, and the legal community, what went on in the minds of the shooter and his victims and what actually caused the carnage remains debatable.

The first three chapters are a short reconstruction of the backstory—the Stand Your Grand movement, the NRA, and guns on American campuses. The next eighteen chapters are the front-story—the grand jury proceedings, trial, mistrial, change of plea, and sentencing. The final three chapters attempt to connect the tragedy of one campus shooting to the many gun culture issues that plague our civil and criminal justice systems, not to mention society in general.

The first trial took five weeks, consuming nine trial days and four days of jury deliberations. The sheer volume of the testimony, arguments, and court rulings made it necessary to condense and summarize testimony, legal issues, media coverage, and community reactions.

I did not interview witnesses, lawyers, court staff, or judicial officers. However, their views and statements are condensed and summarized from the excellent record maintained by the court. I read the court record in its entirety. And I reviewed five years of print and broadcast news. The end result is my excerpted, condensed narrative of what happened, why and how it happened, and what it portends for higher education as more guns show up

and more students die. I have tried to eliminate redundancy, translate legal jargon, and clarify the legal consequences. While all the stated facts are true, the opinions and legal interpretations in this book are strictly my own.