



## Exercising the Right

### Army Vet on Trial After Self-defense Shooting

A story out of San Antonio reminds us how anyone who engages in armed self-defense might end up facing a criminal prosecution. The defendant in the case, 25-year-old Roger McCracken, was charged with the shooting death of his neighbor in Bexar County. The incident occurred back on September 11, 2021 when McCracken was returning to the apartment complex where he lived with his wife and children. At that moment, he was confronted by his 34-year-old neighbor, Ronnie Riddle. For unknown reasons, Riddle was highly agitated and began making threatening remarks to McCracken and his family. McCracken said that Riddle reached for a gun he was carrying, so he pulled his own firearm and opened fire on Riddle, mortally wounding him.

Prosecutors relied on the testimony of an eyewitness who contradicted McCracken's version of the story but who was an admitted drug user. McCracken's defense attorney, Joseph Hoelscher, was adamant that McCracken had acted lawfully. "Roger McCracken carried his weapon responsibly. He used it responsibly. He did everything that gun owners are trained to do if they ever have to use their weapon in self-defense," Hoelscher told [News4SanAntonio.com](#).

After hours of deliberation, the jury told the judge they were deadlocked. The judge would not accept that result, and told them to return to deliberating. Thankfully for McCracken, on February 1, the jury returned with a "not guilty" verdict. McCracken told [News4SanAntonio.com](#), "I feel like the stress is off my shoulders and the weight's lifted.... I'm happy that I can say I can be home with my family.... I feel blessed.... I just know that I've got a future now."

While McCracken was saddened at the loss of Riddle's life, he knows he did what was necessary to protect his family. While he is grateful to be a free man, this whole episode might motivate him to consider a career change. "You know, after this case, I'm actually thinking about going into law," he said.

### "We Are Going to Protect Ourselves"

Sometimes it seems as if prosecutors are looking to lock up innocent people who simply defend themselves or their families. That isn't the case in Indianapolis, where one prosecutor is a strong supporter of people exercising their Second Amendment-protected rights. News site [WTHR.com](#) reported on January 4 about Johnson County Prosecutor Lance Hamner's comments on a recent self-defense shooting. Hamner told the site, "When a person is on his property at his home, he is able to use deadly force to protect himself and to [prevent] somebody from breaking in or coming in to harm them, if he reasonably believes that that force is necessary.... You're seeing a lot of these home invasions and people protecting themselves, and lots of times, the bad guy is coming out the loser.... I hope that's a strong message that at least in Indiana, we're not going to stand by and just let somebody come in and attack you and take everything you have. We are going to protect ourselves, and we've seen that happen a lot. I've seen it happen [in] my county."

### Justifiable Increase

[KOAT.com](#) reported out of Albuquerque on January 5 about the increase in justifiable homicides from



Written by [Patrick Krey](#) on February 20, 2024

Published in the March 11, 2024 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 40, No. 05

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2022 to 2023. In 2022, there were six justifiable homicides in Albuquerque, but in 2023 that number rose to 16. During a press conference, Albuquerque Police Chief Harold Medina attributed the increase to more “individuals armed during simple conflict that weren’t armed in the past... I think the more armed individuals we have in the community, when one individual goes to do something they shouldn’t be doing, and the other person has immediate access to a firearm, we’re going to see more of these incidents.”

Retired Albuquerque Police Department commander and public safety expert Paul Szych said that people feel less secure these days, and that’s why they’re arming themselves in record numbers. “The more violent felons that you have on the streets that are not incarcerated, where they have the ability to be rehabilitated, the more likelihood you’re going to have of an average citizen finding themselves in harm’s way, being forced to take action to save a loved one or themselves,” he explained.

## **Snapchat Scam Turns Deadly**

[KTUL.com](#) out of Bartlesville, Oklahoma, reported on February 6 about a scammer using a fake social-media profile who ended up getting a man killed in one of his criminal schemes.

Police detectives believe a 23-year-old man was contacted by the scammer on Snapchat. The scammer, who was posing as an attractive young woman in the man’s area, told the man that if he sent “her” digital currency through the app, that “she” would allow him to come to “her” apartment for a sexual encounter. The man agreed to the prostitution proposal, sent the money, and headed to the location as instructed by the scammer.

The man walked almost four miles before he arrived at an apartment complex matching the address given by the scammer. He became irate when a woman at the address claimed she didn’t know who he was and wouldn’t let him in her apartment. He began pounding on the door, and the woman warned him to stop and told him she was armed. The man refused to relent and eventually kicked the door off its hinges. The woman inside the apartment opened fire, hitting the man in the chest and killing him. The local district attorney ruled that the shooting was a justified use of lethal force.

As part of the criminal investigation, authorities identified the Snapchat account that set the whole tragic chain of events in motion. They determined that it had brought in more than \$2,000,000 via similar methods, and that the person or people behind it were operating overseas.

Bartlesville Police Department Captain Daniel Elkins advised people to be on the lookout for any communications from unknown sources requesting money.



Written by [Patrick Krey](#) on February 20, 2024

Published in the March 11, 2024 issue of [the New American](#) magazine. Vol. 40, No. 05

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