



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on October 1, 2017

Oklahoma Jury Finds Muslim Convert Who Beheaded Woman Guilty

Rejecting the defense of not guilty by reason of insanity, a jury in Cleveland County, Oklahoma, found Alton Alexander Nolan guilty Friday of first-degree murder in the beheading of a co-worker at a food plant in Moore, Oklahoma, in 2014. Nolan was also found guilty of five more counts of assault.

The jury took only two hours to find Nolan guilty. This week, the trial will resume, as the jury will determine Nolan's punishment. Cleveland County District Attorney Greg Mashburn is seeking the death penalty.



Nolan confessed soon after he was arrested for the September 25, 2014 murder of Collen Hufford, a 54-year-old co-worker, in which he beheaded her with a knife. He explained that he was acting in the name of Allah, following the Quran. "I felt oppressed," Nolan told law enforcement officers, arguing that he was only doing "what I was supposed to do as a Muslim."

In his Facebook page, Nolan, writing under the name of Jah'Keem Yisrael, posted before the murder at Vaughn Foods, "I am not your friend. All my friends are at the mosque all around the world."

Nolan was apparently inspired to murder Hufford by decapitation by recent beheadings of Americans and other westerners in the Middle East. Moore Police Department spokesman Sgt. Jeremy Lewis delivered the grisly details: "Initial investigation shows that Alton Nolen, who was an employee at Vaughn Foods was terminated and became angry. Nolen went to the parking lot, then drove his vehicle to the front of the business, where he hit another vehicle. Nolen then entered the main entrance into the front office. Nolen encountered Hufford with a knife. During the attack, Nolen severed the victim's head."

After cutting off Hufford's head, Nolen then proceeded to stab a second victim, Traci Johnson. Johnson received several stab wounds, but before Nolen had the opportunity to behead her, too, the chief operating officer of Vaughn Foods, Mark Vaughn, prevented a second killing with several shots from a rifle. Johnson was taken to OU Medical Center, along with Nolen, where both recovered.

Nolen had a criminal past, having been convicted in 2011 of multiple felony drug offenses, assault and battery on a police officer, and escape from detention. He was released from prison in March 2013, and soon thereafter, converted to Islam.

After going to work at Vaughn Foods, he was very aggressive in attempting to convert co-workers to Islam. On his Facebook page, Nolen challenged the words of the Apostle Paul in First Thessalonians 4:16-17, which described the resurrection of "the dead in Christ," and the catching up of living Christians to "meet the Lord in the air." Nolen rejected that teaching, saying those who "will rise from the dead" will be those who died in faith as "servants of Allah." Nolen argued that "the ones who died in sin will remain in their graves," because they are already in Hell.



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In another Facebook post, Nolen called upon the U.S. to help Gaza against Israel. “America and Israel are wicked. Wake up Muslims!!!,” he exhorted his readers.

At the time of Nolen’s murderous rampage, local Muslim leaders distanced themselves from Nolen’s action, asserting that his views are not what is taught in the Quran.

District Attorney Mashburn rejected the argument that Nolen committed the murder and assaults because he was insane. When defense lawyer Shea Smith told jurors during closing arguments that Nolen thought what he was doing was pleasing to Allah, and that as a result he would get to Heaven, and that what happened that day “didn’t make any sense,” Mashburn responded, “Senseless, violent crimes happen every day. I wouldn’t have a job ... if it didn’t. That doesn’t mean he’s insane.”

Perhaps the tragic episode in Moore is instructive of another issue. “We had officers on the scene very quick,” Sergeant Lewis of the Moore police department said. “The attack, it didn’t go on a long time. I do not know that in our response, we were there within minutes of the initial call.” But while the police are to be commended for their rapid response, it is a fact that many times, crime victims need help immediately — help that can only be provided by themselves or by others already at the scene or close by when the crime is being committed.

Had it not been for Vaughn and his rifle, it is likely that at least one more person would have died a grisly death, and perhaps many more. Vaughn fired multiple times, finally dropping Nolen.

“This was not going to stop ... [Vaughn] was obviously a hero in this situation,” Sgt. Lewis noted.

Had Vaughn’s constitutionally protected right to keep and bear arms been denied, as we have seen happen in nations such as Australia, not only would Nolen’s murderous rampage have continued, perhaps Vaughn himself would have died by decapitation.

In the case of Nolen, the exercise of Vaughn’s right to keep and bear arms did stop more killings. And the exercise of this right will continue to save lives in the future.



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