

The words of an innocent man's family - near the time he was arrested and after the acquittal:

His mother - "I received a phone call from my son's (girl)friend, telling me that he had been arrested, was in jail, and what should she do with the children. She brought them over about mid-morning, and told me what she knew, also very little!! Later, I tried calling the jail, was given a phone number to call, where you could get information about any inmate. The number did not work for me, it had not for his friend, and it did not work for my daughter. Later in the day, we went to the Jail Complex. Of course, all talking was via voice-box outside the building. We were not permitted to leave a message, and God forbid, see him. We did not know other than what his friend told us, 'domestic violence.' We are convinced it was cruel and unnecessary punishment for someone who is presumed innocent until trial. Never having been involved in a situation of this kind, we weren't sure what to do. The only information we were given was the time of the hearing - Monday morning at 10:15."

"We arrived at the Courthouse in plenty of time, inquired as to what courtroom and attended the session. Bail was set at \$10,000. No priors, no weapons. Once again, we inquired as to what to do and how to go about it. We did contact a lawyer, arranged to make the bail in cash and took it back to the Courthouse expecting to have our son released within an hour or two of making the payment. Only then were we informed that the bond restrictions hadn't been set - and wouldn't be till the following day. We became a bit upset, raised our voices and, as a consequence, the lawyer we ultimately procured had to apologize for us to Judge Nau. The first lawyer was not willing to visit our son before the hearing nor to be there as representative. So much for client relationships."

"We did not see the telecasts on Channel 5 or the ones that aired on Casper 13, but understand that they were very incriminating. I've not seen the police report. The WT-E on Sunday morning was perhaps taken from that report."

"We are losing quite a lot of interest on the money markets. A cash bond is a very antiquated system. I felt we were putting these young women at the Courthouse in quite an untenable position, as well as ourselves in having to transport the cash from the bank. Why doesn't the court system take advantage of computer banking - or at the very least, a cashier's check?" (March 26, 2008)

"Thank you very much for the article you published on April 15 concerning the 'Exonerated by the Victim' story. It very much needed to be said. It is my considered opinion that both parties in a domestic dispute should be charged, but especially the one who is trying to gain access to someone else's home at 2:30 am on a cold and snowy March morning. If a weapon was not taken into evidence, what business does said weapon have being mentioned in the local newspaper? At that point, a weapon was only hearsay attested to by a neighbor." (April 17, 2008)

"A few weeks ago, I put down my thoughts about the arrest and what a horrible week-end and also following days it was! They are obviously operating our jail system on the premise 'if you are here, you deserve no human compassion, and don't even think that you may not be guilty! We know better!!' And the family is also treated as pariahs!! The money they are saving on basic humanity must be making a nice little bundle in someone's pockets. I have never been one who thought a convicted criminal should be coddled. But all should be treated with basic humanness." (Sometime after April 17, 2008)

"Mr. Featherly: I understand that you would like to know some of the emotions I experienced throughout my son's trial. Believe me, they were and have been, all over the place since the arrest in March! We are fortunate to have had quite a stable family life and I like to think we have passed those values on to our children. We had no more disciplinary problems than was the norm for the period our children grew up in! (School years from 1956 through this son's high school graduation in 1986.) Their Dad was a school administrator for all of their school lives. Small town principals, superintendents, and finally assistant principal during our son's school years. This son is our youngest. He does have a brother two years older than he, so he wasn't the total baby and had to share in the spoiling!"

Now, how did we get from my emotions to school years?? (Scroll down, please)

"I think my first emotions are anti-judge. Neither Nau nor Coates seemed to take into consideration what the prosecuting attorney would need in order to get a conviction or even whether there should be a conviction. At that time, a knife was hearsay and denied by the alleged victim. The victim, in my opinion, was whomever was being pursued (my son). I would think that a judge was remanding these types of cases just because the attorney needed the practice (although, in my opinion, she did). Also, I would wonder at the cost to the State of taking to trial an almost frivolous case. On his own, my son could not have afforded an attorney so that could have been an added cost for the State. What can we do make the judges more accountable? I know that we vote for judges at almost every election but they are mostly unknown entities and I for one do not take the time to know them. So, somehow our judge system should be changed - but I know not how!!

"I thought the trial was a very disjointed affair and am really proud that the jury was able to follow and make sense of some of the testimony. Think I would have been hard-put to do so. I'm not sure if a prosecuting attorney can drop a case for lack of evidence, cause or what options he has once a judge has deemed a trial should be held, but perhaps they all needed the practice!!" (January 17, 2009)

His sister - My impressions & feelings from my brother's arrest to his trial:

"My first reaction on hearing my brother was in jail for assault with a deadly weapon (knife) was disbelief that my brother would ever do such a thing. The family had realized before this happened that an apartment was not the place he should be, or should offer his kids as a home, so we had been working to buy his own home since he had a job here in town and could offer them stability. We knew that he had girlfriends since his divorce, but he had never brought one home to meet the family.

My mom called me on Saturday to tell me that my brother had been arrested and was in jail. She had his kids at her house, and had as much information as his (girl)friend, could provide at that time. We honestly thought that this would go away.

Saturday evening, we (our family in Cheyenne) missed the evening newscast featuring our son's upstairs neighbor (the prosecution's eyewitness). The Casper news showed a picture of my brother in jail which our other brother in Ten Sleep saw, and he called mom to tell her. My brother's ex-wife saw the newscast in Cheyenne with Chris Jose of Channel 5, damning my brother to death for being a drug dealer and abusing this woman. We asked to have a copy of this video, but were denied.

Sunday, mom and I tried to go see my brother and let him know we were doing everything we could to get him out. For all of you 'jail virgins,' the Laramie County Jail is not open on weekends and the employees you talk to are not very helpful or nice. Mom and I went down there and rang the bell, and were told they were not open and to come back later.

We (again, 'we' refers to family members - as many as were available) attended the preliminary hearing for my brother on Monday morning and heard that bond was set at \$10,000. We did not talk to my brother at any time, but immediately went to the bank and got the money and turned it in to the clerk because we were told that was what we needed. We assumed that when we paid the bond, we then could get him out of jail. We were then informed that we needed a release from the Court and that could not happen until the next day. We did raise our voices to the clerks, because we had been told he would be released. My daughter, who works for the State, was contacted later that day about her mother and grandmother and their disrespect for the clerks. My brother's attorney, Don Cole, had to apologize to the court for our rude behavior. I still resent that. If we had been given correct information, the incident would not have happened.

I went that afternoon and sat in the jail area to see my brother and let him know that we were working as hard as we could to get him out and to let him know we loved him. There is a certain protocol you have to follow at the jail, and I had not done so, thank you very much to the ladies who helped me get my number and tell me the rules. When my number was called, I was informed that my brother had already had a visitor that day and I could not see him. Sorry, but I again raised my voice, wanting to know who it was. Of course, they could not tell me.

Tuesday, we finally got him out of jail. He had been in lockdown, not able to talk to other people, could not call anyone, and was ready to give up and say 'guilty.'

(Please scroll down)

How would you feel? By the time we finally got my brother released on Tuesday, we were all ready to give up. He was sure we had abandoned him, and we were sure we would never see him again.

We have no idea why Ms. Conrad (the prosecuting ADA) was so adamant about his guilt. He had never been arrested before and certainly did not have a record of abusing women. We also believe that LL (his upstairs neighbor) had her own agenda that night and saw an opportunity to rid herself and her landlord of an unwanted tenant – even at the expense of his reputation, job, and family. I definitely think there should have been more investigation of this incident and their eyewitness, and my brother could have been proven innocent much sooner than he was. The things LL testified to seeing that night are physically impossible given the people involved.

(Circuit Court Judge) Denise Nau on Monday should have paid attention when she found out the incident happened at my brother's house rather than at the "victim's." Roberta Coates should have had the courage to dismiss the case when it was brought before her. This should not have gone 9 ½ months to a jury trial so that the jury could find him not guilty in 30 minutes. What a waste of time and taxpayer's and our money!

For a family who has never dealt with the courts, this was a very traumatic experience! We, again, collectively, have never been in court on charges, never charged with a felony, never foresaw in our future that we would have to deal with this. My brother served in the U. S. Army, was honorably discharged, was married, had four children, was divorced, served in the Army Guard, and got a ticket for speeding.

The actual trial after waiting 9 months was a relief. Seeing the jurors, listening to them about their prejudices, it was very heartening! I was very impressed with the juror who declined because he did not believe the State should proceed without a victim.

We, of course, knew that my brother was innocent. There had never been a question in our minds, but waiting for the jury to decide that he was innocent was awful for him and for us. We were there for him no matter the outcome, but are very grateful to God that he was declared innocent!"

His brother-in-law - "While sitting and listening to the Assistant DA ask prospective jurors if they thought the State should go ahead with a trial even if the plaintiff didn't want to, I thought that the State must not believe in 'innocent until proven guilty.' The State must believe that a person is guilty until proven innocent. Why else would they have a trial when there is no plaintiff?"

The accused (notes made while he was held in jail initially) - To Whom It May Concern:

I do not deserve to be here. MP (*Cheyenne Herald note: MP is the State's alleged victim who testified for the defense, saying she was not threatened and had not seen a knife that night*) has caused this entire incident because of her jealousy. She began by texting threatening messages to my phone because I was with another woman. After not getting her desired response, she began calling. She threatened the life of my girlfriend, along with serious property damage to both of our vehicles.

Then she showed up, uninvited, and began making very loud noises to make me believe she was damaging my vehicle. I went outside and told her I was going to call the police. Then she began trying to physically enter my home, where my children were sleeping and I did not let her get by me!

I never raised a hand in my life!

I'm not going to start being violent overnight! She planned this domestic disturbance to be vindictive and boldly lied about everything. She threatened me, she physically assaulted me, and somehow, I am the one in trouble.

I have had a steady job since I was old enough to work, haven't missed a day in twenty years. I go to the same church and sit in the same spot for 38 years. I have served my countries' Armed Forces honorably for 12 years and continue to do so.

I don't have a criminal background.

I am locked down unfairly.

I want Justice!!!!