

Circuit Judge Steven Redding  
Morgan County Courthouse  
77 Fairfax Street  
Berkeley Springs, WV 25411

September 19, 2018

My name is K. P. (real name undisclosed for privacy) and I am writing to you about an incident that occurred on June 16, 2016 between neighbors of mine Erick Shute and Jack Douglas. I did not know the others involved being William and Travis Bartley or Terry Marks.

I have owned property in Great Cacapon since 2001. In 2011 we had a dump truck stolen from us and about a year later Jack Douglas admitted to my husband that he had stolen our dump truck and then sold it, we did report the stolen truck to the state police. My first face-to-face meeting with Jack Douglas was in the fall of 2014 when my husband purchased a canoe from Jack Douglas, I had to go pay Jack the money for the canoe. In November Jack came to my home in the middle of the night when I was home alone, he woke me up to tell me he had the ores for the canoe, I opened the door to get the ores and he pushed his way in, he did not have any ores, then he tried to rape me. I begged to go to the bathroom he let me go and I went to the bedroom to get my shotgun, I came out and told him at gun point he had to go or I would shoot him, he left with his pants around his ankles and Travis Bartley was sitting out in the truck waiting for him. Many times, when passing Jack on our private road he would cut me off or attempt to pull me over and he would shout threats to me that he was coming back to get me and finish what he started. I noticed a few times that he was carrying a pistol and he would have Travis Bartley with him. I knew who Travis Bartley was but never actually met him.

We knew Jack was not supposed to be carrying a weapon due to a felony record. We also knew from Jack's wife Melissa Douglas that he had duck-taped her to a chair and put his pistol in her mouth threatening to kill her and the children if she did not tell him what he wanted to know. He did this in front of their children sitting on the sofa scared to death. Jack did six months in jail for that incident. Jack Douglas was a mean nasty person with a long prison record. Jack was also the king-pin drug supplier of hard drugs on this mountain we live on.

My husband and I often wish we had done background checks of several people that live here when we purchased the property. If we had known what we know now we would never have moved up here to live.

My first meeting with Erick Shute was on January 25<sup>th</sup> 2015 it was his mothers' birthday and we met at a birthday party for her. The party was at a mutual neighbors' home Terry and Jim Wilbourn and Erick and Linda spent the night there. I immediately took to Erick due to his open, funny, friendly and intelligent personality. Erick and I became good friends. Erick would house sit for me and sat at my dinner table several times. I never saw a mean bone in his body, or lose his temper, or raise his voice to anyone. Erick had a valid reason for fearing for his life when confronting Jack Douglas on that June day. Erick did not hate these people or wish them harm, he is not a malicious person, yet, he did not like some of the things they did.

My husband Charlie and I were home on June 13<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and we heard the six-gun shots being fired. We didn't think anything of it. People target practice and fire guns around here all the time. When we found out what had actually happened, we knew Erick must have been scared for his life and with good reason upon confronting four against one.

I was at the pre-trial and heard Ericks recorded testimony I know he feared those men and they threatened him. I realize it's not nice to say but Erick did the people on this mountain a favor that day and now he is paying for acting in self-defense.

I wanted to testify at Ericks' trial but his attorney, Andrew Arnold, told me it was "irrelevant" and I should not testify and stay home. Despite that I would talk about all the horrible things that Jack Douglas, or Travis and William Bartley had done on their property with the stealing and drug dealing everyone on the mountain knew what kind of horrible person Jack was and if you knew him you were probably a drug addict or dealer or someone who has poor moral character or your someone who can't stand him because birds of a feather flock together. No one with good character would associate with him.

How can my testimony for Erick Shute and Jack Douglas could be "irrelevant" when I feel like I could have been Ericks saving grace at his trial tells me that his attorneys never had his best interest at heart in the first place?

You with the care of our state and country in your hands and knowing the tremendous problems opiates have caused to our society need to understand this is the trade Jack Douglas was dealing in and everyone who lives on this mountain knew it and everyone in the Douglas family is involved with it to this day.

If you knew Erick for who he really is I believe you would love him the same as I love him. If you knew him you would see and know that there is no way that he would have done what he did except in self-defense.

When Erick would bring his girlfriend and her son to visit it touched my heart how he could care so lovingly for a child that was not his.

I know that Erick reacted in self-defense.

Very truly yours,

**K.P.**