

Colten Boushie Rally

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Locals held a vigil and rally for Colten Boushie on the steps of the Prince George Courthouse following the not guilty verdict in the trial of Gerald Stanley, the farmer accused of the second-degree murder of Boushie. Speakers at the rally denounced the acquittal, the lack of indigenous representation in the all-white jury, and the negligence of the investigation in preservation and processing of the crime scene. Speakers called for urgent reform in the legal system, especially with regards to limiting the powers of legal teams to eliminate potentially hostile jurors with a "peremptory challenge" during jury selection. For those who attended the rally, the all-white jury and the power of the defense to manipulate the jury composition in their favor seemed to emphasize a worrying weakness in the judicial system.

"We looked up at the front of the court room and you could see everyone in charge of our fate was white. And above it all, there is a picture of the Queen looking over the court room. We realized this is not a system set up for us: this is not a system set up to keep us safe."

- Indigenous rights activist, Erica Violet Lee on the Boushie case.

Another keynote touched on by speakers was that in Canada the use of a firearm is not permitted in order to defend private property; even in self-defense - which the accused did not claim - the use of lethal force is rarely permitted under the law. Gerald Stanley admitted to discharging his pistol twice in the air, claiming the third shot that was fired into Colten Bolshie's head from a half meter away was an accidental discharge. However, based on witness' accounts as well as Gerald Stanley's own account, Boushie and his group were already in the process of fleeing the scene and presented no threat in that moment of time.

Legal pundits such as Tim Quigley - a law professor at the University of Saskatchewan are surprised by the outcome of the trial and are contending that negligence with a weapon should have resulted in a manslaughter charge. "I knew an acquittal was possible, I wasn't expecting this," Quigley said in an interview with CBC, adding: "An appeal court cannot overturn a jury acquittal, it will be difficult for the family to get in any sense of justice on Colton Bolshie's death."

