



ONE CALL

[BY K.L. JAMISON]

It is reliably reported that the trial and execution of Jesus of Nazareth violated both local and Roman law.

Had He been given competent legal counsel, the New Testament might have had a happy ending. But getting competent legal counsel can be tricky. Even if given the first century equivalent of a phone call, as a stranger in Jerusalem, Jesus could not know which local lawyer would be best for his case.

There is a cultural image that a defendant gets one phone call. Actually, a defendant has a right to contact the outside world. This typically takes the form of a communal jail phone, and a battered copy of the Yellow Pages. The defendant

can make as many calls as the rest of the jail community will tolerate. The calls are made collect, and the defendant will often find that family members have blocks on their line which prevent calls from the jail. These blocks seem especially common on cell phones, and prevent contact with the outside world at all. Lawyers typically accept collect calls from jail as a business expense. Various organizations provide referrals to lawyers familiar with firearms and self-defense cases, but nothing more. The faster a knowledgeable attorney is brought into the case, the harder it will be for the authorities to prosecute the case, or even file criminal charges. Getting this knowledgeable attorney is a function of knowing which lawyer is knowledgeable, and being able to pay for the knowledge.

There are companies that offer a type of legal insurance for self-defense cases. The coverage may be limited to early legal proceedings, and may pay only after the insured has first prevailed in court. One such policy for individuals who act in self-defense insures personal property or bodily injury resulting from an act of self-defense. It also covers legal defense in a civil suit, and reimburses the defendant for costs of a criminal defense, but only if acquitted or the charges are dropped. The policy is available only to NRA members.¹

Another company sells a policy which pays for legal services through grand jury proceedings.² A grand jury is like any other jury. It is "grand" only in its task of determining if criminal charges will be filed against the guest of honor. Since the grand jury only hears from the