

News Roundup

Author : Christopher Tyner

Categories : [Uncategorized](#)

Date : June 14, 2019

On Wednesday, Craig Stephen Hicks [pleaded guilty](#) to murdering Deah Barakat, Yusor Abu-Salha, and Razan Abu-Salha in a Chapel Hill home in February 2015; he received three consecutive life sentences. On a February evening, Hicks angrily confronted the victims at a condo that Barakat and Yusor shared in the same community where Hicks lived. Under the pretense of furthering an ongoing parking dispute, Hicks almost immediately drew a handgun and fatally shot the victims, each of whom was Muslim. Barakat was a student at UNC Dental School, where Yusor had recently been accepted as well, and Razan, visiting the couple for dinner, was attending NC State. Keep reading for more news.

Hate Crimes and Parking Disputes. The Associated Press article in the lead notes two facets of the Hicks case that have generated significant discussion. One is that in the immediate aftermath of the shooting the Chapel Hill Police said that it stemmed from a parking dispute. The victims' families along with others said that this characterization [did not adequately convey](#) that Hicks appeared to target the victims because they were Muslim. The Chapel Hill Police Department released a [statement](#) this week apologizing for any pain caused by the earlier statements.

The other issue generating discussion is related, as the victims' families have expressed frustration that Hicks is not currently being prosecuted on federal hate crime charges. An attorney for the families said that by not pursuing federal charges, "[o]ur government failed this family and our multicultural democracy." This recent [article](#) from the New York Times explores the hate crime issue, and Shea [blogged about it](#) in the days after the shooting.

Immigration Cooperation. In the context of discussing a proposal by the North Carolina Sheriffs' Association regarding [ICE detainers](#), this [Greensboro News & Record](#) article notes that the North Carolina General Assembly currently is considering two bills, [H370](#) and [S637](#) which would require, to varying degrees, that local law enforcement officials comply with detainer requests. The News & Record report says that Guilford Sheriff Danny Rogers has announced that he does not support either of the bills or the alternative proposed by the Sheriffs' Association. The News Roundup has noted several instances this year where North Carolina Sheriffs have reduced their cooperation with ICE.

Barber Trespassing. WRAL [reports](#) that late last week former state NAACP leader Rev. William Barber was convicted by a jury of second-degree trespass at the Legislative Building during a protest two years ago. Barber was leading a group sitting outside of Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger's office in a call-and-response that some legislative staffers said was disruptive. The group refused requests from General Assembly Police to be quiet or leave and were then arrested.

Asheville Shooting. WLOS [reports](#) that a pregnant woman who was shot and killed in Asheville this week recently testified for the state during an ongoing murder trial. Tiyquasha Antwonique Simuel was a witness late last month in the [trial](#) of Nathaniel Dixon, who is accused of killing his girlfriend, Candace Pickens, and injuring her son in 2016. Simuel's unborn child survived the shooting. There were no suspects in Simuel's death at the time of writing.

Overcriminalization. Readers of this blog know that folks here at the SOG have done some work on the issue of overcriminalization. Jeff wrote a [law review article](#) about it a few years back, and Jessie recently has blogged about it [here](#) and [here](#). A defense attorney who runs the popular Twitter feed [@CrimeADay](#) has just released a book that looks

at obscure and absurd federal criminal offenses. In *How to Become a Federal Criminal: An Illustrated Handbook for the Aspiring Offender*, author Mike Chase covers offenses that range from making an “unreasonable gesture to a passing horse” to selling “improperly shaped spaghetti noodles.” In [this interview](#) about the book, Chase notes that one reason for the proliferation of strange offenses is delegation of crime-making authority through laws that broadly make violations of existing and future agency regulations criminal offenses. Jessie’s posts note the similar situation that occurs in North Carolina with ordinance crimes.