

Gun Owners Are Obligated to Store their Weapons Safely

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25-year old Nick Bell and his friend, 24-year-old Jeffrey Charbonneau were invited to stay at the Vermont home of Jim Goodwin on the night before Thanksgiving. In the morning, Bell came into the room where Charbonneau was sleeping to wake him up. Jokingly, Bell took a .22-caliber semi-automatic rifle, with no safety engaged, off of a wall in the room and began walking around the bed with it. The rifle went off accidentally and a bullet entered Charbonneau's heart from the side, instantly killing him. Bell pleaded no contest to felony charges of manslaughter, and misdemeanor charges of reckless endangerment and assault with a weapon. He was sentenced to one year in prison.

The rifle belonged to Jim's brother, Charlie, who was out of town visiting family. While Jim was the only member of the Goodwin family at home when Charbonneau was killed, the entire family is being sued for wrongful death because the gun wasn't stored safely. David Cleary, representing attorney for the Charbonneau family, explains that "If you ask a guest over, you have a duty to maintain your premises in reasonably safe condition," and that "the constitutional right to bear arms doesn't negate a gun-owner's legal obligations to use and store weapons in a safe manner."

Jeremy Geigle is a criminal defense attorney and shareholder at JacksonWhite. He has been practicing over 8 years and has handled thousands of felony and misdemeanor counts. He works in both adult and juvenile court handling DUIs, aggravated felonies and sex crimes in Arizona. He works in Federal, State and local jurisdictions including Phoenix, Mesa, Gilbert, Chandler, Scottsdale, Glendale, Tempe and Peoria. Mr. Geigle is a 5-Star-Client-Rated Attorney on Avvo. To read more about what former clients are saying about hiring Mr. Geigle or to set up a free consultation, please visit www.jacksonwhitelaw.com/criminal-defense-law.

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