

## Fair Trial May be Difficult for *American Sniper* Killer

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On February 2, 2013, Chris Kyle, a former SEAL and inspiration for the recent Hollywood blockbuster, *American Sniper*, went to a shooting range with two friends at the Rough Creek Lodge 90 miles southwest of Dallas. While the circumstances of what happened after arriving at the range are unknown, the lifeless bodies of Kyle and one friend were found by a hunting guide shortly after the group had arrived.

The second friend, an unemployed former Marine who reportedly suffered from severe PTSD, allegedly shot Kyle and the other man before stealing Kyle's black Ford pickup and fleeing to his sister's home 65 miles away.

It has been difficult for anyone to make sense of this tragedy. Kyle served four combat tours in Iraq with the SEALs, only to be killed by a friend in his home state of Texas.

### Is a 'fair' murder trial possible?

The [jury selection for the murder trial of Kyle is scheduled to begin today](#). According to the Stephenville Empire-Tribune, an Erath County court will be going through 800 potential jurors hoping to find enough unbiased individuals to ensure a fair trial.

Erath County has a reported population of fewer than 40,000, and considering Kyle's close ties to the community, it will likely be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the court to find enough jurors who haven't seen *American Sniper*, reportedly the highest-grossing war movie ever made, or who haven't at least heard the story.

### Murder Trials from a Juror's Point of View

[Murder](#) trials can be weeks or months long, exhausting, and traumatizing for jurors. In some cases, jurors have reported symptoms similar to those of PTSD, including flashbacks. Sometimes, when people are subjected to the gruesome details typical of a murder trial, they can experience severe emotional trauma.

To make matters worse, jurors are prohibited from discussing the case with anyone until after the trial has concluded, so they keep their feelings bottled up. In some high-profile murder cases, like that involving Casey Anthony, [the jurors are sequestered](#), which means they are banned from any contact with anyone outside the courtroom and cannot watch or read news of any kind.

At the end of the day, every American citizen is entitled to a fair trial and it is the court's responsibility to ensure the defendant receives one. This often requires extensive advanced research and planning to find an acceptable group of jurors.

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