

Eric Holder's Stand Your Ground Squirrel

Welcome to the Obama administration's cringe-inducing non sequitur of the week. On Tuesday, Attorney General Eric Holder continued stoking the fires of racial resentment over a Florida jury's acquittal of George Zimmerman. In an address to NAACP leaders, who are demanding federal intervention, Holder attacked Stand Your Ground self-defense laws.

All together now: Squirrel!

"Separate and apart from the (Trayvon Martin) case that has drawn the nation's attention, it's time to question laws that senselessly expand the concept of self-defense and sow dangerous conflict in our neighborhoods," Holder opined. He then baselessly claimed that such laws are creating "more violence than they prevent" and used his platform to promote citizens' "duty to retreat."

So, what exactly do Stand Your Ground laws have to do with Zimmerman and Martin? Absolutely nothing, of course. Outside your own home, common principles of self-defense dictate that unless you have reasonable fear of deadly force or harm, you must flee if possible rather than use deadly force. But a "duty to retreat" rests on the ability to retreat. And "duty to retreat" was irrelevant in Zimmerman's case because – pinned to the ground with Martin on top of him, bashing his head on the concrete – he was unable to retreat.

This didn't stop the NAACP crowd from cheering their heads off when Holder tossed out his red meat. Holder's racial-grievance-mongering agenda has also been bolstered by media propaganda outlets, who've been dutifully bashing Stand Your Ground regardless of the facts.

The New York Times, for example, falsely claimed in an

editorial preceding Holder's speech that the jury "reached its verdict after having been asked to consider Mr. Zimmerman's actions in light of the now-notorious Stand Your Ground provision in Florida's self-defense law." Rolling Stone made a similarly inflammatory claim, calling Martin a "victim of Florida's Stand Your Ground law."

All nonsense. The jury received standard instructions. Zimmerman did not invoke the Stand Your Ground provision. Zimmerman later waived his right to a pretrial immunity hearing under the Stand Your Ground procedures.

And as National Review's Sterling Beard points out, "The only time Stand Your Ground came up during the trial proper was when a prosecution witness stated that he'd taught a class Zimmerman had attended that covered Stand Your Ground."

Even the prosecution rejects the cynical attempt to tie Martin's death to Stand Your Ground. Prosecutor John Guy couldn't have made it clearer during the trial: "This case is not about standing your ground." During their post-trial press conference, as conservative talk show host Victoria Taft first noted, a Miami Herald reporter asked the prosecution team specifically whether Stand Your Ground "affected the facts in this case and whether this case could have been won, perhaps, pre the changes in the law."

Prosecutor Bernie De La Rionda replied: "You know, self-defense has existed for a long time. And we've dealt with it in Jackson for a long time. We've tried a lot of self-defense cases; I've personally tried 10-15 self-defense cases. They're tough cases, but we accept it so ... the law really hasn't changed all that much. Stand Your Ground was a big thing, but really the law hasn't changed. We have a right to bear arms and a right to self defense."

In short, Stand Your Ground did not kill Trayvon Martin. Stand Your Ground did not sway the jury. Stand Your Ground saboteurs

don't have a leg to stand on. Columnist Jacob Sullum observed drily: "You might think that, given all we now know about Zimmerman's actual defense, critics of 'stand your ground' laws would have to find a different, more apposite case to illustrate their concerns. Instead they just barrel along, citing the same phony example again and again, without regard to the facts. It does not inspire confidence in their argument."

Nope, it inspires exasperation and contempt. Once again, Eric Holder's Department of Selective and Social Justice is grasping for straws. Holder now vows to "continue to fight for removal of Stand Your Ground laws" that had nothing to do with the Zimmerman trial. He promises to ban "racial profiling" in the aftermath of a local crime incident that – according to Holder's own FBI employees – had nothing to do with race.

This is all a transparent pretext, of course, for undermining a plethora of state laws enacted by pro-Second Amendment legislatures. (Never mind that eight of 15 states that adopted Stand Your Ground legislation were helmed by Democratic governors at the time of passage.) Even more insidiously, left-wing groups have exploited the Martin case to launch broader attacks on the political speech and activities of limited-government groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council, which supported Stand Your Ground.

The Obama administration's cynical campaign against Stand Your Ground laws is a racially charged weapon of mass distraction. The goal isn't public safety or community harmony. The goal is for conservative political opponents to Surrender Your Ground. Silence, as always, is complicity. Political self-defense, as with physical self-defense, begins with self-assertion.

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