



## Jurisprudence Section - 2015

---

### **F52 Defending Veterans: Teaching Juries the True Costs of War, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Adrenaline Addiction, and Deadly Drug Cocktails**

*Jose A. Baez, JD\**, 2020 Ponce De Leon Boulevard, Miami, FL 33134; and *Donald E. Shelton, JD, PhD*, 500 S Harris Street, Saline, MI 48176

---

After attending this presentation, attendees will learn about the nature of conveying to juries the psychology of returning from war, toxicological challenges, and overcoming bias against veterans in the criminal justice system.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by informing forensic science practitioners, lawyers, and other key criminal justice system stakeholders how to effectively tell a veteran's story to judges and juries.

This presentation will provide better understanding of the challenges facing many veterans returning from war when they enter our criminal justice system. According to Department of Justice statistics in 2004, one in ten of all the inmates in the United States have served in the military. One out of every five combat veterans returning from war is diagnosed with PTSD. As one commentator stated: "A certain number of veterans suffering from mental-health issues will, invariably, end up in jail or prison. After Vietnam, the number of inmates with prior military service rose steadily until reaching a peak in 1985, when more than one in five was a veteran. By 1988, more than half of all Vietnam veterans diagnosed with PTSD reported that they had been arrested; more than one-third reported they had been arrested multiple times. Today veterans' advocates fear that, unless they receive proper support, a similar epidemic may befall soldiers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan."

Other veterans suffer from anxiety, drug, and even adrenalin addiction. This has prompted the emergence of specialty "veterans' courts" popping up across the country in state and federal jurisdictions, often with grant assistance from the government. Unfortunately, these intensive programs do not normally accept those veterans charged with violent crimes, leaving veterans to face judges and juries while dealing with a myriad of psychological and toxicological issues.

This presentation will discuss the landmark case of *United States v. Gabriel Brown*, a former Green Beret sniper turned serial bank robber, as well as other cases that shed light on the best practices on identifying and presenting to judges and juries the stories of those soldiers who went from fighting for our freedom to fighting for their very own. Best practices related to presenting mitigating information to judges and juries will be discussed.

---

#### **Veterans, PTSD, Adrenaline Addiction**