issue is whether an intruder forcibly and unlawfully entered the defendant's home.

Immunity. Individuals who are authorized to use deadly force are immune from criminal prosecution and civil liability.

Prosecutors after reviewing a case may decide against bringing charges despite a police decision to arrest an individual because the prosecutor concludes that the individual has a valid claim of self-defense. Claims of self-defense are adjudicated in a preliminary hearing in which the assailant is required to establish self-defense by a preponderance of the evidence. The immunity provision prevents an individual who possesses a credible claim of self-defense from being brought to trial in criminal or civil court. The failure of a court to find that a defendant is immune from prosecution may be appealed. The individual whose claim is rejected in a preliminary hearing also may seek a plea bargain or rely on self-defense at trial. In some instances, the stand your ground law may influence the decision making of jurors despite the fact that the defense does not explicitly rely on the law.

The *St. Petersburg Times* studied ninety-three Florida cases between 2005 and 2010 involving claims of self-defense and found that in well over half of these cases, either individuals claiming self-defense were not charged with a crime, or the charges were dropped by prosecutors or dismissed by a judge before trial.

The central criticism of stand your ground laws is that the laws create a climate in which people will resort to deadly force in situations in which they previously may have avoided armed violence. This, according to critics, threatens to turn communities into "shooting galleries" reminiscent of the "old West" in which a significant percentage of people feel the need to carry firearms. Since the passage of the Florida law in 2005, the number of individuals with concealed-carry permits has increased three times to 1.1 million permits.

There is evidence that in stand your ground states roughly 8 percent or six hundred more homicides have been committed than otherwise would be expected. Researchers speculate that this results from the fact that ordinary interpersonal conflicts escalate into violent confrontations. This in turn has led to an increase in the number of cases in which individuals claim that the violence was justified on the grounds of self-defense.

The *Tampa Bay Times* has compiled a database of stand your ground cases and has published several informative studies. Because of the failure of localities to keep accurate records, there is no fully accurate compilation of cases. Among the most important findings are these:

Number of cases. The stand your ground law is being applied in a growing number of cases. The *Tampa Bay Times* database of nonfatal cases increased five times between 2008 and 2011. Several hundred defendants are invoking the law each year. As a result, the court system is overburdened with expensive and time-consuming cases. On the other hand, individuals who acted in justifiable self-defense are able to avoid prosecution.

Acquittal. As of July 2012, 67 percent of defendants who invoked the law went free.

Background. Individuals with "records of crime and violence . . . have benefited most from the . . . law": In the study of one hundred fatal stand your ground cases, more than thirty of the defendants had been accused of violent crimes, and 40 percent had three or more arrests.

Race. Individuals asserting self-defense against African Americans were more successful than individuals who relied on self-defense against assailants of other races. Of individuals who killed an African American, 73 percent were not punished as compared to 59 percent of individuals killing an individual of another race. The race of the defendant appears to play little role in the result of cases. Proponents of the law claim that African American offenders are more likely to be armed.

Age. In February 2014, the *Tampa Bay Times* reported that 19 percent of stand your ground cases resulted in the deaths of children or teens. Another 14 percent involved individuals who were either twenty or twenty-one.

The *Tampa Bay Times* notes that although stand your ground generally is applied in a responsible fashion by Florida prosecutors, there are a number of similar cases treated differently by local prosecutors. The newspaper also found cases that make a "mockery" of the law. "In nearly a third of the cases . . . defendants [who] initiated the fight, shot an unarmed person or pursued their victim . . . still went 'free.'"

In 2006, Jason Rosenbloom was shot by his neighbor Kenneth Allen in the doorway to Allen's home. Allen had complained about the amount of trash that Rosenbloom was putting out to be picked up by the trash collectors. Rosenbloom knocked on Allen's door, and the two engaged in a shouting match. Allen claimed that Rosenbloom prevented Allen from closing the door to his house with his foot and that Rosenbloom tried to push his way inside the house. Allen shot the unarmed Rosenbloom in the stomach and then in the chest.

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