



## Victim's Rights

By Mary Waldron

At age 19, Grace was preparing to wed her fiancé, Keith Griffin, and working toward a career in English when she was struck with a life-changing event which caused her to take a complete u-turn in her plans. Griffin was murdered by a former coworker shortly before he and Grace's wedding.



"Like most other crime victims, Keith's murder changed the course of my life. At the time of his death shortly before our wedding, I was studying to become an English professor, concentrating on Shakespearean literature. In one moment, my world exploded and Keith's ended," she says.

As a result of this traumatic event, Grace became empowered to do something in response to the senseless act that left her torn. She abandoned her original career plans and decided to go to law school.

"I have never had any interest in pursuing most avenues within the legal profession such as slip and falls, wills, torts, or money matters. After Keith's death, I have only been interested in one thing, pursuing violent criminals and stopping crime. Why? I do not want others to live through what I did when going through the justice system," says Grace.

Grace attended Mercer University Walter F. George School of Law to obtain her J.D., and she continued her education even further, earning a master's degree in constitutional and criminal law from New York University.

After law school, Grace clerked for a federal judge in the northern district of Georgia until she began prosecuting anti-trust and consumer protection cases with the Federal Trade Commission.

In 1987, Grace was hired as a special prosecutor for Atlanta-Fulton County, Georgia District Attorney's Office in inner-city Atlanta. Grace also worked two night jobs teaching business law to undergrads and teaching trial strategy and technique at Georgia State University to make ends meet.



Despite the humble salary she got at the DA's office, Grace quickly found that this job was going to further her legal career and mission.

"For the next decade, I prosecuted everything from shoplifting to rape, child molestation, arson, and murder. The cases I prosecuted and the people I met changed my life forever. Those ten years not only defined my legal practice, but molded me into a victims' rights advocate," she says.

Over the course of her stay at the D.A.'s office, Grace maintained an almost a perfect winning record of about 100 cases.

Ten years after joining the D.A.'s office, the elected district attorney, Mr. Lewis R. Slaton, who was the longest serving district attorney in the country, decided to retire to Grace's "distraught." "I knew the next elected D.A. would likely clean house of all the top litigators under the old regime," she says.

Coincidentally, around this same time, Grace was on her way to New York to appear on a panel of legal experts. Her door of opportunity to her next career move was about to open.

"I happened to sit between Johnnie Cochran straight off the O.J. Simpson win and Roy Black straight off the William Kennedy Smith rape case win. The three of us got into a huge argument, in good nature," says Grace.

And the rest is history.

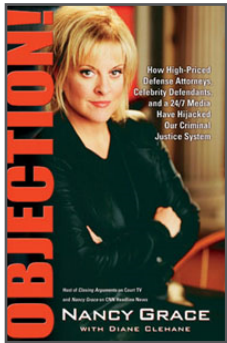
The heated he-said-she-said discussion sparked ideas of a legal debate show, Cochran & Grace.



Law Job Star

'I initially refused and flew back to Atlanta to continue trying cases. When my boss retired, I took Court TV up on their offer and flew to New York with three boxes of clothes, a curling iron, and 300 dollars in my savings account!' Grace says. 'I do not think show analysis affects juries in any way...do I have to say O.J. Simpson?'

Grace made her debut on legal debate show *Cochran & Grace* in January 1997. The hard-hitting prosecutor, Grace, wasted no time making her mark on the big screen. Examining the day's most prominent and controversial legal cases, Grace interviewed, and sometimes butted heads with, numerous high-profile attorneys, legal experts, and reporters.



Steven Brill, the founder and CEO of Court TV (now truTV) who approached Grace about anchoring, said of the show, 'In Nancy Grace and Johnnie Cochran, we have two highly regarded, extremely articulate – indeed electric – lawyers who have widely different views on most issues but who save an avid interest in the law and how the law is applied in this country and around the world.'

When Cochran eventually left the show, Grace continued on solo with *Nancy Grace: Closing Arguments*. In 2005, Grace also began appearing on *Headline News* with her own self-titled legal debate show of a similar nature to *Closing Arguments*.

Grace's ultra-assertive interviewing style and blazing opinions on case proceedings built her a notorious reputation for being tough and pushy. It's no surprise that, as a result, Grace made fans as well as enemies.

'I have had many, many critics during my career dating all the way back to the courtroom, especially from defense lawyers. I try not to listen. If we listen to our critics, we would never accomplish any task, no dream would ever come true. I try to learn from constructive criticism...it's never too late to learn,' says Grace.

In June 2005, Grace wrote *Objection!: How High-Priced Defense Attorneys, Celebrity Defendants, And A 24/7 Media Have Hijacked Our Criminal Justice System*, which examines US criminals and their attorneys. Grace was criticized by some of her remarks about defense attorneys.

In May 2007, Grace left Court TV to focus solely on her *Headline News* show and charity work.

As an outspoken woman in the legal system, Grace knows a thing or two about the hurdles women attorneys must overcome to be respected. 'Women are still the minority in the legal profession. We have a very long way to go. I sincerely hope that women have not become complacent or have forgotten our battle for equality,' says Grace.

EmploymentCrossing is the largest collection of active jobs in the world.

We continuously monitor the hiring needs of more than 250,000 employers, including virtually every corporation and organization in the United States. We do not charge employers to post their jobs and we aggressively contact and investigate thousands of employers each day to learn of new positions. No one works harder than EmploymentCrossing.

Let EmploymentCrossing go to work for you.