

Long Sentenced To 21 Years For Murder, Assault

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

After about 13 hours of deliberation, a jury decided Monday that 54-year-old Thomas Long was guilty of second degree murder in the March shooting of his estranged wife, Annette, and guilty in the same incident of assaulting former Brunswick County Commission Chairman Franky Thomas with a deadly weapon with intent to kill, inflicting serious bodily injury.

Judge Coy Brewer, presiding in Brunswick County Superior Court, sentenced Long to consecutive sentences of 15 years for the murder offense, and six years for assault. He has already served six and one-half months of that time in Brunswick County jail. His attorney, William Shell of Wilmington, said the conviction will be appealed.

The extent of Long's guilt hung on the few seconds just before his 357 magnum discharged on the night of March 25, 1986, as he and Mrs. Long (whom he called Ginny) stood beside Thomas's Bronco truck in Mrs. Long's driveway.

Otherwise, the story was clear. The Longs, married 22 years, had been separated about three months, with Mrs. Long moving into an apartment in the Olde Towne home of Barbara Lewis in early January.

Long testified last week in a soft, halting voice that he loved his wife deeply and hoped for a reconciliation. He drove by her place in Olde Towne frequently, he said, just to see her car in the drive and know she was safe.

According to her children, Sherry DuBois and Bruce

Long, who had been raised by Long, the marriage had been good. "I wanted to grow up and have one like it," Sherry said. In late 1985, as she was frequently with her mother and stepfather, Sherry said she saw nothing amiss between them, and was shocked to learn a week after the fact that her mother had moved out.

Then her stepfather began to seem quieter, lonely, and needing to talk, she testified. The testimony of several witnesses indicated he was depressed over the separation. Indeed, Peggy Dyson, his former secretary, now working for Thomas, said he told her a few weeks before the shooting, "I can't live without Ginny."

But his step-children and others contended there was never any anger directed at their mother. He had never

during the marriage behaved toward her in a threatening or violent manner.

In fact, Long was described by a half-dozen friends and business associates as the kindest, most easy-going of men, who earned among co-workers the nickname "Teddy Bear."

But he admitted that on the night of March 25 he was upset about his wife's actions and those of her companion, Franky Thomas.

Thomas was a longtime friend of the couple, and had recently loaned Long \$1,000 to assist him with his business problems which had deteriorated so that Long was filing for bankruptcy.

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GREATER VARIETY, a change of site, more parking and better weather helped boost festival attendance to approximately double that of a year ago. This photograph was taken at mid-afternoon Saturday.

Festival Turn-Out Brings Smiles At Chamber

BY SUSAN USHER

South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce Director Anne Marie Schettini was all smiles Monday afternoon, just as she had been throughout Saturday.

"I've just come back from the bank," she said. "I'm real happy."

Receipts from the 1986 N.C. Oyster Festival—and attendance—were just

about double that of a year ago, she said, making this year's festival the most successful yet.

With this year's event, she said, "I'm sure the N.C. Oyster Festival takes its place among the festivals of the state in prominence and popularity."

She credited a variety of factors with this year's festival perfor-

mance: a new, improved site; better weather; better organization; excellent volunteer leadership from Festival Chairman David Batten and committee members; and the full cooperation from all chamber members.

"In the past we've always had some chamber members we could always count on," she said. "But this

year support from our members was terrific. Almost everyone had somebody there or else gave us stuff to use. It was just a really great effort. Our chairman did a great job."

Several chamber members went so far as to hire workers for the day when they could not provide workers otherwise.

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NO WELCOME CENTER IN PLAN

Highway 17 Work Said On Schedule

BY SUSAN USHER

Work on the four-laning of U.S. 17 from Winnabow to the South Carolina state line is proceeding on schedule, according to the N.C. Department of Transportation.

"At this point, we don't anticipate any problems," said Frank Price, long-range planning engineer with the department. "We hope to have it under contract by this time next year."

At the Board of Transportation's meeting Friday, members approved additional funds for right-of-way acquisition and for preliminary engineering along the route.

The latest cost estimates are slightly above the \$32 million price tag projected on the project last year.

The U.S. 17 project involves bypasses around Shallotte and Bolivia, then four-laning of the highway from N.C. 87 at Bell Swamp to the South Carolina state line.

Advance acquisition funds have been provided for acquiring ahead of schedule land under development at the north and south ends of the projected Shallotte bypass route. "Whether it's been actually acquired, I don't know," he said.

At the north end, there are some relocates that will require assistance and a period of time to relocate. "We may not get the entire route under contract by the end of the fiscal year," he added. "They may hold us up."

Preliminary engineering on the Shallotte bypass is in progress, he said.

Their actual construction should be completed about the same time, with Bolivia possibly a little behind the Shallotte bypass, he said. "A lot depends on the progress contractors make once we get it under construction. We're working on getting the bypasses under contract as soon as possible."

Then, he added, the gaps will be filled in.

No decision has been made on whether to begin four-laning from Bell Swamp or from the South Carolina line.

"We're still looking at what the most advantageous construction pattern would be," said Price.

The Shallotte bypass will include a rest area, but apparently not the welcome center some local residents have been pushing for—at least not a state-funded center.

"We have no plans for a state welcome center there," a spokesman for Welcome Centers Director Lynne Sizemore told the Beacon.

She didn't rule out the possibility that local groups might decide to build their own between Shallotte and the South Carolina state line.

If a welcome center were to be provided, Price said, "We'd work with them. If one is to be provided, we would try to incorporate it in the bypass for the Shallotte area."



STAFF PHOTO BY EDDIE SWEAT

Oyster Shucking Champion

Last year's runner-up for the title of N.C. Oyster Shucking Champion, Cathy Carlisle (left), is this year's champion. She is congratulated by Alan Holden, president of the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce. More coverage of the shucking contest and other Oyster Festival events is inside this issue.

Calabash Gives Cold Shoulder To Carolina Shores Incorporation

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

The Carolina Shores Association got an emphatic turn-down Monday from the Calabash Town Board on the subdivision's request for approval of its possible incorporation plans.

Bud Knapp, spokesman for Carolina Shores, which met Sept. 25 to discuss incorporation, submitted for adoption a brief, handwritten resolution to the board at its monthly meeting. The resolution stated that Calabash would have no objection to any action by Carolina Shores to form a town, provided the new municipality would never annex property within the extra-territorial boundaries of Calabash.

"If Carolina Shores does incorporate and ever wanted to expand, it would be to the west," Knapp explained.

Commissioner Pati Lewellyn asked Knapp, "Why wasn't our board invited to that (Sept. 25) meeting, since Calabash is so directly affected, and why was our mayor asked to leave when he tried to attend?"

Knapp replied that the meeting was called strictly for Carolina Shores members and guests.

"We found we needed an agreement to incorporation from the town whose property adjoins ours," he went on. "I don't know whether the members will vote to incorporate when they meet Oct. 29, but we want you to know we would be good neighbors and want to work together."

He said there are over 400 houses in the subdivision, with an assessed value of over \$52 million.

Lewellyn said, "I can see why you'd want to incorporate, but it would affect us badly, partly because of building permits. Our income from permits accounts for more of our revenue than taxes, and we draw heavily on Carolina Shores."

She also objected to the resolution presented, because she said future town councils of Carolina Shores would not be bound by the promise not to annex.

Considerable discussion of laws affecting incorporation and annexation revealed a misconception among

Calabash board members. Commissioner and former mayor Sonia Stevens said state law prohibits Brunswick County towns from growing by annexation unless the town is petitioned to annex a particular area by residents of that area.

Town Attorney Mike Ramos said that law had been repealed in 1983. He said if Calabash wanted to annex Carolina Shores, the only requirement was that one-eighth of the external boundary of the subdivision would have to be contiguous to the Calabash boundary.

"My concern with the resolution is that it binds future Calabash town boards as to what they could do with their town," he said.

"The League of Municipalities doesn't favor incorporation, because it doesn't want little towns all over the place next to each other," Ramos went on. "But I don't know of any requirement that an area needs a resolution like this from an adjoining town in order to incorporate."

Knapp said he understood that if Calabash did not adopt the resolution, Carolina Shores has only one alternative. "At least 50 percent of our property owners would have to sign a petition to be annexed, and if Calabash didn't act on that within a year, we could petition for incorporation," he said. There was disagreement over the percentage, with Town Clerk Janet Thomas saying it was 100 percent. Ramos later observed he thought it was 15 percent.

Laura Kranfield of the League of Municipalities later confirmed Thomas's understanding that all property owners in a petitioning area must sign the petition for annexation.

The board voted unanimously to disallow the petition, but Lewellyn cautioned, "We need to look into this, and find out more about incorporation and annexation, because it's going to come up again."

Land Use Plan

The board also heard from Haskell Rhett of the Wilmington office of the N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development. He had been asked to advise

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Republican Trend Continues In New Registration Figures

Republicans continue to inch upward in the percentage of their members registered to vote in Brunswick County.

Figures reported by the county board of elections Tuesday, following Monday's registration deadline for the November elections, confirmed this trend.

A total of 24,572 people had registered to vote as of Monday, with 741 of those describing themselves as unaffiliated with any party, compared with 1985 figures of 716.

Democratic registrations numbered 16,584, compared with 16,775 registered before the primaries in May. Republicans registered totaled 7,247, compared with 6,748 before the primaries. The total of registered voters before May, 1986, was 24,239.

Percentages tell the story of the gains Republicans have made. Early this year registered Democrats made up 69.2 percent of the voters, while that has now slipped to 67.57 percent. Meanwhile, the Republican percentage has risen from 27.9 percent before the primaries to the present 29.43 percent of registered voters in the county.

This gradual trend toward greater numbers of registered Republican voters and decreasing numbers of registered Democrats has been in process over the past several years. What was once an overwhelming Democratic stronghold is undergoing gradual but persistent change.