

Convicted Arson Violates Probation; Goes To Prison

BY ERIC CARLSON

The Shallotte teenager who set fire to a building at West Brunswick High School two years ago has been sent to prison for nine years after failing to comply with the terms of his probation.

Cleveland Demond Blue of Mulberry Street last Tuesday (July 19) admitted violating his probation and had his suspended prison sentence activated by Superior Court Judge Jack Thompson.

Blue was found guilty of felony arson in March, 1992, and sentenced to nine years in prison, suspended five years on the condition that he pay \$645 in fines, court costs and attorney fees.

Judge Dexter Brooks put Blue on supervised probation and ordered him to obtain a Graduate Equivalency Degree (GED), to perform 200 hours of community service, to report for a psychological evaluation and to not violate any laws for five years.

Court documents indicate that Blue paid only \$34 of the money he owed, that he made no effort to obtain his GED, that he performed only six hours of community service, that he failed to obtain his psychological evaluation and failed

to report to his parole officer as required last November and again in February.

On Feb. 9, Blue was convicted of resisting or obstructing a public officer, second degree trespass and driving while his license was revoked, court records show. He was incarcerated in Brunswick County Jail May 20 for failing to appear in court.

Judge Thompson gave Blue credit for time spent awaiting his probation hearing and ordered him to pay an additional \$150 for his court appointed lawyer.

In other superior court action last week: ■ Marvin Carter, 32, of H & S Mobile Home Park, Long Beach, was sentenced to 90 days in Brunswick County Jail after he pleaded no contest to two counts of forgery and uttering. He was also given a five-year prison sentence, suspended on the condition that he pay \$130 restitution, court costs and \$600 in attorney fees.

■ Keith Everett McCoy, 21, of Boiling Spring Lakes was sentenced to 60 days in jail after pleading guilty to charges of common law robbery, breaking and entering and larceny. He had been charged with armed robbery and pleaded guilty to the lesser charge in a plea bargain under which a three-year prison sentence was

suspended on the condition that he pay \$500 restitution, court costs and \$450 in attorney fees. He was put on supervised probation for three years.

■ Lori Christine Spicer, 24, of Wilmington was sentenced to 54 days in jail after pleading guilty to one count each of cocaine possession, forgery, uttering and possession of drug paraphernalia. A three-year prison sentence was suspended on the condition that she pay court costs and \$250 attorney fees and not use or possess controlled substances for three years. She was ordered to obtain a mental-health evaluation and to submit to warrantless searches and drug tests. She was put on supervised probation for three years.

■ Matthew William Kaufhold, 22, of Elizabeth Drive, Yaupon Beach, was given a six-year suspended sentence for two counts each of breaking and entering and larceny. The sentence is to begin at the expiration of any sentence he is now serving. He was ordered to pay restitution in the amount of \$240 to the Pizza Shack, \$787.50 to Walt's Beach Club and \$112 to the Deck, all in Long Beach. Kaufhold was put on three years supervised probation and ordered to pay \$400 in attorney fees.

Get the Facts About Your Social Security Benefits

Although most workers contribute a part of their earnings into the Social Security system, many have misperceptions about their eligibility to receive certain benefits. The N.C. Association of Certified Public Accountants provides the following overview of Social Security benefits along with information on how the new tax law affects those benefits.

How You Earn Benefits

During your years of employment, you and your employer pay a fixed percentage of your salary into the Social Security system. If you are self-employed, a fixed percentage of your net self-employment income also goes toward Social Security.

When you retire, Social Security sends you monthly retirement income as long as you are "fully insured." Generally speaking, you are "fully insured" if you have worked 40 calendar quarters (about 10 years) in a job covered by Social Security.

Once you begin to collect benefits, your spouse can also receive benefits based on your earnings record, even if he or she never worked in a job covered by Social Security. The amount of your Social Security benefit is based on your date of birth, the type of benefit for which you are applying, and your average lifetime earnings. Benefit amounts are adjusted annually to re-

fect the increased cost of living.

The earliest you can retire and collect Social Security benefits is age 62. However, when you retire at age 62, you collect only 80 percent of the full benefit you would be entitled to receive at normal retirement age. The 2-percent reduction compensates for the fact that you may be receiving benefits over a longer period of time.

Right now, workers are entitled to receive full retirement benefits at age 65. But beginning in the year 2000, the age at which you can retire with full benefits will be raised gradually from age 65 to age 67.

What happens if, after you retire, you decide to take a part-time job? In 1994, Social Security recipients between the ages of 65 and 69 may earn up to \$11,160 without a reduction in benefits. For every \$3 over the limit, a dollar in benefits is lost. The earnings limitation is \$8,040 for those between ages 62 and 64, with \$1 subtracted for every \$2 over the limit. Once you reach age 70, you may earn any amount you want without sacrificing your benefits.

Survivor Benefits

Part of your Social Security taxes buys survivors' insurance that, in the event of your death, pays your spouse monthly benefits based on your Social Security record. Your children, parents, and in some cases,

grandchildren may also be eligible if they are dependent on you for most of their support.

A surviving spouse is eligible for widow or widower's benefits at age 60 (50 if disabled), or at any age if caring for a child under 16 or a permanently disabled child. Unmarried children receive survivor benefits until they reach age 18, with an extension to age 19 if they are still attending high school full-time.

Disability Insurance

Social Security also pays income to disabled individuals and their families. The standards for qualifying for Social Security disability benefits are stringent. According to Social Security, you are disabled if you are unable to do any kind of gainful work for at least a year, or you have a condition that is expected to result in your death. If you qualify, you must wait until the sixth month of the disability before benefits are available. However, benefits continue until you are no longer disabled, or to age 65, whichever comes first. The disability benefit

amount is based on the worker's Social Security contributions.

New Tax Law

As a result of the new tax law, some high-income Social Security recipients may find that a higher percentage of their 1994 Social Security benefits are subject to income tax.


Under the old law, certain taxpayers had to include up to 50 percent of their Social Security benefits in their taxable income. For some taxpayers, that figure is now raised to 85 percent. To determine if your benefits are affected by the new tax law, contact your local Social Security office or seek assistance from a CPA. To minimize the tax bite on your benefits, you may also want to consult with a CPA for advice on deferring the recognition of income by restructuring your investments.

Money Management is a weekly column on personal finance prepared and distributed by the N.C. Association of Certified Public Accountants.

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Register Of Deeds Reports \$82,774 In Collections During The Month Of May

More than \$82,000 in revenue was collected by the Brunswick County Register of Deeds office during May, according to a monthly report. Filings for May included 615 deeds, 509 deeds of trust, 38 plats, 115 financing statements, 420 miscellaneous recordings and 35 marriage licenses.

A total of \$56,695 in excise tax was collected. Half of those funds, minus two percent for handling, or \$27,780 was sent to the N.C. Department of Revenue.

Half of the fees collected for marriage licenses, or \$700, was remitted to the N.C. Department of Administration for the domestic violence center fund, which helps support Hope Harbor Home in Brunswick County. Five dollars of each marriage license fee was sent to the state treasurer for the abused children's fund.

Expenses in the register of deeds office during May included \$581 for supplemental retirement benefits \$307 for telephone, \$204 for postage, \$1,685 for maintenance and repairs to equipment, \$2,102 for departmental supplies, \$995 for service maintenance contracts, \$92 for dues and subscriptions and \$906 for travel and training.

Wages are not included in the report.

Permits For Construction Top \$2 Million During May

Permits were issued for more than \$2.1 million worth of new construction in the unincorporated areas of Brunswick County during May, according to figures compiled by the county planning department.

Eighty-seven permits were issued for mobile homes and 19 for other single-family dwellings built at an estimated total cost of \$1,027,155.

There were three permits issued in May for commercial construction valued at \$361,000. One permit was issued for \$14,250 worth of remodeling. Nine additions valued at \$126,994 were permitted. Nine were approved for garages valued at \$165,060 and four for decks or porches valued at \$10,840.

There were four permits issued for signs worth \$38,070 and one for a pool valued at \$8,640.

In all, there were 469 permits issued by the department during May, including 169 for building, 162 electrical, 67 plumbing and 71 mechanical.

During the first five months of 1994, there have been a total of 1,876 permits issued, including 349 for mobile homes and 78 for single family homes valued at a total of \$5.1 million. The average value of the single-family homes permitted this year is \$65,842.

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