



Indictments Handed Down In Eason Case

Feds To Prosecute Reputed Local Dealers

The Federal Government has assumed prosecution of two reputed Chowan County drug traffickers after the case was relinquished by the state.

Louis Norman (Brad) Eason and his wife, Audrey Naomi Pretlow Eason were arrested Nov. 16 in the course of a joint investigation of area

law enforcement agencies which was dubbed "Operation Snowball." Also arrested around the area were over a score of suspects on lesser

drug charges.

Eason was arrested in Gates County and his wife at their home in Chowan County. Officers, armed with a search warrant, found a small amount of cocaine and 30 pounds of marijuana. The biggest discovery was \$112,000 in cash in the house and two vehicles.

Subsequent investigation uncovered \$521,000 in safety deposit boxes in Sunbury, Gatesville and Hobbsville. Also seized was a checking account containing \$173,000. Cash and currency totaled \$806,475.

A press conference was held last Thursday in Elizabeth City by state and federal officials to announce the transfer of jurisdiction of the case.

U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina, Margaret P. Currin announced the indictment of the Easons by a federal grand jury sitting in Wilmington, N.C. the day before.

District Attorney H.P. Williams, Jr. appeared at the conference with Mrs. Currin and announced that state charges have been dismissed in view of the federal indictment.

The first count of the indictment charges both Easons

with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine and marijuana from April, 1988 to Nov. 16, 1988.

The second, third and fourth counts charge Louis Eason with possession and distribution of cocaine on Oct. 5, Oct. 14 and Oct. 30. Both Easons are charged in the fifth count with possession and distribution of marijuana on Nov. 16. The sixth count charges both with possession and distribution of cocaine on Nov. 16.

The currency is alleged by the indictment "to be the fruits of drug trafficking crimes."

If convicted of all charges, each of the Easons could receive a maximum sentence of life imprisonment without parole, a \$4 million fine, or both.

A key provision of federal drug statutes is that all property associated with trading in drugs can be confiscated.

In this case, the cash and currency, four automobiles and two parcels of property, (one each in Gates and Chowan) including their residence were seized. The cash seizure is the largest yet in the Eastern District of North Carolina, officials said.

A portion of the funds from these seizures can be divided

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INDICTMENTS ANNOUNCED--Margaret P. Currin, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina stands at podium with District Attorney H.P. Williams at a new conference where it was announced that federal drug indictments have been handed down against Chowan residents Louis and Audrey Eason. Seated from left are Asst. U.S. Attorney Rocco deGrasse, E.C.P.D. Capt. W.O. Leary, Gates County Sheriff Elmo Benton and Asst. District Attorney Frank Parrish.

Stickers Stir Up Interest

By JACK GROVE

"Basnight for U.S. Congress" bumper stickers have begun to mysteriously appear in the local area. An effort to uncover the source was unsuccessful this week.

Sam Walker, of Currituck County, a Democrat and two-time candidate for an N.C. General Assembly House seat, was said to be the source, but he denied it Tuesday.

Asked if he was part of a movement to encourage Basnight's candidacy for the Congressional seat currently held by Walter B. Jones Sr., Walker replied, "No, but I would encourage Marc to run in 1990."

Concerning Jones, "He look's as healthy as I have seen him in several years." But, "I think 1990 is the year he will step down."

Sen. Marc Basnight was contacted in Raleigh for his reactions. Would he run for the office? "I don't know, it's too premature to say right now." Was he interested in a Congressional seat? "Very much so. I want to run one day

and represent us in the First District." Concerning 1990, "The thoughts are across the district" that Jones won't run for re-election.

As to his position in the political spectrum, he considers himself a "fiscal conservative, very much so. I hope I'm attuned to their (constituents) wishes. I want to carry out the basic tenets that our country is founded on."

Congressman Jones' Administrative Assistant, Floyd Lupton, was contacted in Washington Wednesday. He provided a statement from the congressman concerning his plans for 1990. "I've just been sworn in and running for the next term hasn't entered my mind at this time. Certainly I have given no thought to not running."

In the general shakeup that has just taken place in the General Assembly, Basnight was named as Chairman of the Senate Base Budget Committee, one of the most powerful posts in state government.

Now a major player in the budget process, Basnight said

"I see very good things for the northeast. A brighter day." He and other legislators from the eastern part of the state, including Reps. Vernon James of Pasquotank and R.M. (Pete) Thompson of Chowan, had been fighting an uphill battle for a larger piece of the fiscal pie for this area.

One campaign has been to four-lane highways in the area. A recently devised highway plan that the senator had a major part in formulating calls for four-laning U.S. 17 from the Virginia border to South Carolina and the four-laning of U.S. 64 to Manteo and widening Highways 158 and 168. "I'm very happy with the highway plan as it stands today," Basnight said.

He said that funds must be raised for the ambitious highway construction plan and he favors tax increases in user areas such as gasoline and vehicles sales.

He foresees more mental health funds coming to the area through a per capita distribution of funds. Basnight pointed to a new mental health facility in Elizabeth City which is included in the governor's budget.

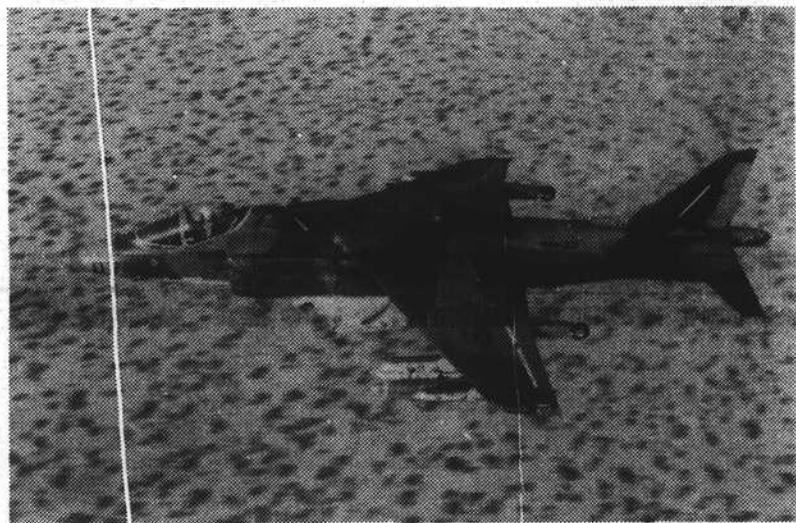
Basnight defended the senate's actions in stripping the power to name senate committee chairmen from the Lt. governor. Previous Democratic Lt. governors had this power. Newly elected Republican Lt. Governor Jim Gardner lost it.

The senator said, "basically the senate is organizing itself," which is its right. Sen. Henson Barnes, President Pro Tem of the Senate now controls committee assignments and Basnight said that arrangement would be permanent.

Death Ruled Suicide

The gunshot death of a Tyner man in Pasquotank County on Jan. 10 has been ruled a suicide by Pasquotank Medical Examiner Dr. Joe L. Robertson.

The body of Alvin Leander Twine, 28, was found at the residence of his brother, Willie Twine at Lot 77, Hickory Village Trailer Park. No determination as to whether



U.S. Marine Corps' AV-8B Harrier II Jet

Anniversary Noted

(Editor's Note: The following information was provided by the Reserve Staff Group of the Second Marine Aircraft Wing in Cherry Point, N.C.)

This month marks the 30th anniversary of the closing of the U.S. Marine's air facility at Edenton.

The base was once an important training site for fighter and attack squadrons of the Second Marine Aircraft Wing at Cherry Point.

It was active during World War II, was closed for several years, then reopened briefly during the 50's officially as Marine Corps Auxiliary Air Station, Edenton.

The base was closed for the final time in January, 1959. Anyone who has lived here long enough can point out many of the original buildings, such as operations, the mess hall, and of course, the Officers Club which is now the Chowan Country Club.

Edenton Air Station is remembered in Marine Corps aviation history as one of the home bases for the famous

gull-winged F-8U Corsair.

Those not old enough to remember it can at least recall seeing it in the TV series, "Blacksheep Squadron." It was the renowned Marine Fighter Squadron-214 under the command of Marine Ace, Gregory "Pappy" Boyington.

They carved their history in blood, fighting Japanese Zeros in such faintly remembered places as Guadalcanal, Tulagi and Rabaul.

Today, even the oldest Marines at Cherry Point were in high school when Edenton's base ceased operations for the final time. And Marine pilots flying the latest and most technologically advanced jets in the world weren't even born.

These young pilots are flying such planes as the McDonnell Douglas AV-8 "Harrier" which can take off and land vertically and even "hover" like a helicopter.

Cherry Point is still the home of the Marine's east coast aircraft. Besides the Harrier, they are headquarters for the EA-6 "Prowler" which provides electronic warfare capability.

In addition, the Second Wing has the latest in the Navy and Marine Corps strike-fighters, the F/A-18 "Hornet" down the road in Beaufort, S.C.

During the next few days, there will be a few old-timers who will pause in the midst of jet roar and remember the deep throb and hum of the mighty Corsair's propellers over the Albemarle Sound.

Derelict Car Destroyed By Fire

Edenton firemen were called out Saturday at 2:50 p.m. to a grass fire that spread to derelict cars and threatened

a house on Paradise Spur Rd.

The fire, which originated in a roadside ditch, was whipped across the yard of

property owned by Elliott Robinson. Firemen immediately attacked the flames closest to the dwelling before extinguishing fires that had spread to two cars.

The yard was littered with between six to ten derelict cars that were apparently being stripped for parts. One of the cars was totally destroyed by fire and one was slightly damaged. A tire in the yard sent dense black smoke into the air from the blaze.

Fire Chief Lynn Perry commented, "We were fortunate that the fire got into only one car," alluding to the destroyed vehicle.

He said that the fire was apparently caused by a carelessly tossed cigarette butt on the roadside.

Perry said that, notwithstanding the recent rains, "That surface area dries mighty quickly." He cautioned the public to conduct outdoor burning with great care.

Saturday's was the first fire call in two weeks.



SATURDAY FIRE--A fireman hoses down a car that caught fire due to a grass fire on Paradise Spur Rd. Saturday afternoon. The fire was stopped short of a dwelling.

The Public Parade

Toward Upper Limits

Higher education, including the community college system, found little comfort in Gov. Jim Martin's budget recommendations to the General Assembly. In response to requests for more money for the next fiscal year, he told them simply to increase their own revenue.

That comes down to raising tuition and other fees.

That may not have come as much of a surprise to the North Carolina University system, where Chancellor Paul Hardin of Chapel Hill has been suggesting such an approach. But it came as a shock to the community colleges, which are expected to maintain an open-door to all comers.

It is true that tuition in both systems is relatively low. But that is not due to an oversight; it has been by design. The constitution mandates that the state -- "as far as practicable" -- operate its university and "such other institutions of higher education as the General Assembly may establish" free of cost to the people of North Carolina.

We do not have the figures for the University of North Carolina system, so we cannot give you an estimate of how much tuition and other fees would have to be raised to increase its income by any realistic amount. The community college system had asked the governor and the Advisory Budget Commission to recommend an appropriation of \$35 million in new money for next year just to keep the system "whole."

An increase of 1 per cent in in-state and out-of-state tuition would bring in \$243,423; but to raise \$35 million, that would have to be multiplied by 143.78, which is out of the question. If you increased current tuition by as much as 28 per cent, it would raise only \$6,815,844, still far short of the pressing needs of the system, which is under pressure from all sides to turn out more and more better qualified workers and reduce adult illiteracy in

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