

GOVERNOR OFFERS HIS REASONS FOR LENIENCY TO INCORRIGIBLE THIEF - MURDERER

Dear Jack:

Thank you for your letter and copy of your editorial. I want to assure you that the News and Observer articles had nothing to do with my decision to commute the life sentences of Claude Griffin and his co-defendant to terms of 60 years. This action was taken by me several days prior to the newspaper reports and the orders were delivered to the Parole Board on Friday before the first story was published on Sunday.

The Board of Pardons recommended these sentences be commuted to 40 years last October, but I declined at that time. Church leaders, Department of Correction, Pardons and others felt something should be done since the men had outstanding prison records. So, I commuted them to 60 years. It is felt such action will be an incentive to other inmates to make good records and thus help reduce our crime rate, both inside and out of prison.

Claude Griffin has not been paroled. He has about 50 years left to serve and would probably not live long enough to complete such a term. If placed on work release, he will be paying

taxes on the money he earns, supporting his dependents (if any), paying for his transportation to and from work, and paying for his room and board at the prison unit.

Cordially,
/s/ Bob
Robert W. Scott

(The following article was included with the letter from the governor.)

In 1848, in Ireland, nine men were arrested and convicted of crimes against Her Majesty, the Queen. The nine, John Mitchell, Thomas McGee, Richard O'Gorman, Morris Lyenne, Charles Duffy, Terrence McManus, Patrick Donahue, Thomas Meager, and Michael Ireland, all were sentenced to death.

However, passionate protest (just like today) from all over the world — with a strong voice from the United States — forced Queen Victoria to commute the death sentence to banishment to the far wilds of Australia.

Some sixteen years later, around 1864, word reached the aging Queen that Sir Charles Duffy, who had been newly elected as Prime Minister of Australia, was the same Charles

Duffy the Queen had banished. After hearing this surprising news, Queen Victoria requested the records of the other eight men. This is what they revealed.

John Mitchell, had left Australia for the United States. He was living in New York and had become a prominent politician. (His son was later Mayor of New York, John Perry Mitchell.) Thomas Darcy McGee, was living in Canada and was a Member of Parliament for Montreal and Minister of Agriculture. Richard O'Gorman had become Governor of New Foundland. Morris Lyenne had ascended to Attorney General of Australia (To which Officer Michael Ireland had succeeded him). Terrence McManus, had left Australia. He was a Brigadier General in the United States Army, and Francis Feager — well . . . he had only become Governor of Montana.

Maybe we can use the 'moon'? If banishment turns out this type of "ex-con" then let there be banishment; but banishment in the transportation sense and not by stigma.

by Jack Rider

Last week Governor Bob Scott commuted the so-called life sentence of convict Claude Griffin to one of 60 years, and as a result of that I did a radio editorial criticizing the governor and sent him a copy of that view to which the following reply and enclosure were received Tuesday along with a tabulation which shows that Scott in his first two years in office has not been so lenient as his immediate seven predecessors, in some senses.

The view of the radio editorial was largely that Griffin's commutation, which made it possible for him to be granted "work release" privileges, was overly kind in view of Griffin's notoriously bad record, which included desertion from the armed forces in World War Two for which he served 18 months of a 5-to-7 year jail term, safe cracking and thievery in Nash County after the desertion term for which he served a brief stint behind bars and finally, in 1959 a murder conviction from Iredell County, which was tried at the same time Griffin had eight safe - cracking charges pending against him in South Carolina.

Scott uses the standard excuse of the paternalistic attitude shared by a majority of the citizenry today: that only by hope of leniency can efforts toward rehabilitation hope to have any success. And that the further excuse of collecting small payments from the gainfully employed convict lightens the bur-

den on the taxpayer and possibly make life easier for the family of the criminal if a family exists.

This reasoning carried to its logical conclusion would see an end to all prison life. It overlooks that there is no commutation possible for the victim of the premeditated murderer; nor does the state, the work-release program, the paroles system nor any of the various rehabilitation efforts include in its bag of tricks any compensation for the loss of life, of property or health that might have resulted from the act of the criminal.

Only one state so far has embraced the reasonable concept that the state or the criminal should compensate the victim of crime. If each criminal knew that one of the facets of his punishment would be repayment for that which he had stolen, destroyed or damaged and compensation for injuries he may have inflicted in the commission of his crimes a percentage of them might better understand that there was little permanent profit in crime.

Now after 12 years Claude Griffin has seen his "life sentence" reduced to 60 years and he is able to leave prison during working hours and mingle with law-abiding society on a basis of complete daytime equality.

If he behaves himself long enough and does not revert to his former habits of thievery and mayhem a later governor Continued on page 8

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Jones One of Four Counties Without Litterbug Indictments in Past Year

The Governor's Beautification Committee this week announced that the counties of Mecklenburg, Gaston, Cumberland, and Guilford placed highest in the State in 1970 in the number of citations issued by the Highway Patrol for anti-litter law violations.

Mecklenburg was highest with 56 cases made, followed closely by Gaston with 55. Cumberland had 53, and Guilford recorded 51 cases.

Chowan, Jones, Perquimans, and Graham counties composed the elite group of counties which had no cases made in 1970 for anti-litter law violations.

In March, the Beautification Committee announced totals from official Highway Patrol arrest records showing that in 1970, 1,220 cases were made against motorists for littering North Carolina's streets and highways. This figure showed an increase from 1,043 in 1969, and 989 in 1968.

In releasing complete county by-county figures on "litterbug" citations, Beautification Committee Chairman Pat Huff of Charlotte said, "The North Carolina Highway Patrol is to be commended for their increased vigilance and desire to help us all keep our State free of unsightly litter and trash."

Lenoir County had 15 such indictments last year and 14 convictions or pleas of guilty in court.

Two Civil Actions Filed During Week

Jones County Court Clerk Rogers Pollock reported the filing of two civil actions in his office during the past week.

In one Estelle E. Adams seeks a divorce from Herman Leslie Adams, alleging their marriage October 31, 1935 and their separation March 14, 1970.

In the other Commercial Credit Corporation is seeking to collect \$295.12 which it alleges it is owed by Floyd Brown of Jones County.

Drunken Drivers Major Court Items

In last Friday's session of Jones County District Court drunken drivers occupied a large part of the activity.

Benjamin Harper had a choice of 32 days in jail or paying a \$100 fine, Albert Slusser was found guilty of reckless driving instead of drunken driving and was fined \$15, Thomas Berry's choice was 61 days in jail or a \$100 fine, and Robert Faulkner paid the court costs for reckless driving on his drunken driving charge. William B. Parks was also fined \$100 for drunken driving.

Herbert Mills, Nettie Riggs, Jimmie Cannon, Willie Franks Jr., Lillie Roberts and John Jones Jr. all had to make bad checks good and pay costs.

For other traffic offenses a stop sign violation against Charlie Cunningham was not proscribed with leave. Andrew Mallard paid costs for failing to yield right of way, Bobbie Foy paid costs for driving left of center line and John Dickerson III paid costs for speeding.

Gary Christopher paid costs for fishing without a license, and an assault charge against Guy King was not proscribed.

Also the court nol prossed with leave two narcotics charges against Raymond Earl Koonce who escaped from jail while waiting trial for growing and selling marijuana. The case will be reopened when, and if he is caught. Fugitive warrants have been issued for his arrest.

Jones Board has Quiet April Meet

The Jones County Board of Commissioners enjoyed a quiet April session on Monday.

Routine bills were approved for payment, including \$81 paid to Craven County Hospital for an ambulance carrying Walter Mattocks to the hospital at Chapel Hill.

October 4th was set as the date for public sale of tax liens and Charlie Jones was named to the Trent River Watershed Commission, replacing C. M. Foscoe Jr. who had resigned last month.

THREE THIEVES CAUGHT

Quick action by LaGrange and county officers resulted in three men being caught in the act of burglarizing the LaGrange Piggy-Wiggly Store at about 3 a.m. Monday. Chester Mack Howard of Camp Lejeune, Jesse Lee Blackshear of Lumber River route 1 were charged with breaking, entering and larceny and Clinton Howard of Jacksonville was charged with possession of burglary tools.

Calvin Meadows and Ivey Riggs to Attend Governor's School in June

Two Jones Senior High School students have been selected from many applicants to attend the Governor's School on the campus of Salem College at Winston-Salem from June 13 to July 31.

The two juniors are Calvin Meadows and Ivey T. Riggs. Both students will be in the academic area.

Meadows is the grandson of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Meadows of Trenton. He was a member of the football team and served as trainer for the basketball team.

He is a member of St. Stev-

en's Deciple Church, Trenton, Community Club, and Trenton 4-H Club. He was third place winner in a Post-Current Event Contest. He plans to attend North Carolina A & T State University and major in Architectural Engineering.

Riggs is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ivey Riggs of Pollockville. He is a member of the Future Teachers of America. He is Lay-out Director for the Annual Staff and is a substitute bus driver.

He plans to major in Ecology or enter the Coast Guard Academy after high school graduation.

After Two Years of Improvement 1970 Reverses Traffic Trend; Caution is Urged by Commissioner Joe Garrett

"Let's turn back the tide." This was the admonition this week from Motor Vehicles Commissioner Joe Garrett as North Carolina approached one of its traditionally bloody weekends—the Easter holiday.

Garrett's reference is to the fact that, after two consecutive years of reduced highway fatalities, the death rate on our streets and highways is currently running ahead of the 1970 figure.

The commissioner pointed out that there were 1,125 highway crashes during the four-day 1970 Easter holiday period. Five hundred and sixty-eight people were injured and 23 died.

"In well over 1,000 of those accidents," Garrett said, "violations of the motor vehicle laws were clearly indicated. Speeding, failing to yield the right-of-way and driving to the left of the center line accounted for over half of the violations — and

of course, we know from experience that driving under the influence was a factor in at least half of the crashes resulting in fatalities. Adding to the threat is the fact that, already in 1971, we have added more than 140,000 new motor vehicles to our last year's total."

Garrett said the State Highway Patrol will be on the roads "in maximum force" through the weekend, giving special attention to speeders and drinking drivers, but he added that "the driver himself will determine whether we enter the spring and summer vacation period on a happy or tragic note."

The commissioner concluded: "Don't think it can't happen to you. It can. And experience tells us there will be at least 1,000 accidents on our streets and highways this weekend. Don't be one of them."