

Our Judicial System. What's Right And Wrong With It.

The Insanity Verdict. Part I

By George A. Burns

Fact: Lawrence Crowley. Bus hijacker found incompetent to stand trial and released from custody. Fifteen months later, Crowley was brought to trial for butchering his roommate and stuffing body parts in a freezer.

Fact: Matthew Quintiliano. Former police officer who killed his wife. Quintiliano was held for three months for mental observation after his acquittal for that crime on grounds of insanity. Five years later, he was charged with killing his second wife.

Fact: Robert Pates. In and out of mental hospitals 24 times in 10 years in Mississippi for drunkenness. In a Biloxi jail, he sets a fire in his padded jail cell that kills 29 inmates.

Fact: Charles Meach. On a "work release" after being acquitted on the grounds of insanity in a murder case, Meach shot and killed four teenagers in an Anchorage, Alaska park.

Fact: Glen Tripp. After a hijack attempt of an airliner in Seattle, Tripp was given probation and sent to a psychiatrist. Three years later, he hijacks a plane and threatens to blow it up. Federal agents shot him to death.

Fact: On March 31, 1981 President Ronald Reagan leaves a hotel after a speech. Surrounded by Secret Service agents and his entourage, the President is

fired upon by John Hinckley, Jr. Four, including the president were wounded. Fifteen months later, Hinckley is acquitted on the grounds of insanity.

The facts go on and on. Each and every day in our American judicial system, more public outrage is made in regard to cases such as these, and those perpetrators committing the dastardly crimes. Critics aim their disenchantment at the insanity defense, a 19th century legal doctrine that allows the premature release of dangerous persons.

Insanity pleas, however, are only part of a broader problem that is sparking conflict between legal and medical experts as well as confusing those outside of the justice system. In fact, lawmakers and judges are now closely scrutinizing every step along the path traveled by mentally ill persons accused of violent acts, from arrest to release.

Is the actual help and treatment required for the mentally ill given them as really needed? According to a Pennsylvania Commission that studied the problem, their findings were of a resounding NO. "The mentally ill inmate has proved to be difficult and inconvenient for both systems, corrections and mental health. The result: many of the mentally ill who run afoul of the law slip between the cracks and do not get the treatment that they

See LETTER, Page 11

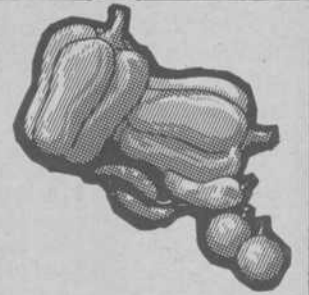
MAKE THE DISCOVERY

BIG 8 MARKET &

LIQUORS

900 W. Owens

647-3935



REX SAUSAGE in OIL
9 1/2 oz. can \$1.29
48 oz. can \$4.59

FARMER JOHN WEINERS & BEEF FRANKS
99¢ lb.

BEEF BACK RIBS
\$1.29 lb.

MARKOV VODKA
1 liter
\$4.99

KESSLER'S AMERICAN BLENDED WHISKEY
1 liter
\$5.99

NEWPORT GIN
1 liter
\$4.99

Millers BEER
12 oz. bottle
\$4.99 12 pack

CAL FLAVOR AVOCADOS
3 for \$1.00

BRER RABBIT SYRUP
12 oz. bottle \$1.69
40 oz. bottle \$4.49

WELCHES GRAPE & STRAWBERRY HAWAIIAN PUNCH
OLD FASHIONED MUG ROOTBEER
12 oz. can \$1.89 6 pack

Our success depends upon how well we satisfy you

NELLIS FURNITURE

(702) 649-4200

Harold L. Johnson
USAF SMS Retired

2666 Las Vegas Blvd. North
North Las Vegas, Nev. 89030

