

THE JOAN LITTLE CASE

By James Reston Jr.

New York Times (1923-Current file); Apr 6, 1975;

ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2007)

pg. 240

THE JOAN LITTLE CASE

In a small Southern town, the night jailer is found murdered, his black woman prisoner gone. Did she kill to escape, or to resist rape? Her forthcoming trial is a *cause célèbre*.

By James Reston Jr.

WASHINGTON, N. C.—The Beaufort County jail is in the basement of the county courthouse. One enters through a thick, soundproof door. Directly ahead is an office with a wall of video screens on which the jailers can watch the prisoners' every move. Off to one side, at the end of a corridor of cells, there is a two-cell section separated from the rest of the block. It was here that Joan Little, black, 20 and sentenced to 7 to 10 years for breaking and entering, spent 81 days as the jail's only

female inmate, in virtual solitary confinement, until the early hours of Aug. 27, 1974.

At 4 A.M., a town policeman bringing in a drunken black woman found the night jailer lying face down on Joan Little's cell bunk, dead. His shoes were outside the cell door, and, except for his socks, he was naked from the waist down. In one hand, he held his trousers; in the other, an ice pick he kept in a drawer in the office. He had been stabbed 11 times with the ice pick. Joan Little was gone.

After a week of frantic search, complete with dogs, high-powered rifles and house-to-house in-

quiries, she gave herself up and was indicted by a Beaufort County grand jury for first-degree murder, for which the mandatory penalty in North Carolina is death in the electric chair. Out of these circumstances has grown a *cause célèbre* combining the issues of civil rights, women's rights and prisoners' rights. Poor, Southern, undereducated and typical of the prisoner population, Joan Little is an ideal subject for reformist groups seeking to dramatize these issues for the public. And for Washington, N. C., known in these parts as Little Washington to differentiate it from the nation's capital, the "Joan Little case" and the furor over



Joan Little in the Correctional Center for Women in Raleigh, N. C., awaiting trial.

it have come as a severe and unexpected wrench.

This is how David M. Milligan, editor of the local weekly, The Beaufort-Hyde News, defines the stereotyped picture the townspeople believe the nation is getting of their home:

"This is the South. Here's a rinky-dink town with its shacks and shanties. You got this old redneck sheriff and this old redneck jailer and this pore little ole colored gal.

"She's there in jail, so defenseless, so innocent, and she gets raped and ravaged by this gross jailer, and all of a sudden, out of nowhere, she struck out, trying to defend herself. She had to kill the jailer, and now those ignorant old rednecks are gonna get their revenge on her. They're gonna make her pay for it with her life.

"Well, that's not the story at all."

Joan Little grew up along the dirt streets of Washington's shantytown, the eldest of nine children—five by her father (who left home before she was 10 and now works as a security guard in New York) and four by a stepfather. Her mother was intensely religious and would often consult with a "root worker," or conjurer, who purportedly could cast spells through the use of roots thought to have mystical powers. With her father gone and her mother preoccupied with her religion, Joan turned inward. She kept to herself in school, which was fully segregated, like all schools in Beaufort County.

Joan dropped out of school when she was 15, and her mother sought help from a local judge, who promptly declared her a truant and committed her to a training school. Joan fled from the institution, and her mother, recognizing that the arrangement would not work, secured an official release from the judge. Then Joan went to Philadelphia and stayed two years with relatives. "She always wanted to be a city girl," her mother says, but when she returned to North Carolina, her school records did not come with her, and the Washington schools would not recognize her Northern credits. Joan did not want to repeat a grade; besides, by this time, she had developed a thyroid condition that required surgery. So she dropped out of school for good.

When she was 18, according to a North Carolina civil-rights leader, Golden Frinks, Joan fell into bad company. She began living with Julius Rogers, who ran a pool hall in the black section of town, and leading a "fast life." She took a weekend job in a discotheque in Jacksonville, N. C., near a Marine base, Camp LeJeune.

In late 1973, she was charged with possession of stolen goods, but the case was not prosecuted. On Jan. 3, 1974, she was arrested for shoplifting in Washington, but the case was dismissed. Six days later, she was charged and convicted of shoplifting in nearby Greenville and given a six-month suspended sentence. Then on Jan. 15, 1974, she and her younger brother were arrested and charged with breaking and entering. The case went to trial in June, and, in a bizarre twist, her brother turned state's evidence against her, and it was mainly on the strength of his testimony that she was convicted and sentenced to 7 to 10 years; her brother received a suspended sentence of five years.

On June 6, 1974, unable to make a bond of \$15,000, Joan Little was locked up in the Beaufort County jail. She herself requested that she be held in Beaufort County, rather than be moved to the Correctional Center for Women in Raleigh, the normal procedure, so she could work on posting her bond.

In the jail, the video system for keeping prisoners under observation left her little privacy. The

James Reston Jr. lectures in creative writing at the University of North Carolina. His second novel, "The Knock at Midnight," was published last month.

cell itself had a combination wash basin and commode, modern and clean, and a video camera kept her constantly exposed. (In the last weeks of her incarceration there, the camera was broken and was sent for repairs.) The prisoner was issued two sheets, but when she spread one sheet across the front of the bars to block out the video camera, the second sheet was taken away from her. When she wanted to take a shower, she had to call the guard to turn on the water; there was no shower curtain, and the video system covered the shower area.

The night jailer was Clarence Alligood, formerly



The defendant: With lawyers Paul and Galloway.



The town: Main Street, Washington, N. C.



The County Prosecutor: William Griffin.

a farmer and truck driver. He was 62 years old, 5 feet 8 inches and 200 pounds. The Alligood family is one of the oldest in Beaufort County. Four Alligood brothers came here in the eighteenth century and spread their seed so broadly that there are Alligoods throughout the region who are related only in the most distant way. "The Alligoods are good folks, but poor folks," says Mrs. A. K. Alligood at the Goodyear Tire garage. "I didn't know the jailer personally but his neighbors spoke mighty highly of him."

Alligood was making \$6,600 a year and had been on the job 18 months last August. Sheriff Ottis

(Red) Davis, a veteran of 29 years in law enforcement, remembers him as "the most security-minded man we ever had back there," and asserts emphatically, "If I had known he was a ladies' man, he wouldn't have stayed around here 10 minutes." A bottling-company manager in town who often had coffee with Alligood was surprised that he had held down the jailer's job as long as he had, implying limited regard for his competence. As for that rape story, the manager was skeptical: "Alligood was so racially biased that he wouldn't want a colored woman." This sentiment was echoed by Alligood's wife, the mother of his six children: "He didn't like coloreds that much."

In the 81 days of their acquaintance, the jailer did the inmate a number of favors. He would bring her sandwiches late at night, and he would let her use the telephone in his office at odd hours. And in the early hours of the 82d day he was dead.

In the week Joan Little was at large, it was generally believed in the black community that if she was found, she would be killed. A local judge argued that she should be declared an "outlaw" under a seldom-invoked and roundly criticized statute, peculiar to the North Carolina frontier, which provides that a fugitive can be shot on sight by anyone. Sheriff Davis claims credit for averting the application of the outlaw statute. As for Joan, according to those who have taken up her cause, she hid in fear of her life when she heard that Alligood, who was still alive when she escaped from the jail, had succumbed to his wounds. Then, through the grapevine, she got in touch with Jerry Paul, a white Durham attorney well-known for defending blacks, and on Sept. 4, escorted by Paul, she surrendered to the director of the State Bureau of Investigation.

The case placed before a Beaufort County grand jury (which included an Alligood) might have seemed a simple matter of murder and jailbreak except for what one law-enforcement official called "the peculiarities in the way he [the jailer] was dressed." There were other peculiarities. Joan Little's nightgown lay on the floor, her brassiere hung from the cell door. Under the body was a torn woman's kerchief. The Beaufort County medical examiner, Dr. Harry M. Carpenter, whose autopsy showed that the fatal wound was in Alligood's heart, identified sperm on the jailer's leg. The medical examiner was willing to appear before the grand jury to elaborate on this evidence of sexual activity just before the killing, but the jurors declined to call him. Indicted for first-degree murder, Joan Little was placed in the women's prison in Raleigh, with bail fixed at \$100,000 in addition to the earlier \$15,000 bond. Her attorneys said she would state that the slaying was in self-defense.

Washington, N. C. is a town of 9,000 set on the brackish Pamlico River, the county seat of Beaufort County. It doesn't like to be called Little Washington, and prefers the appellation "the Original Washington," since it was the first town in America named after George Washington. Its streets are clean and newly adorned with shrubbery and seats for the hot summer days. With the Bicentennial approaching, the 19th-century buildings along Main Street have been sandblasted and the old railroad station is being converted to a community art gallery.

It's a friendly little town, if it has no reason to be otherwise. The Chamber of Commerce puts out an attractive pamphlet with a picture of the new waterfront park that has replaced a row of sagging warehouses, and toward the back of the booklet are detachable applications for industries interested in locating in Beaufort County. Several phosphate operations in the county approach an investment of \$500-million, and a Little (Continued on Page 40)

Washington real estate firm has just put together the sale of more than 50,000 acres of forest and wetlands to Japanese and Italian investors, who intend to convert the land to modern food production.

During the 1972 Presidential primary, George Wallace took nearly 70 per cent of the vote in Beaufort County, but Bill Abeyounis, the amiable director of the Chamber of Commerce, says of the region: "We're an easy-going people. We like to live and let live." When asked about the racial situation, he explains that the schools were integrated in 1965 without major incident. That the "integration" was a "freedom of choice" plan adopted under court pressure and, as with most such plans in the South, allowing for very little desegregation, and that it took a Federal court order in December, 1969, to make the town begin to desegregate, grudgingly, in any real sense, are details Bill Abeyounis is not about to volunteer. But it was a smooth transition, on the whole, and he attributes the smoothness to "our excellent black leadership," which "kept the militants out."

Among Little Washington's 6,000 whites, the reaction to the Joan Little "incident" followed a familiar pattern. First, there was shock and confusion. The sheriff's office did not release the details of Alligood's condition when he was found, and the editor of The Washington Daily News, Ashley Futrell, wrote, to his subsequent embarrassment, that Alligood was a "good man" who died "in the line of duty." As the facts began to emerge, the attitude became one of "Isn't it a damn shame that such a thing could happen in our jail?" There were a few embarrassing reports in the major North Carolina newspapers, but nothing more. Then, as various forces began to coalesce around the case, Little Washington grew alarmed.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, headed by Julian Bond, the young, black Georgia State Senator, sent two million letters around the country appealing for funds for Joan Little's defense. (The mailing itself cost \$250,000, and the appeal has raised more than \$150,000 so far.) The national news media began to descend on Little Washington and to print cracker and racist comments by local citizens, which are easy enough to hear in Beaufort

County. Proud of its tranquil record in the midst of racial troubles in other small towns in the past decade, Little Washington grew resentful of its portrayal as "Tobacco Road." "This is not Meridian, Mississippi," said one white. "But of course, it's not New York either."

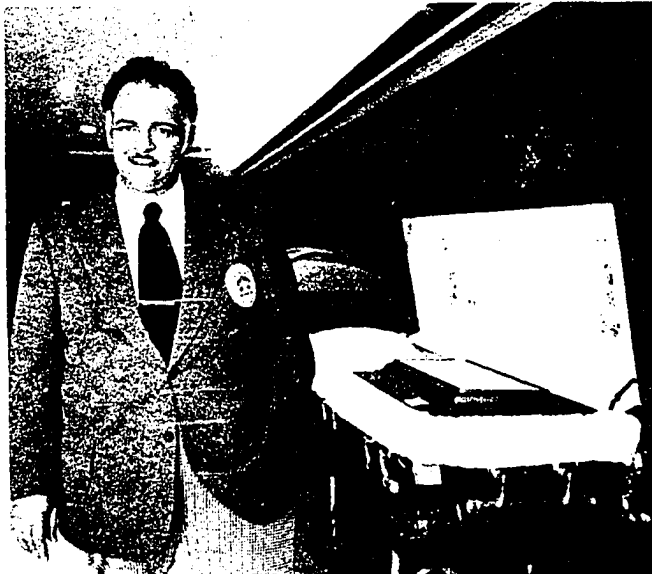
"When Judge Larkins ordered integration I was madder than hell, like a lot of people. I didn't wish him any harm, but if Judge Larkins had gotten in an accident and left this earth, I wouldn't have cried. We white people didn't like it. We were sitting here thinking we were offering equal education, but we weren't.

"Now, I have to admit that integration is one of the finest things that ever happened to this town. We've had less trouble now than when we were totally segregated. That's because we had good leadership, and we've got dad burn good young people."

Stout and courteous and outgoing, his tie loosened as he goes about the daily affairs of his wholesale hardware business, Mayor Max Roebuck seems completely sincere as he offers that assessment of the 1969 school desegregation order issued by Judge John D. Larkins Jr. of the Federal District Court at New Bern, N. C., and of its consequences. When a civil-rights march in support of Joan Little was held Sept. 8, Mayor Roebuck stood across the street, listened to the speeches and found nothing offensive in them. "They're pushing their own cause," he says. "I can't blame them. This is an opportunity for them. I don't like it, but they'd be foolish not to take advantage of it."

In Little Washington, as you meet some of the other local figures, the stereotype of the Southern small-town redneck breaks down in other ways.

The Sept. 8 demonstration might not have passed off without serious incident except for the chief of police, Philip Paul. When the march was called, a group in Wilmington, N. C., called Rights for White People announced that they were going to Little Washington to help the police there do its duty. The police chief, who is tall, heavy-set and in his 50's, got on the phone to the group, told them he didn't need their help, and assured them that if they came to his town creating problems he would do his duty in a manner they



City Councilman (and undertaker) Randolph: "Washington's progressed as much as any small Southern town."

might not like. The group never showed up.

Sheriff Red Davis is a soft-spoken, sandy-haired man who has a reputation for fairness and honesty in both the black and white communities. The sheriff likes to point out that he received 90 per cent of the black vote in his recent election, and that two of the three people he has hired are black, including Beaufort County's only black field deputy. Davis talks of being open with one reporter, briefing him for an hour and a half on the Joan Little case, whereupon the reporter "ran me down like a dog" in his story. Now Davis refers most reporters to a statement printed in The Beaufort-Hyde News in which he said, "In some cases of press coverage, there are strong insinuations that I, myself, am a racist. I don't really care how much they write about the story, but I am distressed when a writer comes to town with his story all written, and all he wants from us is a dateline, a few names to tag to his bad-grammar quotes, and a picture or two of our slums."

Louis Randolph is an undertaker and the only black on the City Council, elected to that post in December, 1973, with more votes than any other candidate, including Mayor Roebuck. Sitting in his cluttered office, looking like a black Sydney Greenstreet with a 4 1/2-carat diamond ring on one hand and a Mason's ring on the other, Randolph speaks of the pressures on him from some blacks who want him to say Little Washington is "a rotten town."

"But I can't say that. It's progressed as much as any

small Southern town around. There was a time when blacks could only work in the saw mills, on the farms, or in the kitchen. But the area has industrialized, and over 50 per cent of the workers in most industries are black. We've got people in supervisory positions, and we've got tellers in all the banks. We've got black policemen. I'm personally responsible for getting the first two black firemen hired [out of a staff of 19], and I'm looking for two more."

And there has been a slum-clearance program cited for superior achievement by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in Washington, D. C. Yet the color line still cuts Little Washington in half. Randolph may represent the "excellent black leadership" the Chamber of Commerce speaks of, but in nearly 20 years as an undertaker he has buried only one white, a woman of German extraction who designated him in her will.

David Milligan, the local weekly editor, has little patience with the old Southern tactic of guilt-transference — speaking knowingly of greater hypocrisy on racial matters in other parts of the country. Milligan says, "We've got no responsibility for Boston or Harlem. We've got to see to it that things are right in our own town. The point is that Joan Little is here."

In his book "Stars Fell on Alabama," Carl Carmer describes a ritual that used to be performed at the University of Alabama. During intermission at a dance, the lights would be turned down and young

men would march in carrying flaming torches. The leader, standing on a table in the middle of the gymnasium, would raise a glass of ice water and offer a toast: "To Woman, lovely woman of the Southland, as pure and chaste as this sparkling water, as cold as this gleaming ice, we lift this cup, and we pledge our hearts and our lives to the protection of her virtue and chastity." The young men, like as not, were drunk, and, Carmer observes, "the probability is that he [the toastmaster] and his cohorts are among the better known seducers of the campus, but no one sees any incongruity in this."

Hence the cult of the Southern woman, frozen as a statue upon a pedestal, the inspiration of Ku Klux Klansmen raiding the countryside on behalf of the sanctity of the home and the purity of womanhood, and, in modern times in North Carolina, the rationale of death in the electric chair for "first degree rape."

The obverse of the "rape complex," the terror of violation of the Southern white woman by the black man—and the lynchings and legal executions for touches or even looks it has led to—is the reality of the black female knocked down by her white master between the corn rows. If the white woman was idealized, the black woman was sensualized. Sociologist John Dollard refers to this as the "split image" in the mental life of white Southern men. In his classic work, "Caste and Class in a Southern Town," Dollard refers to black women as a "zone of freedom" in an otherwise tight cultural situation. "With them," he writes, "the white man can have a transitory irresponsible relationship, whereas otherwise sexuality is loaded with cares, threats, and duties. In relations with Negro women, the psychic strain may be less."

If this theory holds, then Joan Little in the Beaufort County jail, late at night, as the only female prisoner, is the epitome of the unprotected woman. As one native of Little Washington says, "They [white people] figure Alligood was going back there to have himself a little fun. It's completely accepted." Or as another white said, disapprovingly, "Alligood had no business getting caught back there."

And so, for many of the whites in Washington, N. C., the most comfortable accommodation to the facts is that

Joan Little is a bad girl who enticed Alligood, a weak man, into her cell with a premeditated plan of murder and escape. Didn't she work at that discotheque in Jacksonville? "I'll tell you one thing," said Hardy Henry, an executive for the National Spinning Company, who lives in Country Club Estates in Washington, "she wasn't defending her honor in that cell. She'd lost that years ago."

The traditional white perception of black morals is at work. In the 1924 novel, "Fire in the Flint," by Walter White, a sheriff expresses the sentiment this way: "Humph! They ain't no nigger gal that's pure after she's reached fo'teen years ol.'" A contemporary rendition comes from Glenn Cox, an auto salesman in Washington: "Hell, to them, — is like saying good morning or having a Pepsi Cola."

Not everyone in the white community sees it quite that way, of course, particularly among the women. In the Cinderella Beauty Salon and the Adams Soda Shop, when the women talk about it, there is no disagreement in the abstract that any woman is justified in defending herself against an attacker any way she can, including a black girl supposedly incapable of being raped? "Even if a girl has loose morals," said one woman in a soft, ladylike fashion, "she should be able to pick the man she wants to be raped by."

Golden Frinks, 55, is an organizer for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in eastern North Carolina, a section of the state that is distinctly more conservative than the central piedmont section with its universities and urban centers. Frinks speaks proudly of his 197 arrests and 71 terms in jail since the early sixties. In the first days of last September, as he began to build the "Joan Little movement," as he calls it, he went from church to church in the black neighborhoods of Little Washington, arguing that "God has chosen this girl, with all her little shortcomings, to be the savior of black women who are incarcerated." His reception from the older black citizens was cool, but he is used to that. "They give me their children," he says. But even the children are harder to get for marches and demonstrations in the nineteen-

seventies. "Black Power" has been overshadowed by "Green Power," which Frinks regards as a conspiracy by the Good Neighbor Councils around the state to undercut protest. According to Frinks, the message of the councils has been: "Stop demonstrating, stop rapping. With black power you raise that fist, open it up, and there's nothing inside. With green power, you open the fist, and you've got something."

Frinks and the S.C.L.C. hope to shift the emphasis back to the moral issue with an encampment in Little Washington through most of this month — another "Resurrection City," like the ones erected in Washington, D. C., in 1968 and in Miami during the Republican convention in 1972. The encampment, Frinks says, will cause "creative tension." He wants the town to "do penance," both for "the wrong that Mr. Alligood did" and for the historic treatment of black people in eastern North Carolina.

But the Joan Little movement has slipped away from his control. As the legal defense came together in the fall, the thrust of the case moved away from civil rights to women's rights—the issue of killing in self-defense. Frinks, who meanwhile has served part of a six-months sentence for demonstrating without a permit in 1971 (he was released last month) was embittered, and brought the tactical split into the open on March 14. Welcoming Dr. Ralph Abernathy, the head of the S.C.L.C., at a news conference at the Raleigh-Durham airport, Frinks suddenly charged that Joan Little was being held hostage by her lawyers, Karen Galloway and Jerry Paul, and that she was being drugged and encouraged to deny old friendships. A week later, claiming that Paul had gone back on an agreement to turn over to the civil-rights organizers 30 per cent of the money collected by the Southern Poverty Law Center for Joan's defense, Frinks joined Miss Little's mother in filing suit in Judge Larkins's court to block the defense team from using any of the funds. Whereupon Joan Little released a letter accusing Frinks of trying to sabotage the defense effort and using her mother for the purpose. Paul denies having made any fund-sharing agreement with Frinks, a decision he says would be up to the Joan Little Defense Fund, Inc., and



Mayor Roebuck: "We've had less trouble now than when we were totally segregated."

adds: "I feel bad about Golden. The man spent 17 years in civil rights work looking for a case that would propel him into national attention."

If Frinks thinks he has found his dream case, the feminist groups that have entered the controversy feel strongly about its importance to them. The issue of killing

in self-defense by a woman under sexual assault was posed in the trial of Inez Garcia, the 28-year-old California woman who was convicted last fall of killing one of her two assailants, but the defense of justifiable homicide in a state of shock and rage was undermined by Miss Garcia's foul-mouthed perfor-

mance on the stand and her playing to the feminist gallery, as well as by the fact that the killing took place 17 minutes after the alleged rape occurred. These handicaps, from the feminist standpoint, are not expected in Joan Little's trial. Such organizations as the Women's Legal Defense Fund, the Femi-

nist Alliance Against Rape, the Rape Crisis Center, the National Black Feminist Organization and the National Organization of Women have joined in a fund-raising effort.

Then there is the issue of prisoners' rights. Although it has been alleged that sexual assault on female prisoners is a common practice in small-town jails, it has not been proven, and many activists in the treatment-of-prisoners field doubt that this is really so. These groups are more concerned about the lack of rehabilitation programs for female inmates nationwide than about physical abuse. Cookie McGee, member of a North Carolina Commission on Sentencing, Criminal Punishment and Rehabilitation, hopes the Joan Little case will lead to an investigation, first, of the county jails, and, later, of the entire North Carolina correctional system.

Joan Little is a spare 110 pounds. She has large, prominent eyes and a round face and alternates her hair style between Afro and straightened. After a group of University of North Carolina

professors raised the \$115,000 and she was released on bond Feb. 26, she attended several "Meet Joan Little" fetes, appearing frightened and intimidated. "I write better than I speak," she told a rally at Chapel Hill. But she can be forthright in private. "I was in a position where I had to protect my own interests—which is me," she said in a recent interview, speaking of the night of Aug. 27. "I've always been a determined person."

There is no air of contrivance or cunning about her, nor is there any hate or bitterness on the surface. She is an uncomplicated person, and Jerry Paul, himself a native of Little Washington, feels this will be much to her advantage in court. Lately, she has been spending a good deal of time in Washington, D.C., away from the pressure, protected by a private guard and under constant observation by her doctors for acute thyroid problems. The trial has been scheduled for April 15, but with the divisions in the defense camp and her doctors' recommendation that she be given at least two months' more

rest, the opening date may be postponed.

The 31-year-old Beaufort County prosecutor, William Griffin, not only has no qualms about the death penalty but sees it in a religious light. "I believe it [capital punishment] should be retained, not as a deterrent but as punishment," he wrote last year in a letter to The Washington Daily News. "Punishment is a basic principle of our system, from which we have strayed. . . . The Bible not only requires punishment for crimes, it demands it. . . ." Several years ago, he prosecuted a 27-year-old white man of questionable mental competence on a charge of first-degree rape, and the man was convicted and sits on death row.

With a degree of self-satisfaction, Griffin reminds an interviewer that Little Washington is a "small place," where it is quite easy to find out a great deal about any defendant. The implication is clear: The prosecution will try to argue that Joan Little is basically a bad person, perhaps even a prostitute; it will probably contend that she enticed Alligood into the cell with a premeditated plan of murder and escape. If the jury is persuaded, but does not want to make her North Carolina's 70th inmate on death row (the state's death-row population comprises about 40 per cent of the number for the whole nation) it could reduce the charge from first-degree to second-degree murder, which in North Carolina carries a sentence of anywhere from two years to life.

Everywhere in the white community one is assured that Joan Little can get a fair trial here. David Milligan, the editor, says, "A crime has occurred. Who committed it, we don't know. But we're going to have due process, and we're going to let justice

reign." But State Senator William Smith, himself an eastern North Carolinian, says that if the jury to be chosen is representative of most Beaufort County juries, it will be a primarily white panel of "good folks, basically ignorant, fearful, extremely subject to community pressure, aware of what the neighbors will say, and afraid of being called a 'nigger lover.'"

The defense, at the cost of \$30,000, is conducting a survey aimed at rating the "level of prejudice" of potential veniremen and at showing that there is intentional discrimination against blacks, women and young people in selecting juries in the 23 eastern counties. The defense has already asked for a change of venue.

Nothing would please this county more. Said former Sheriff Jack D. Harris, who hired Alligood, "I wish they would move it someplace, anyplace. They can move it to Egypt or Africa, I don't care. Just pray to Almighty God, I wish they'd move it out of here."

As one who experienced the transition from segregated to integrated public accommodations in Chapel Hill, N. C., in the early nineteen-sixties, I went to Washington, N. C., looking for the New South in the small town. I wanted to see the effect of the civil-rights revolution in paradigm. I looked for evidence that this startling case would break the old patterns, confuse the old categories.

Some of the old meanness is gone, to be sure, and the potential for overt racial violence is less. But when the issue is forced, the people here react in traditional ways. Race still predominates in eastern North Carolina. This is the Old South. ■



The county courthouse in Washington, N. C.