

## Wilmington's Underworld Lies Quiet During "Big Court"

BY BOB KLINE  
Staff Writer

Wilmington's underworld was laying low last week. Also last week, Judge Leo Carr was handing down prison sentences and heavy fines to convicted violators of North Carolina law.

The inactivity of the criminals and the activity of Superior court was not a coincidence.

For it is a well known fact among both legal and criminal circles that while the "big court" is in session, infractions of the law drop to a minimum. This situation was reflected last week in the city police department, the sheriff's office and by the ABC police.

On the city police department's daily summary, where all reported violations of the law are recorded along with automobile accidents and other mishaps, the presence of the Superior court could be read between the lines last week.

In contrast to the usual daily summary, last week's included mostly auto accidents, minor affairs, lost billfolds and a few thefts. The absence of major crime was noticeably absent.

And, except for the reported theft of \$70 from the Dixie Pig on the Carolina Beach road the previous week, Sheriff Porter Davis was free of crime in his county, he said. That he chose last Oct. 23 to make a raid on one of the local "fortune tellers" cannot be construed to mean that the "mediums" were running rampant last week only.

Rather, the raid can be identified with the expose of the "mediums" by the Wilmington News on the same day that one of them was arrested for doing business without a license.

The ABC police had a quiet week too. The brewers of illegal booze were staying clear of the law, for awhile, at least.

The "little court" or Recorder's court is the most accurate barometer of crime. Apprehended law-breakers are brought here immediately after arrest for trial or for a preliminary hearing before they are sent to Superior court.

County Solicitor Jimmy King and Judge H. Winfield Smith are the first to realize that their business is slow when they are rivaled by Superior court. There are two reasons for the definite corralary between the activities of the "big" and "little" courts.

Reason No. 1 is the group of criminal lawyers. When Superior court is in session, their time there is demanded first, in favor of Recorder's court. The Superior court cases are usually more important than those in Recorder's court, and the lawyers receive larger fees for their legal counsel there.

So when a lawyer has several cases to argue in Recorder's court at the same time Superior court is in session, he has the cases in the lower court continued when possible, until the upper court is adjourned. Naturally this practice alone tends to slow down Recorder's court activity when judge is hearing Superior court cases.

But the more interesting and probably more important reason why Recorder's court will see but a relatively few cases during the next two weeks, is the criminals themselves.

While the "big" court is going on, the potential law-breakers lay low. The theory, which is generally accepted in court circles, is that the would-be criminals are frightened by the presence of the Superior court judge (Leo Carr can take the credit for this during the October session) and fear that if they pull off a hold-up or a shooting they will be speedily brought to justice while the higher court is still in session.

The theory continues that persons who may be contemplating committing crimes read of the prison sentences received by apprehended criminals, and realize that they too may receive the same punishment. This brings some insight on what goes on in a truly criminal mind.

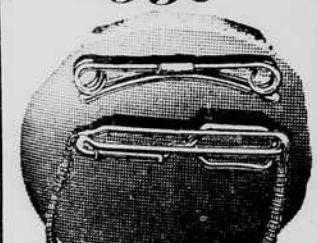
If a criminal abstains from committing a crime while Superior court is dealing with other criminals, because he fears he too will be punished, then that criminal must be admitting to himself when he

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robs, steals or murders that he probably will be caught. If he didn't think he would be arrested, it would make no difference to him whether Recorder's court or Supreme court were in session.

That the veteran criminals do feel they will be brought to justice for their transgressions is proven not only by the fact that they are "good" when a Superior court judge is sentencing other criminals. The foolhardy attitude of the younger violators proves it too.

"Tough" teen-agers invariably think they won't be caught when they violate the law. Therefore the presence of Superior court means nothing to them. Two 15-year-old and two 16-year-old Wilmington boys, who were arrested a week ago, evidently had this philosophy.

They continued their nighttime misdemeanors and felonies, according to city detectives, until they were arrested, just four days before the criminals term of Superior court was to open.

They were too smart to be caught, and so why should they worry about the dumb ones who were to get their justice in court?

While Judge Carr is handing down sentences during the next week, it will be interesting to observe if the downward trend of crime that traditionally accompanies the "big court" will continue.

### INQUEST MONDAY IN CRASH DEATH

### Wilmington Youth Died At Hospital After Highway Collision

A coroner's inquest will be held tomorrow night to investigate the death of a 20-year-old Wilmington boy who was killed in an auto-truck crash on the Jacksonville highway, six miles north of Wilmington. Three Greensboro men were being held in jail pending the inquest.

Joseph A. Matthis, Jr., a sophomore at Davidson college was killed in the crash, and three of his companions were injured.

The injured were: Bobby James, 519 S. Sixth street; Carl Sexton, 606 S. Fourth street; Harold Dixon, 302 Castle street.

All three youths, who were admitted to the James Walker Memorial hospital, received serious injuries of the face and head, hospital officials reported.

Held in jail are Please Alexander, Negro, alleged driver of the truck, William H. Burkett, Negro, and George R. Kidd. The latter two were held as material witnesses.

The accident was reported to have taken place when the youths' car was in collision with the parked roofing company truck, according to investigating officers.

Coroner Gordon Doran said the inquest would be held in the grand jury room at the courthouse at 7:30 o'clock.

Funeral services for Matthis, a Navy veteran, were to be held today at 2:30 p. m. from the Matthis home at 318 Church street. The Rev. Dr. William Crowe was to officiate and the Rev. M. C. MacQueen was to officiate. Interment was to follow in the Clinton cemetery.

Active pallbearers were to be Donald Edwards, Dick Nelson, F. Louis Collier, Bobby Maynor, John Crowley and James Croom.

Surviving him were his mother and father, Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Matthis, Sr.

### Hundred And Ten New State Highway Patrol Men Sworn In

RALEIGH, Nov. 1.—(P)—One hundred and ten new state highway patrolmen were sworn in today in the hall of the house by Associated Justice M. V. Barnhill of the State Supreme court. The new men bring the patrol up to its authorized strength of 423 officers and men.

Thirty-one of the new men were assigned to Troop A, commanded by Capt. Lester Jones, with headquarters in Greenville; 27 to Troop B, commanded by Capt. J. R. Smith, with headquarters in Fayetteville; 25 to Troop C, commanded by Capt. D. T. Lambert, with headquarters in Greensboro; and 27 to Troop D, commanded by Capt. W. B. Lentz, in Asheville.

### UN Security Council Calls For Indo Peace

NEW YORK, Nov. 1.—(P)—The security council today called upon the governments of The Netherlands and Indonesia to enter into negotiations looking toward ending hostilities on Java and in effect issued a third cease-fire order to the two countries.

The vote was 7 to 1 with three absences. Russia opposed the resolution but withheld its right to veto and abstained along with Syria and Colombia. Poland voted no.

**BARRIOS NAMED**  
CARACAS, Venezuela, Nov. 1.—(P)—Gonzalo Barrios, member of the revolutionary Junta and governor of the federal district, was named foreign minister today.

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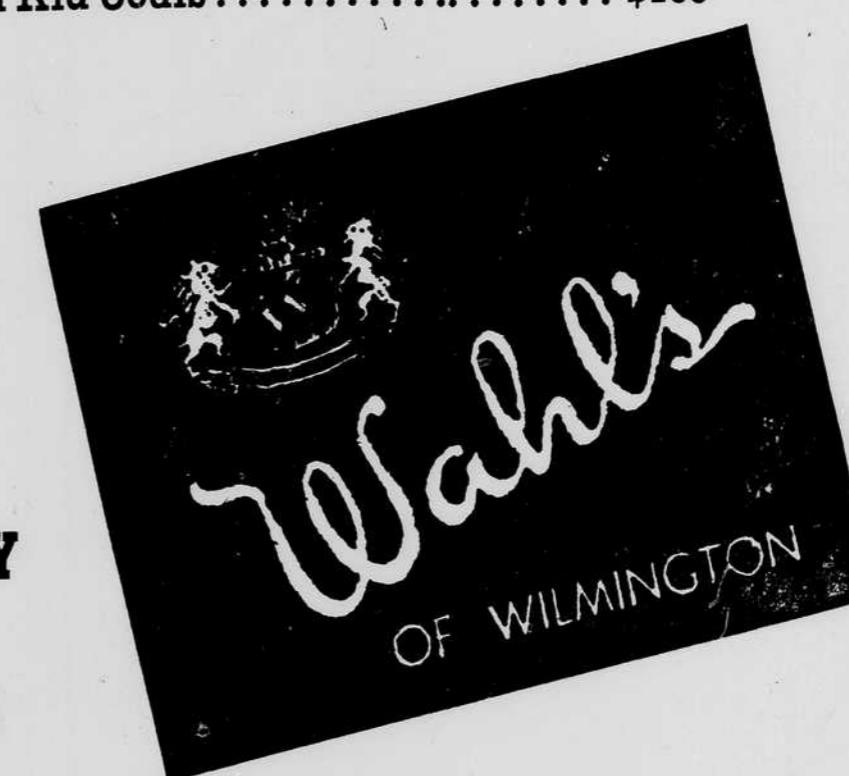
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