

Text of Statement by Prison Board Trustees

Here is the text of an open letter from the Indiana State Prison Board to Supreme Court Judge Frank, Gilkinson concerning the Ott Workman case:

Mar. 3, 1949.
Honorable Frank Gilkinson
Supreme Court of the State of Indiana
Indianapolis, Ind.

Dear Judge Gilkinson:
In the Tuesday, Feb. 15, 1949, issue of the Indianapolis Times in the article, "The Ott Workman Story," Robert Bloem, the writer of the article, quotes you as follows: "Yet Supreme Court Judge Frank Gilkinson, like Mr. Workman, a native of Martin County, insists that fabulous sums of money were paid. Judge Gilkinson last week told two Times reporters that the money was paid, that he knew who received it, but did not feel it his responsibility to name the person at this time."

"He expressed the belief that if 'certain persons' in the state prison administration were removed from their positions, 'Ott Workman, himself, would tell the story in his own good time.'"

In the fifth and final article of "The Ott Workman Story" in the Sunday, Feb. 20, 1949, issue of the Indianapolis Times, Mr. Bloem again quotes you as follows: "Supreme Court Judge Frank Gilkinson still believes that politicians were paid upward of \$50,000 to parole Ott Workman of Logansport from state prison in 1945."

"In a recent interview, Judge Gilkinson told Times reporters he was certain the money was paid before Workman was released. He said he knew who got the money, but declined to reveal names on grounds that it was not his responsibility."

"The judge said he still believed the story would be told sooner or later by Ott Workman, himself. Workman has remained silent in Judge Gilkinson's opinion, 'because certain persons within the prison administration have told him to keep still.' These persons, the judge said, apparently have convinced the controversial convict that they still can deliver the parole."

"Judge Gilkinson expressed a conviction that the sudden decision to spring the trap on Mr. Greenwald was because he didn't split the \$20,000 with anybody."

STATEMENTS NOT DENIED

If the above statements were made by you, as we most sincerely believe they were, as you have not denied making them, it is quite evident that your long legal training and experience has been most cleverly applied in wording your statements so as to avoid the possibility of prosecution for libel. However, this has not prevented your double-talk and implications from casting a shadow of distrust, fraud and doubt upon each and every one

of the personnel connected with the administration of the Indiana State Prison. It is high time that you step from behind the iron curtain of mystery, implications and vindictiveness and clearly, fearlessly and honestly acquaint the citizens of Indiana with the facts if you have them.

We believe there are a few items of interest in connection with the Ott Workman case, and your interest in it; which the public would be interested in. During the latter part of June, 1947, when the board of Trustees of the Indiana State Prison uncovered the fact that Mr. Workman had paid Frank Greenwald, public defender, \$20,000 as attorney fees, they issued an order prohibiting him from further entrance into the prison. Copies of this order were forwarded to the Governor, the Chief Justice of the Indiana Supreme Court and the Attorney General.

On July 1, 1947 when the members of the Clemency Commission were requested to appear before the members of the Indiana Supreme Court of the State of Indiana for questioning in the Workman commutation, you took over the role of chief inquisitor at this hearing. You went so far as to threaten the Secretary of the Board of Trustees of the Indiana State Prison, who is also a member of the Clemency Commission, with contempt for daring to bar Mr. Greenwald, an employee of the Supreme Court, from entrance to the prison. You further accused that member of the Board of Trustees, and the president of the said board, with releasing to the press the contents of the order prohibiting Mr. Greenwald from entering the prison.

Now, Judge Gilkinson, will you state publicly, that you, yourself, did not release this information to a member of the Indianapolis press prior to 10:00 a. m. on July 1, 1947? Furthermore, kindly state publicly your representatives of the Indianapolis press were not permitted to attend this meeting at which the members of the Clemency Commission, Mr. Frank Greenwald and all members of the Supreme Court with the exception of one were present.

CRIMINAL RECORDS LISTED

For your information we have listed the criminal records of Ott Workman in connection with the Ott Workman case.

1937: April 3: Indiana State Prison: Michigan City, as Geoffrey Brothers No. 18,693, for Inflicting Injury While Engaged in Attempted Robbery. Life. Sentenced from Dubois County Circuit Court, 4-2-37. Granted Governor's Parole, 9-27-47. Executive

Order No. 19,195. Released on parole, 10-21-47.

Ott Workman

1939: July 1: Indiana State Prison: Michigan City, as Ott Workman No. 19,549, for Attempted Robbery; the Use of Dangerous Weapons; and Inflicting Physical Injury. Life. Sentenced from DeBois County Circuit Court, 6-30-38. Released on parole, 9-10-45. Returned for parole violation, 10-4-45. Governor's parole revoked, 10-5-45, by Executive Order No. 18,337.

Frank Souderike

1923: April 19: Indiana State Farm: No. 14,621, for Contributing to Delinquency; 6 months and \$100.00 fine and costs. (Fine and costs paid.) Escaped, recaptured, returned to Indiana State Farm; discharged Mar. 8, 1930.

1932: April 11: Indiana State Prison: Michigan City, as No. 15,374, for Second-Degree Burglary; 3 to 10 years. Paroled by Governor, 5-12-33. Discharged while on parole, 9-7-38.

1937: Feb. 5: Indiana State Prison: Michigan City, as Frank Souderike No. 18,586, for Inflicting Physical Injury with a Firearm While Attempting to Commit a Robbery; Life: Sentenced from Dubois County Circuit Court, 1-15-37.

Mr. Brothers was released on parole on Oct. 21, 1947. You did not recommend or oppose his parole. Mr. Workman was paroled on Sept. 10, 1945, and his parole was revoked on October 6, 1945. His parole was vigorously opposed by you. On the last occasion when Mr. Souderike's petition for clemency was considered by the Clemency Commission and ultimately rejected, you recommended his parole by a letter. In the Sunday, Feb. 29, 1949, issue of the Indianapolis Times, Mr. Bloem quotes you as follows: "Judge Gilkinson today is frank to say that he believes Ott Workman would be a 'dangerous' parole risk."

ASKS PUBLIC STATEMENT

According to your opinion, Ott Workman, who had no previous record, is a dangerous man, but Frank Souderike, the trigger man who wounded Mr. Basch and who previously had been convicted of contributing to the delinquency of a minor and of burglary, should be granted a parole. Is this consistent or is this evidence of your ulterior purposes.

Will you kindly state publicly whether you at any time contributed financially, morally, or in any other manner whatsoever to the hiring of any attorney or any other person or persons to assist in the prosecution of Mr. Workman at the time of his trial. Also briefly inform the public exactly why you were interested in his conviction.

According to Mr. Bloem's article you have stated that an award of \$50,000 was paid to politicians for the Workman parole; that you know who received it but do not feel it is your responsibility to name the persons at this time. We would like to remind you that you were elected to the Supreme Court of the State of Indiana, not alone by the citizens of Martin County, but by the citizens of the State of Indiana at large; that when you accepted this office and took the oath of office you solemnly pledged to uphold the law and the constitution of the State of Indiana.

Have you forgotten that oath? Not only as a citizen but as a public officer holding a most sacred position of trust and impartiality you are morally bound and obligated to release any and all information which you state you have to the proper officials of this State so that the guilty person or persons may be properly punished. How can you so nonchalantly state that it is not your responsibility to reveal the names of those persons?

EVIDENCE DEMANDED

If you have in your possession any pertinent information and can submit substantial evidence that public officials accepted a bribe in the amount you state, we demand that you submit this evidence to the Indiana State Police and the prosecutor's office

of Marion County with the request that such evidence be placed before a grand jury.

Again referring to Mr. Bloem's article of February 15, 1949, in which he quotes you as follows: "He expressed the belief that if 'certain persons' in the state prison administration were removed from their positions, 'Ott Workman, himself, would tell the story in his own good time.'"

In this statement through implications, you have attacked the character and reputations of every person connected with the State Prison. We demand that you immediately and specifically name who of the following named persons you seek to damage and that you submit supporting evidence if any, to justify your acts.

Carter H. Manny, President, Board of Trustees.

Edwin R. Thomas, Vice President, Board of Trustees.

George Cooper, Treasurer, Board of Trustees.

Leo T. Mulva, Secretary, Board of Trustees.

Ralph Howard, Warden.

L. C. Schmuhl, Deputy Warden.

Russell Blands, Chief Clerk.

Bert Rudical, Parole Officer.

You have been very free in the criticism of the management of the Indiana State Prison. You have acted the part of judge, prosecutor and jury in the Ott Workman case. By intimidation, without producing any substantial evidence, thus far, you have besmirched the character and reputations of respected public officials. Your actions have contributed considerably in breaking down the morale of those officials as well as that of the inmate population. We believe that long before this you should have been held responsible for the statements you have made and we now demand a public showdown from you.

If you are unable to substantiate by unimpeachable evidence, all of the statements quoted by Mr. Bloem as having been made by you, then you should resign from the Supreme Court of the State of Indiana, because, most certainly, you would not be contributing much toward the dignity and confidence of that branch of state government.

Carter H. Manny, President.

Edwin R. Thomas, Vice-President.

George Cooper, Treasurer.

Leo T. Mulva, Secretary.

Make Honor Roll

Three Indianapolis students, Carolyn Palmer, 3711 N. Capitol Ave., senior; Morris Mills, R. R. 7, sophomore, and Esther Little, R. R. 3, freshman, are listed on the first semester honor roll of Earlham College, Richmond.

Dr. David Tavel

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Girl Clerk Accused as Spy Seized With Russ on Bus

NEW YORK, Mar. 5 (UP)—A clandestine meeting on a Third Ave. bus led to the arrest today of a baby-faced government girl and a Russian United Nations employee on a charge of spying for the Soviet Union.

Judith Coplon, 27, saucy, scarcely five feet tall and brilliant, was arraigned before Federal Judge Simon Rifkind with Valentine Gubitchev, 32, a phlegmatic Russian engineer, after Federal Bureau of Investigation agents had trailed her here from Washington on one of her regular week-end trips which she said were for the purpose of visiting her sick parents.

The alleged spies, she a highly regarded Department of Justice employee and he a Russian who had planned to go back to Moscow while the bus poked along under the Third Avenue elevated between 14th and 15th Streets. They had spent two hours furiously maneuvering to shake off detectives.

Envoy Protests
Miss Coplon had in her purse a flat package containing type-written summaries of information abstracted from confidential Department of Justice documents which were alleged to involve security data and restricted information.

Soviet Ambassador Alexander S. Panyushkin immediately called at the State Department in Washington and demanded that the United States order the release of Mr. Gubitchev.

No one would reveal Miss Coplon's title, wages or duties at the Department of Justice, nor the contents of the papers she allegedly stole.

It was indicated, however, that it was unlikely that the information she gave Mr. Gubitchev on

the bus was very important, because the FBI had watched her for some time before she was arrested.

Mr. Gubitchev, who is married and has a 13-year-old daughter, sat stoically throughout the whole proceeding and talked to no one but the judge. Miss Coplon held one brief, animated conversation with her brother, Bertram, who held her hand and appeared to be consoling her.

Judge Rifkind set bail for Mr. Gubitchev at \$100,000, an unusually high figure, and the square-jawed Russian protested vehemently. Miss Coplon's bail was set at \$20,000.

The case, which the judge said involved "conspiracy with an agent of a foreign government, involving defense materials," was first revealed in Washington when Attorney General Tom C. Clark, Miss Coplon's boss, announced their arrests.

The Justice Department said that as an analyst she was just a minor employee, but she was important enough to have her own office, with her name on the door, in the departmental section where registrations of foreign agents are kept.

Miss Coplon is the daughter of Samuel N. Coplon, a retired toy maker who for 25 years was known as the "Santa Claus of the Adirondacks" because of his annual distribution of toys to the poor around Troy, N. Y.

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