

1-19-1977

**Report from Prosecutor's Office re: Interview with Captain John  
McDonald, Leesburg State Prison**

Jeffrey E. Fogel

Jeffrey E. Fogel  
108 Washington Street  
Newark, New Jersey 07050  
(201) 622-2353  
Attorney at Law

January 19, 1977

Tom Carn  
Passaic County Probation Department  
Passaic County Court House  
Paterson, New Jersey 07505

Re: State v. John Artis

Dear Mr. Carn:

In furtherance of our phone conversation, enclosed please find a copy of a report from the prosecutor's office regarding interview with Captain McDonald of Leesburg State Prison indicating that John was responsible for rescuing hostages in 1971 riots at Rahway.

If I can be of any further assistance please contact me.

Very truly yours

  
JEFFREY E. FOGEL

JEF:ab  
encl.

10/19/76

Capt John Mc Donald 12:34 PM 10/6/76

Claims Ruben ringleader in 1962 - 1963 riots. On farm in firehouse; not recall date except cold. Was commander and John the institutional firechief. John on duty. Had walked in. Offered him coffee-early morning hours. Small talk. John had been a good convict, good athlete. Knows him from Rahway. John responsible for rescuing hostages in 1971 riots in Rahway. John responsible for rescuing 6 cops. Ruben a ringleader.

Asked how got mixed up in the murder, & Artis said had date with his chick that night, if he would have gone on that date, would not be here talking. Late 1973 or early 1974.

Parole officer went & asked Artis about it. After bullshit small talk, Asked how got mixed up in bullshit murder or thing like this.

Artis never talked to him about it again. Capt Mc Donald felt talking about his involvement. Not recall parole officer's name.

With a parole dept. Thinks got letter from him arranging a meeting. 609-785-0040. Not recall his mentioning Ruben Carter. Said had sparred with Carter.

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Passaic County Probation Department

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PASSAIC COUNTY PROBATION DEPT.  
129 MARKET STREET  
PATERSON, NEW JERSEY 07505

Raymond A. Zardetto

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY 07505

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX  
RAYMOND A. ZARDETTO  
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER

January 19, 1977

PHONE  
LAMBERT 5-5000

Captain John W. Mc Donald  
New Jersey State Prison  
Leesburg, New Jersey 08327

Re: JOHN ARTIS

Dear Captain Mc Donald:

The above captioned individual will be sentenced on January 27, 1977, before the Honorable Bruno Leopizzi, Judge, Passaic County Court on three counts of first degree murder.

Mr. Artis advised the undersigned that while an inmate at Rahway State Prison, he helped ~~save~~ the lives of several guards during the riots.

However, the classification material does not contain any information to verify this statement. Mr. Artis's attorney advised that you would be able to give information as to the extent of his help during the riots.

As per our telephone conversation of January 19, 1977, please send a letter to the undersigned, Thomas Carn, Probation Officer, 129 Market Street, 5th floor, Paterson, New Jersey, 07505, so that it can be attached to the pre-sentence report.

Very truly yours,

JOSEPH DUFFY,  
Principal Probation Officer II

*Thomas Carn*  
By: THOMAS CARN,  
Probation Officer

TC:cap  
Dear Mr. Carn:

With regard to the above; Please be advised that John was one of a group of inmates that rescued the hostages that were taken during the riot at Rahway State Prison on Nov. 24-25 1971. My investigation indicated conclusively that John Artis played an important role in bringing the hostages out of the distress area where we could effectively remove them from further harm.

It must be understood that this deed had placed John in jeopardy. However we have managed to keep the actual rescue operation confidential, to a large degree. John and several other inmates are still in the system and any notoriety with regard to this matter could open up some old wounds. As a matter of fact, Thomas Wooten the major ringleader of that riot, and the taking of the hostages is here at Leesburg.

1/23/77

*John W. McDonald*  
State Prison - Leesburg

John W. McDonald, Captain

*Pl. Call John to advise me a 13 d stamp*



PASSAIC COUNTY PROBATION DEPARTMENT  
Raymond A. Zardetto, Chief Probation Officer

TO: Honorable Bruno Leopizzi, Passaic County Court  
FROM: Thomas Carn, Probation Officer  
RE: JOHN ARTIS  
DATE: January 25, 1977

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MEMORANDUM

The pre-sentence report prepared by the undersigned on John Artis reflects a statement on page 3A that states the defendant saved the lives of the guards during the Rahway Riots. However, this information could not be verified.

On January 18, 1977, Mr. Jeffrey E. Fogel, attorney for John Artis, phoned the undersigned. He advised that he had a copy of a report from the Prosecutor's Office regarding an interview with Captain Mc Donald of Leesburg State Prison indicating that John Artis was responsible for rescuing hostages in the 1971 riots at Rahway.

The undersigned then contacted Captain Mc Donald on January 19, 1977. He advised the matter was too confidential to discuss on the phone and a letter should be sent to him requesting the information. A letter was prepared and sent on January 19, 1977.

On January 25, 1977, Captain Mc Donald replied that John Artis was one of a group of inmates that rescued the hostages that were taken during the riot at Rahway State Prison on November 24-25, 1971. Furthermore, John Artis played an important role in bringing the hostages out of the distress area where they were effectively removed from further harm.

Captain Mc Donald advised that this deed placed John Artis in jeopardy. However, we have managed to keep the actual rescue operation confidential to a large degree.

JOHN ARTIS

January 25, 1977

John Artis and several other inmates are still in the system and any notariety with regard to this matter could open up some old wounds. As a matter of fact, Thomas Wooten, the major ringleader of that riot and the taking of the hostages is at Leesburg.

Attached are copies of the information cited in this report.

Respectfully submitted,

THOMAS CARN,  
Probation Officer

cc: Mr. Lewis Steel, Attorney  
Prosecutor's Office

TC:cap