Gastonia Gang Members Target Fallston Business for Broad Daylight Armed Robbery !!!– Crime Wave Going on in Cleveland County!!!– Report and analysis by Robert A. Williams

I was at home this past Tuesday when I heard two blasts at around 1:20 in the afternoon. Since it was a bright sunshiny day and some of the neighbors and myself occasionally set off some firecrackers or acetylene balloons, I didn't think much about it as I finished up my lunch. Little did I know at that time what was really going on. But I quickly found out.

At that time of the day and week every business in Fallston on Highway 18, from the bank down to the jewelry store, was open for business. Except for Barry "Horty" McKee's place. It just so happened that Horty had closed up for a bit to go check on his sister at the Hospital. Horty has his produce, etc. on the front porch of a house with scales and an honor system arrangement for after hours sales. Fallston usually doesn't have much crime and everybody watches out for one another. They have to.

But on this day and at the time noted, two black Gastonia gang members, one 19 and the other 20, showed up with 12 gauge shotguns and bad criminal intentions. Note that the gang from Gastonia probably didn't walk to Fallston. A "wheel man" was likely in on the crime to be.

The two young black men, dressed in black and wearing black

ski masks found Horty's front door locked and cut loose with two shotgun blasts that shattered the glass door and went inside. A citizen happened by and saw it all. The citizen's identity is withheld because these are gang members. The citizen traveled just a bit more North on Highway 18 and recognized a Sheriff's Department officer at the ATM machine. The Officer, name also withheld, immediately made his way to Horty's place and observed the criminals inside.

The Officer called for backup and covered the front door. The back door had been previously boarded up. The crooks were trapped. Later investigation indicated the crooks had tried very hard to get out the back door but didn't have time.

Backup quickly arrived, including a K-9 Officer. The Deputies shouted for the crooks to come out and one of them surrendered quickly. The other crook was holding out. That is holding out until the K-9 Officer was sic'ed on him. The K-9 Officer quickly changed the holdout crook's mind and he too became cooperative. The two crooks were carted off to jail and are being held without bond. The wheel man got away.

About all the crooks accomplished was to try to hide their shotguns in Horty's office area. Both, though young, were multiple felons on parole, under house arrest and supposed to be wearing ankle monitors. One crook still has his ankle monitor on his ankle. They know the drill and were trying to avoid charges of possession of a firearm by a felon, which is a separate crime.

The Shelby Star article about this incident gives a pretty good account of the crooks criminal record, so I won't repeat all of that. The Star didn't say much about the robbery details as I have described above for your information. Perhaps the Star Editor edited the details out of their article for some reason.

But the Star, this time, did hit upon a major problem—that the

local criminal justice system does not work. The Star quoted Cleveland County Sheriff Alan Norman stating that very thing. But lots more was left out of the Star article that I will speak about in this article.

First of all, these two young gang members might have Gastonia addresses, but their felony criminal activity spanned Gaston AND Cleveland Counties, Maybe more. Cleveland County records showed felony convictions too. Followed by light sentences that resulted in revolving doors at the jailhouse and prison. Both these gang members were three time losers who could have been put away for ten years on Habitual Felony laws. But Nooo. Cleveland County justice was just as lenient as Gaston County justice. Letting hardened and armed criminals loose on Fallston.

I would suggest that for every felony conviction these gang members had, they probably had three to five charges that were consolidated or plea bargained down to nothing. Not counting the crimes they committed but were never caught. These gang members never learned that crime does not pay.

I would also suggest that these two black gang members didn’t just turn criminal over night. They were most likely juvenile delinquents when in school and put into programs like Communities-In-Schools, Turning Point Academy, Math Academy or some other school related program that cost lots of tax money and produces few results. Former Cleveland County Communities-In-Schools Mentor Coordinator and presently a Cleveland County School Board Member Donnie Thurman, Jr. once posted on his Facebook page that young men such as these were “kings” and basically advocated a “coming together” that seems to advocate joining groups to carry on the fight. Thurman should have realized that many in such groups could be easily radicalized into criminal gangs. Scroll on back to my September 28, 2018 article for the full text of Thurman’s post. Also note that the shooting death of the 23 year old mother at a Kingstown party attended by over 100 people has yet to be solved. 100

people bound by a “Code of Silence” that has been enforced by what??? Local Gangs??? Go back to my October 24, 2016 article for more on the death of the 23 year old mother.

Even worse than that, a convicted First Degree murderer with a life sentence is walking the streets of Cleveland County. Margaret Heller was convicted of the premeditated murder of her boyfriend and given a life sentence. Heller’s lawyer, Paige Morgan, had not used the abuse excuse in Heller’s defense and after Heller had served about seven years in prison a liberal Superior Court judge concluded that Heller’s attorney should have brought up Heller’s contention of abuse in the trial and ruled the case would have to be re-tried. Only thing was, the Cleveland County District Attorney’s Office under DA Mike Miller had lost all the evidence so DA Miller dismissed the case.

Miller’s DA Office dismisses lots of cases.

The day before the attempted robbery in Fallston the DA’s Office dismisses an open and shut felony case of possession of stolen property. Adam Gettys of Polkville, with a court record as long as your arm, had gone to a local convenience store and made purchases with antique silver coins at face value. Another customer soon after made a purchase at the same store. When he paid for his purchase and the clerk opened the cash register, the customer observed the antique coins and recognized them as coins from his deceased wife’s lifelong coin collection that had recently been stolen. The customer purchase his coins back from the convenience store and asked the clerk if she knew who had originally brought the coins to the store. Adam Gettys was identified as the person who brought those coins in the register, and other coins that Gettys wanted to sale to the store, but the clerk, by then, believed them to be stolen and declined to cash in the other coins. The customer took the coins home, examined them more closely and found identifying marks on the coins from the store that his deceased wife had made on her coins that were

the same as were on other coins that were in another place in the house and had not been stolen.

The customer called the Sheriff's Office and a deputy pressed charges against Gettys that, based on the face value of the coins, were determined to be a misdemeanor. This started the same old routine down at the courthouse where the theft victim has to go to court time after time and nothing is done. In this case, the deputy got into some sort of trouble and was fired by the Sheriff. The DA dismissed all the fired deputies cases. The victim complained to the Sheriff and DA's Offices and a new investigator was assigned. The criminal case against Adam Gettys was re-filed, except this time for a felony because by this time the true value of the coins had been determined.

When the case came up for trial, the store clerk who had accepted the coins and who had positively identified Adam Gettys as the person who had brought the coins to the store was in court ready to testify. The victim who could identify the coins as having come from his deceased wife's coin collection that had been stolen was in court ready to testify. Guess what? The DA dismissed the charges. Not enough evidence the DA said. How much more evidence do you need? Or could you have? No amount of evidence was apparently enough for the DA. Besides, deciding whether there was enough evidence to convict is the duty of the Judge and Jury, Not the DA. So Adam Gettys walked out the door-ready to steal again. Maybe steal from you and maybe steal from me.

Stealing from me. Oh yes, I have been a victim of a larceny by Wesley Austin. Austin was in jail due to another felony theft from his place of work. While in jail Austin confessed to the midnight larceny of my property at my house. In Court Austin plead guilty and was sentenced to probation and to pay restitution. Wesley Austin decided that going to jail for a very short time was easier than probation and paying me back for the stuff he stole. So, he went to jail and also to prison

for a short period of time and is now back on the street. As for me, the justice I got was ZERO. Just about like every other victim described in this article.

And there is more.

Today the Star reports two young black men from Kings Mountain were arrested on 48 counts of misdemeanor and felony B&E, larceny, etc. KM Police suspect others were involved. More failures of our school programs such as Communities-In-Schools. More failures of the justice system's probation. One of these two was out of jail on a felony crime probation when he was arrested on these 48 charges. About all probation does is provide a criminal education so the crooks are harder to catch the next time.

Yesterday, the Star reported a young white man, who had previously killed his step father, was shot by the Shelby Police in the act of stealing a military HumVee. The Star also reported $7,000 worth of property was stolen from a residence in Polkville.

Then there is Jeramy Grayson from the upper end of the county. Another walking crime wave who, when he does get caught and convicted, the DA asks for probation again.

And, don't forget the white collar crimes like the fraudulent use of school credit cards that the DA also would not prosecute.

Cleveland County is awash in crime, gangs, and even the County Commissioners and School Board. who have probably stolen more tax money from citizens than all the B&E and larcenies combined. There are many people walking the streets in Cleveland County who have committed crimes ranging from murder down to fraudulent use of government credit cards who have no fear of punishment.

Statistics have shown that most crimes are committed by repeat

offenders. Especially violent crimes. It is pretty obvious that if an offender is caught and jailed, he (or she) will do less crime and Cleveland County would be a safer place for our citizens and their property.

Perhaps enough citizens will be stolen from that they finally decide to vote the DA, liberal judges, the Commissioners and the School Board out of office. I would say that is a very good idea. And 2017 is an Election Year.