Race and the North Carolina Criminal Justice System

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"The act of 1831 directs that when a free negro or free persons of color shall be convicted of an offense against the criminal law and sentenced to pay a fine, if it shall appear to the satisfaction of the court that he is unable to pay the fine imposed, the court shall direct the sheriff of the county to hire out the free negro or free person of color so convicted to any person who will pay the fine for his services... It further makes it the duty of the sheriff... publicly, at the door of the courthouse to hire out the convict."

State v. Manuel, 20 N.C. 144 at 147-48 (1838)

Excerpt from NC Black Codes

"If any person shall willfully bring into the State... any [writing], the evident tendency whereof is to cause slaves to become discontented with the bondage in which they are held by their masters and the laws regulating the same, and free negroes to be dissatisfied with their social condition and the denial to them of political privileges, and thereby to excite ... a disposition to make conspiracies, insurrections, or resistance against the peace and quiet of the public, such person so offending shall be deemed guilty of felony, and on conviction thereof shall, for the first offence, be imprisoned not less than one year, and be put in the pillory and whipped, at the discretion of the court, and for the second offence shall suffer death."

Lynching in NC



"Modern" Lynchings

1981 – Michael Donald lynched in Mobile, AL

- 1992 Carlos Stoner lynched in Winston-Salem, NC
- 1995 Jackie Burden and Michael James Iynched in Fayetteville, NC
- 1998 James Byrd, Jr. lynched in Jasper, TX

















Jim Crow in NC





Moore v. Dempsey

TO THE NEGROES OF PHILLIPS COUNTY Helena, Ark., Oct. 7, 1919

Elaine has been settled. Soldiers now here to preserve order will return to Little Rock within a short time. No innocent negro has been arrested, and those of you who are at nome and at work have no occasion to

worry. All you have to do is to remain at work just as if nothing had happened. Phillips County has always been a peaceful, lawabiding community, and normal conditions must be restored right away.

STOP TALKING! Stay at home—Go to work—Don't worry! 5. KITCHENS, Sheriff COMMITTEE Boward Berem J. C. Myore S. Straub E. H. Alfen T.W. Kerste D. A. Ketshun A. Amon Jurnan 4. D. Hoore J. G. Kright Jon. L. Hoore E.C. Hisnor



Jury Service





NC Interprets Batson

When an objection is made to the exercise of a peremptory challenge on the ground that the challenge is racially motivated, the trial judge must first determine whether the objecting party has made a prima facie case of discrimination. If the court determines he has done so, the proponent of the strike must come forward with a racially neutral explanation. The explanation may be implausible or even fantastic, but if it is racially neutral the opponent of the challenge has satisfied his requirement in this step in the process.

State v. Best, 342 N.C. 502, 511 (1996)



Numerini NOUSE 7. During the course of our discussions, Mr. Baynard also expressed views concerning racial matters. Mr. Baynard stated that "blacks do not care about living as much as whites do." Further, he stated that black men rape white women so that they can brag to their friends about having dome so, and that such probably was Mr. Rouse's motivation for attacking Ms. Broadway. In my presence Mr. Baynard used the word "niggers" to refer to members of the black race.



There is, of course, some risk of racial prejudice influencing a jury's decision in a criminal case. There are similar risks that other kinds of prejudice will influence other criminal trials. The question "is at what point that risk becomes constitutionally unacceptable..." McCleskey asks us to accept the likelihood allegedly shown by the [statistical] study as the constitutional measure of an unacceptable risk of racial prejudice influencing capital sentencing decisions. This we decline to do.

McCleskey's claim "taken to its logical conclusion, throws into serious question the principles that underlie our entire criminal justice system. [If McCleskey's claim were accepted] we could soon be faced with similar claims as to other types of penalty. Moreover, the claim that his sentence rests on . . . race easily could be extended to apply to claims based on . . . membership in other minority groups and even to gender.

McCleskey v. Kemp, 481 U.S. 279 (1987)

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McCleskey v. Kemp, 481 U.S. 279 (1987)

	Black Defendant & White	White Defendant & White Victim	Black Defendant & Black	White Defendant & Black
	Victim	white victim	Victim	Victim
Total Cases	51	165	581	24
Indicted as First Degree Murder	48	138	530	17
# of Death Sentences	15	11	15	0
% of Indicted Cases	31.2%	7.9%	2.7%	0%195









White Hands...





"You needed that job, and you were the best qualified, but they had to give it to a minority, because of a racial quota. Is that really fair? Harvey Gantt says it is. Gantt supports Ted Kennedy's racial quota law that makes the color of your skin more important than your qualifications. Your vote on this issue next Tuesday. For racial quotas, Harvey Gantt. Against racial quotas, Jesse Helms."

State v. Ivey, 360 N.C. 562 (2006)

- "Although neither party briefed this issue, there was discussion at oral argument concerning whether this traffic stop was a case of "driving while black."
- "From the record in the instant case, we cannot determine whether the stop of the defendant, a black male, was a selective enforcement of the law based upon a citizen's race."
- "[T]his Court will not tolerate discriminatory application of the law based upon a citizens race".



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