

Politician's promises are OK, court says

United Press International
WASHINGTON — Voters beware: the Supreme Court says when it comes to political promises, politicians can get away with just about anything.

In striking down a Kentucky law that sought to ban candidates from vowing to cut their salaries, the court ruled — in effect — politicians are free to pledge less taxes, more happiness, or any of countless other campaign promises.

Writing for the unanimous court, Justice William Brennan said:

"The free exchange of ideas provides special vitality to the process traditionally at the heart of American constitutional democracy — the political campaign."

He noted, however, states can prohibit candidates from "corrupting agreements and solicitations" — such as offering payments in return for votes.

But he added, "A candidate's promise to confer some ultimate benefit on the voter or member of the general public, does not lie beyond the pale of First Amendment protection."

The decision was a victory for Republican Carl Brown, who challenged a state appeals court ruling that had nullified an election in which he won a seat on

the Jefferson County (Louisville) Commission. Brown defeated Democrat Earl Hartlage in 1979.

"I thank God for this victory," Brown said at a news conference in Louisville. "We do have a viable First Amendment right and I'm delighted."

Brown currently is a candidate for the Republican congressional nomination in the district that includes Louisville and its suburbs.

The court battle started when Hartlage sued after losing the county commission race. He claimed Brown illegally pledged to serve for \$3,000 less than

annual salary.

Brown made the statement during a joint appearance with another GOP candidate for the commission, Dr. Bill Creech.

In response to Hartlage's suit, Brown stressed he and Creech retracted their promise 78 days before the election.

A key concern centered on a narrow distinction the law drew between what a candidate could and could not pledge to voters. Under the measure, a politician could promise to give back his salary to the public treasury if elected, but could not promise to refuse to accept it in the first place.

Federal prosecutors set to ask for John Hinckley trial date

United Press International
WASHINGTON — More than a year after the attempted assassination of President Reagan, the way finally has been cleared for the trial of his accused assailant, John W. Hinckley Jr.

Federal prosecutors Monday, after being defeated in their third bid to use certain evidence, announced they will ask U.S. District Judge Barrington Parker to immediately set a new trial date.

Three earlier court dates were postponed while lawyers fought over the admissibility of papers seized from Hinckley's cell without a warrant

and statements he made to interrogators after being denied an attorney.

The 11-member U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals refused a Justice Department request to review a ruling by a three-judge panel of the court that upheld Parker's initial ruling the evidence was inadmissible.

The Justice Department could have sought a Supreme Court appeal, but decided to go to trial without the evidence. Justice Department attorneys earlier said the evidence was crucial to combat Hinckley's planned plea of innocent by reason of insanity.

"Although we continue to believe the case presents important issues that have not been correctly resolved, we have concluded in the broader interest of justice there be no further delay of the trial," the department said.

Hinckley, 26, is charged with attempting to assassinate Reagan and assaulting with intent to kill White House Press Secretary James Brady, Secret Service Agent Timothy McCarthy and city policeman Thomas Delahanty.

The four were shot outside the Washington Hilton on March 30, 1981.

Hinckley, a college dropout and the son of a wealthy Col-

orado oilman, was arrested at the scene. He arrived in town the day before aboard a bus and was staying at a nearby hotel.

On the basis of an unmailed letter found in Hinckley's room after the shooting, authorities suspect he shot Reagan as part of a bizarre attempt to impress teenage actress Jodie Foster.

Hinckley has been held in solitary confinement since his arrest and is now at the Army stockade at Fort Meade, Md., 20 miles outside of Washington.

Twice during the past year he has tried to kill himself.

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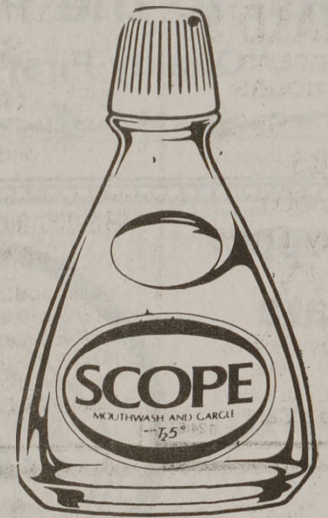
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Cadavers give data on decay

United Press International
KNOXVILLE, Tenn. — Dr. William Bass wishes devotees of the bizarre and the gruesome would stick to horror movies and quit hanging around his experiment.

The problem is, Bass' experiment is the most gruesome show in town. He's got five human bodies rotting in a fenced-in area behind University Hospital, trying to come up with a timetable for decomposition.

"We don't want people tramping around up there," said Bass, anthropology professor at the University of Tennessee and the state's forensic pathologist.

"First, it's on private property, and second, it's behind a fence. When people get up there and walk all over it, they're destroying the experiment."

Bass said the bodies are providing some of the first data on how long it takes for a cadaver to decay.

"The type of flies that are on the body at the moment, and the type of beetle or insect that you have is probably the best indication," Bass said.

Bass said he decided to seek the information after a mysterious corpse was found near Nashville in a shallow grave. Bass investigated the case and determined the body had been dead for less than a year.

But when he took the bones back to his Knoxville laboratory for analysis, the scientist learned the body had been dead 112 years.

It was the body of Confederate Col. William Shy, shot to death in the Civil War Battle of Nashville in 1864. It was in good shape because it had been embalmed — a rarity for Civil War victims — and buried in a cast-iron coffin that did not leak.

Bass started his experiment last April. In wood-frame, coffin-like structures covered with quarter-inch chicken wire are the bodies, in various stages of decomposition.

The first body was placed outside last April. All that is left of it is the skeletal remains. The last body began the experiment last October. It decayed slowly during the cold months, but has begun to deteriorate rapidly with the warmer weather.

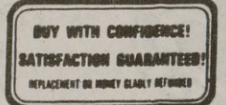
"The bodies were all willed to us specifically for this purpose," said Bass. "We don't randomly pick up bodies."

The professor said his research team hopes to end up with a checklist so police officers can estimate how long a body has been dead.

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