

Senator Nixon ordered to begin 180-day sentence

AUSTIN (AP) — State Sen. Drew Nixon was ordered to the Travis County Jail on Oct. 17 to begin serving a 180-day sentence. But the lawmaker says he won't resign his seat in the Legislature.

After being formally sentenced today for his guilty plea on weapons and prostitution charges, Nixon said he intends to remain in office until his current term expires in 2000.

"I broke the law. I pled guilty. I will now serve the time imposed by a jury of my peers," Nixon said.

"I also intend to serve out my term as a Texas state senator. I weighed my obligations in this case as I did with all the other choices I made as part of this ordeal. My decision is final."

Nixon, R-Carthage, pleaded guilty to the misdemeanor charges last month. He was arrested in February during an Austin Police Department sting targeting men soliciting prostitutes.

Nixon was arrested after soliciting an undercover police officer. A pistol was found in the car, although Nixon had no license to carry the firearm.

Nixon's lawyer, Herman Gotcher, said he would ask the judge to allow Nixon to serve his six-month sentence in a county jail closer to his home in Carthage. He also said they likely would ask that the senator be placed in a work-release program.

Neither the misdemeanor convictions nor jail time automatically forces Nixon from office.

According to legislative librarians, no reference can be found to another lawmaker serving in jail while also in office. Several have been charged during their terms, but most resigned or did not return to office before being sentenced.

In a statement made after his formal sentencing by County Court at Law Judge David Puryear, Nixon said he wouldn't seek re-election.

"As of today, I do not intend to run for re-election," the lawmaker said. "The worst part of this pain is behind me. I look forward to my life with the resolve of one who knows he has erred and is grateful that family and friends are forgiving and loving."

Nixon's decision to remain in office sparked a political controversy. A Texas Democratic Party advertisement urging Gov. George W. Bush and East Texas voters to demand Nixon's resignation began running today in the senator's district.

"Nixon should do what is right and resign before his jail term begins," said Bill White, head of the Texas Democratic Party.

The ad features a picture of Nixon with fellow Republican Bush. An announcer says Bush urged voters in East Texas to re-elect Nixon because the senator has held young people accountable for their actions.

Woman pleads guilty to using Internet to hire husband's hit man

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A woman who used the Internet to hire a hit man to kill her ex-husband has been given 10 years' probation after pleading guilty to solicitation of capital murder.

State District Judge Sid Harle sentenced Andrea Lynn Vickery, 34, on Tuesday to 10 years' deferred adjudication, fined her \$10,000 and ordered her to perform 1,000 hours of community service.

The judge also ordered that Vickery's parental visits to her children be supervised.

Michael Vickery, her ex-husband, said they were married in March 1989. They divorced in 1995, he said, because she was spending up to 16 hours a day on-line on the computer.

She initially received custody of their daughter after the divorce, but lost custody to her husband in August 1996.

Two months later, according to

court records, Vickery went online looking for someone to kill her ex-husband so she could regain custody of their 6-year-old daughter.

Robert E. Lee Smith Jr., 44, a military retiree attending the University of Texas at Austin, told authorities he was intrigued by a conversation he "overheard" between Vickery in a chat room on the Internet.

Vickery said she was looking for someone to kill her ex-husband, Smith said.

"At first I thought the message was humorous," he said.

After chatting with Vickery himself and exchanging several computer messages, they arranged to meet in November of last year at a San Antonio motel, he said. At the time, Vickery was eight months pregnant, he said.

She offered him \$4,000, of which \$1,000 was to be paid before the murder and the rest after the job was done, he said.

The woman gave him a picture of her ex-husband and a diagram of the layout of his home in Sugar Land, a Houston suburb, Smith said. The woman also gave him a credit card with her access code so he could draw the \$1,000 down payment, he said.

He thought the whole thing was a joke until she gave him the credit card, Smith said.

On his way back to Austin, Smith said, he stopped in San Marcos to see if the card and access code worked. He withdrew \$200 from the credit card account.

Later, he withdrew an additional \$800 cash advance on the card to make a payment on his own credit card, Smith told police.

Smith said his wife found the credit card and the envelope Vickery gave him along with the diagram. When his wife accused him of having an extramarital affair, Smith said, he told her of the murder-for-hire plot.

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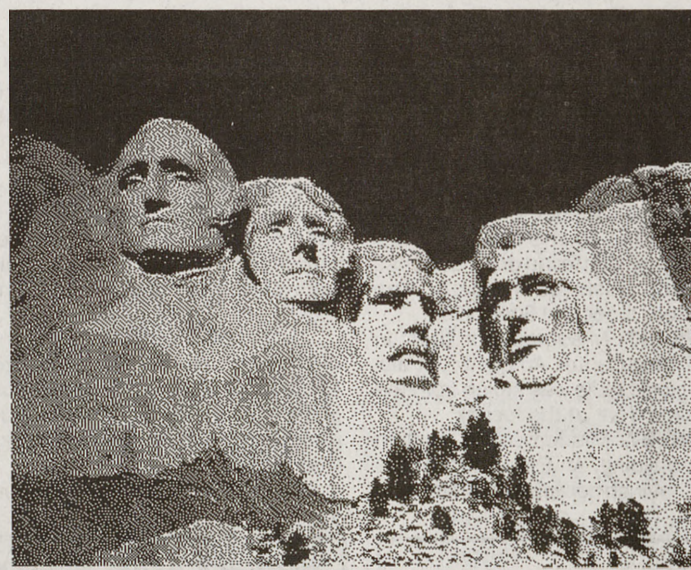
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George Washington:

"Whereas it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor."

Abraham Lincoln:

"Intelligence, Patriotism, Christianity, and a firm reliance on Him who has never yet forsaken this favored land are still competent to adjust in the best way all our present difficulty. ...As was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, 'the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether'"



Thomas Jefferson:

"God who gave us life gave us liberty. Can the liberties of a nation be secure when we have removed a conviction that these liberties are the gift of God? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that His justice cannot sleep forever."

Teddy Roosevelt:

"There are those who believe that a new modernity demands a new morality. What they fail to consider is the harsh reality that there is no such thing as a new morality. There is only one morality. All else is immorality. There is only true Christian ethics over against which stands the whole of paganism. If we are to fulfill our great destiny as people, then we must return to the old morality, the sole morality."

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