

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

Section 23, Pages 661 - 690

The Kansas State Penitentiary case file on Richard Hickock, inmate number 14746. Hickock and his accomplice, Perry Smith, were convicted of first degree murder for the brutal 1959 killings of Herb and Bonnie Clutter, their daughter, Nancy, and son, Kenyon, in Holcomb, Kansas. The murders inspired the non-fiction novel "In Cold Blood" by Truman Capote. Hickock was executed by hanging on April 14, 1965. Please note that some images have been removed in accordance with K.S.A. 45-221(a)(29) and have been labeled with pages indicating their removal. Additional redactions of personally identifiable information made in accordance with K. S. A. 2005 Supp. 45-221(a)(30).

Creator: Kansas State Penitentiary

Date: 1959 - 1965

Callnumber: State Penitentiary, Inmate Files, Executed Prisoners, Box 2

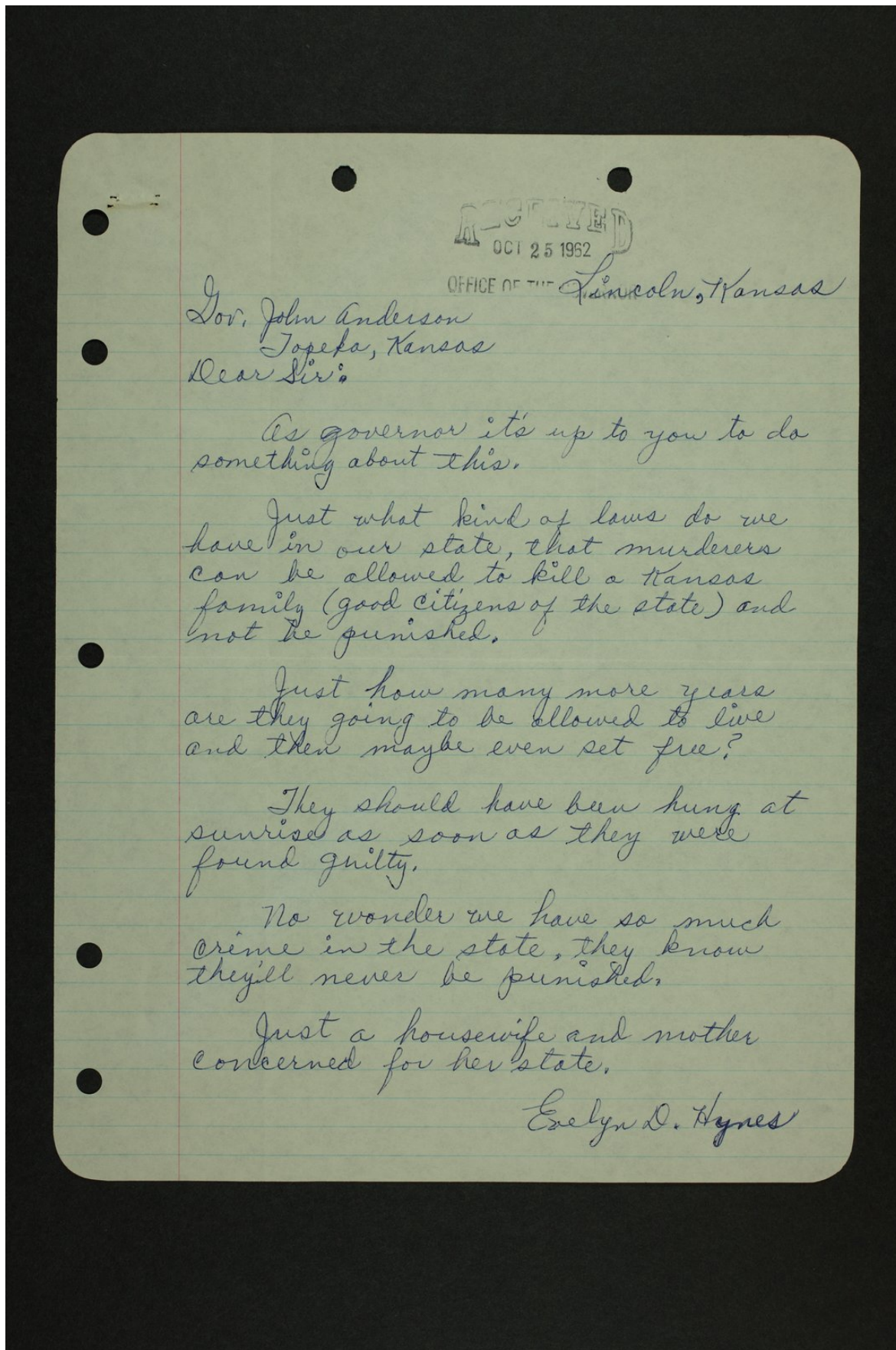
KSHS Identifier: DaRT ID: 208963

Item Identifier: 208963

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KANSAS
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file



Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

EXECUTIVE OFFICE
STATE OF KANSAS
TOPEKA

JOHN ANDERSON, JR.
GOVERNOR

July 12, 1962

Mr. A. C. Bergmann
Vermillion,
Kansas

Dear Mr. Bergmann:

I wish to belatedly acknowledge your letter addressed to Governor Anderson concerning the Clutter case.

The wheels of justice, of course, move slowly and only until all rights of appeal, as provided by law, have been completed can the State proceed to execute those who have been convicted of heinous crimes. This matter is presently in the courts and, I am sure, that you would want all rights of the defendants protected prior to the proceeding to impose the sentence as decreed by the jury.

We appreciate your comments in matters of this nature and I realize that it is hard to understand why these individuals have not received the sentence as imposed by the jury but, fortunately, this is the privilege which we enjoy under our system of law.

Very truly yours,

Charles D. McAtee
Pardon Attorney

CDM:srx

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

Vermillion Gaus =
2-14-1961

Gov. John Anderson
Topeka, Kan.

RECEIVED
FEB 15 1962

Dear Governor =

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

We are very much annoyed
by constantly hearing of the postponed
execution and new trials for the killers
of the whole four members of the house
family at Garden City?

What kind of laws have we in
our "Great State"? How many do these
murderous brutes have to kill to justify
the extermination of such demons of
our society in Kansas?

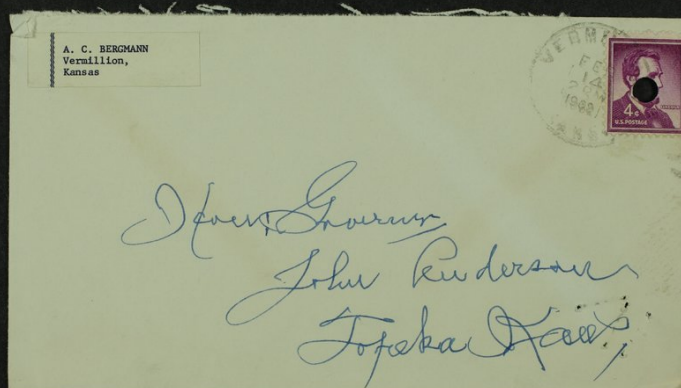
They admit the murders so why give them
an expensive account lasting years?

The fact that they did this horrible act
is sufficient proof that such characters
are a grave danger to society, and the
sooner executed the safer for society.

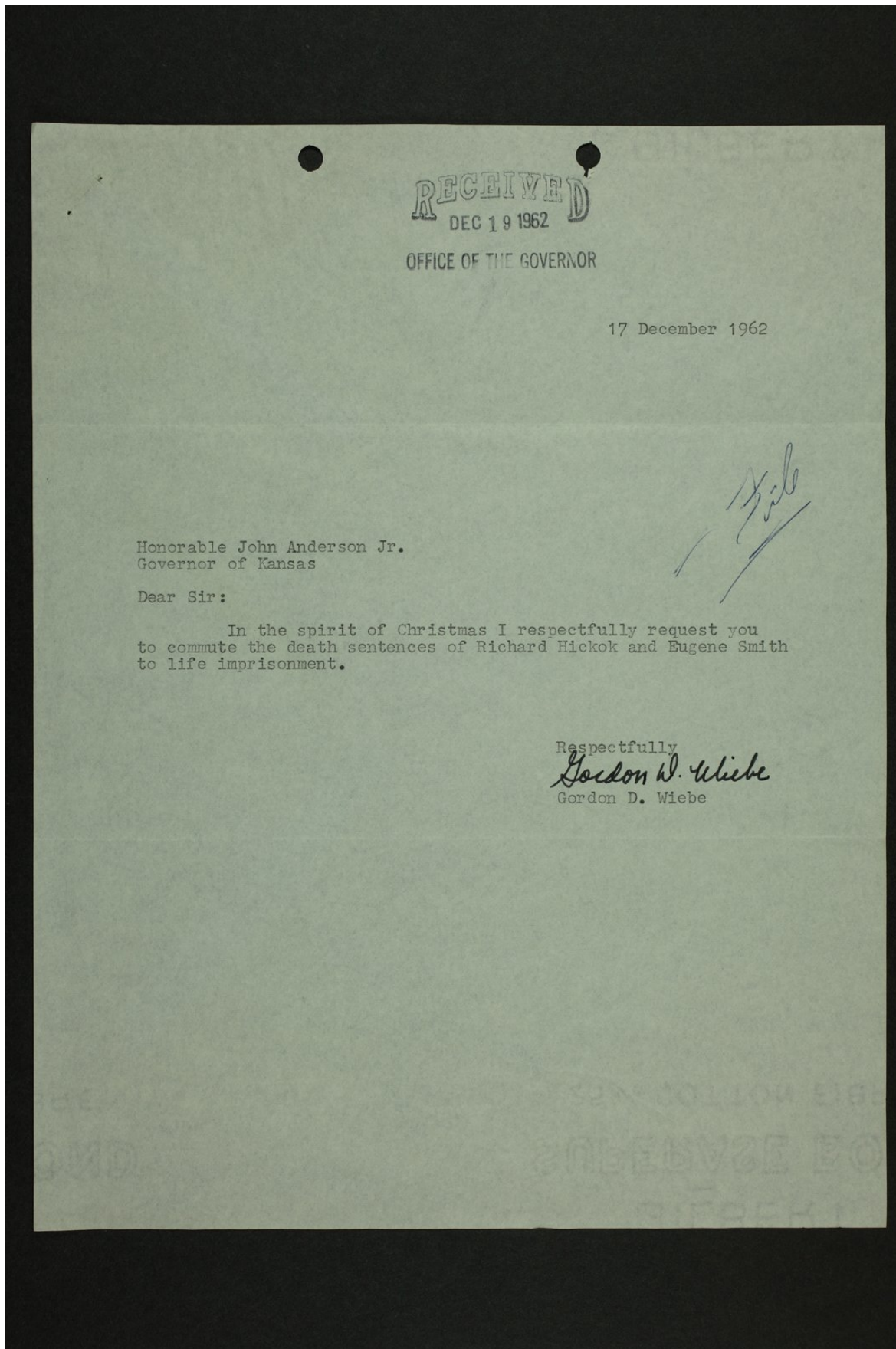
Who is responsible for this delay?

Yours truly
A.C. Bergmann
Vermillion Gaus

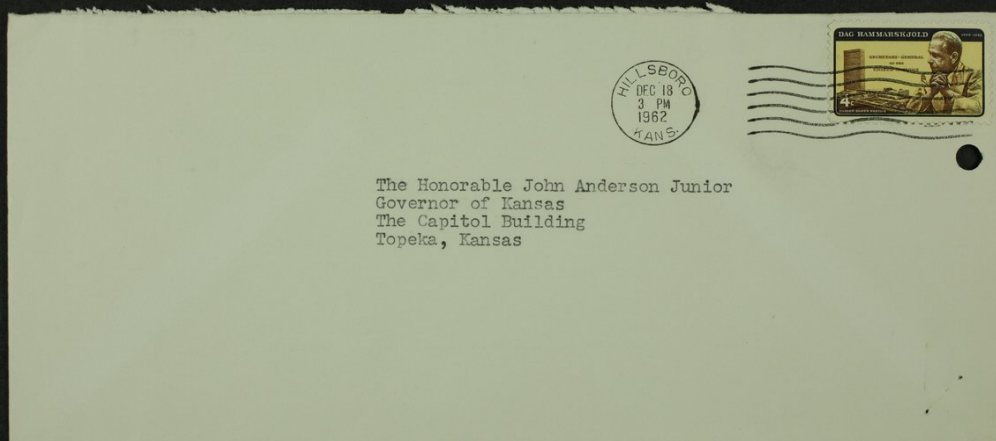
Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file



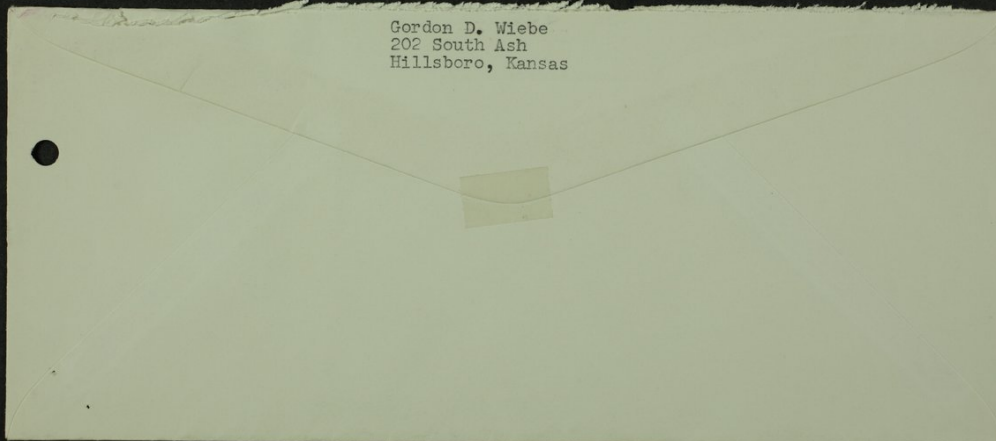
Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file



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Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file



Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

EXECUTIVE OFFICE
STATE OF KANSAS
TOPEKA

JOHN ANDERSON, JR.
GOVERNOR

November 19, 1962

Mrs. Chester King
Route #2
Salina, Kansas

Dear Mrs. King:

I appreciate your recent letter concerning the Clutter case. As you know, those convicted by our courts are afforded extensive opportunities for appeal and review of their convictions. These safeguards are inherent in our system of justice and are there to be exercised even by those whom we know, without doubt, to be guilty. All of these legal procedures are indeed time consuming and do have the effect of making punishment, in point of time, far removed from the offense for which the punishment applies. These men are still pursuing those legal remedies which are inherent in our Constitution, Federal and State laws. The matter is solely in the hands of the courts, and there is nothing which I, as Chief Executive of the State, can do to deny these rights.

I realize that it is difficult for citizens to fully comprehend this act, in view of the admissions of these men that they did commit the crime. However, I am sure that you understand that our laws must be equally applied in all instances, and the same rights given to those known beyond doubt to be guilty just as they are afforded to those who might possibly be innocent.

Again, thank you for your letter, and I know your thoughts are shared, as you say, by many Kansas citizens.

Very truly yours,

JOHN ANDERSON, JR.
Governor

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

Solina Kans
 Oct 25-62
 RECEIVED
 OCT 26 1962
 GOVERNOR JOHN ANDERSON
 Dear Sir - Twelve years ago our-
 selves and enough others voted
 Docketing out of the governor's office,
 although he had been an average
 good governor, but for the sole
 reason we wanted to be sure
 such men as the Clutter family
 murderers were given their punish-
 ment, as sentenced them in a
 fair trial. We are not bloodthirsty
 people, but when men have confessed
 to such an brutal act, how can you
 be justified in spending more
 of the tax-payers money to defend
 them again - No one has any desire
 to have their crime rehearsed again
 it was loathsome the first time

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

Besides, our money could be put to much better uses.

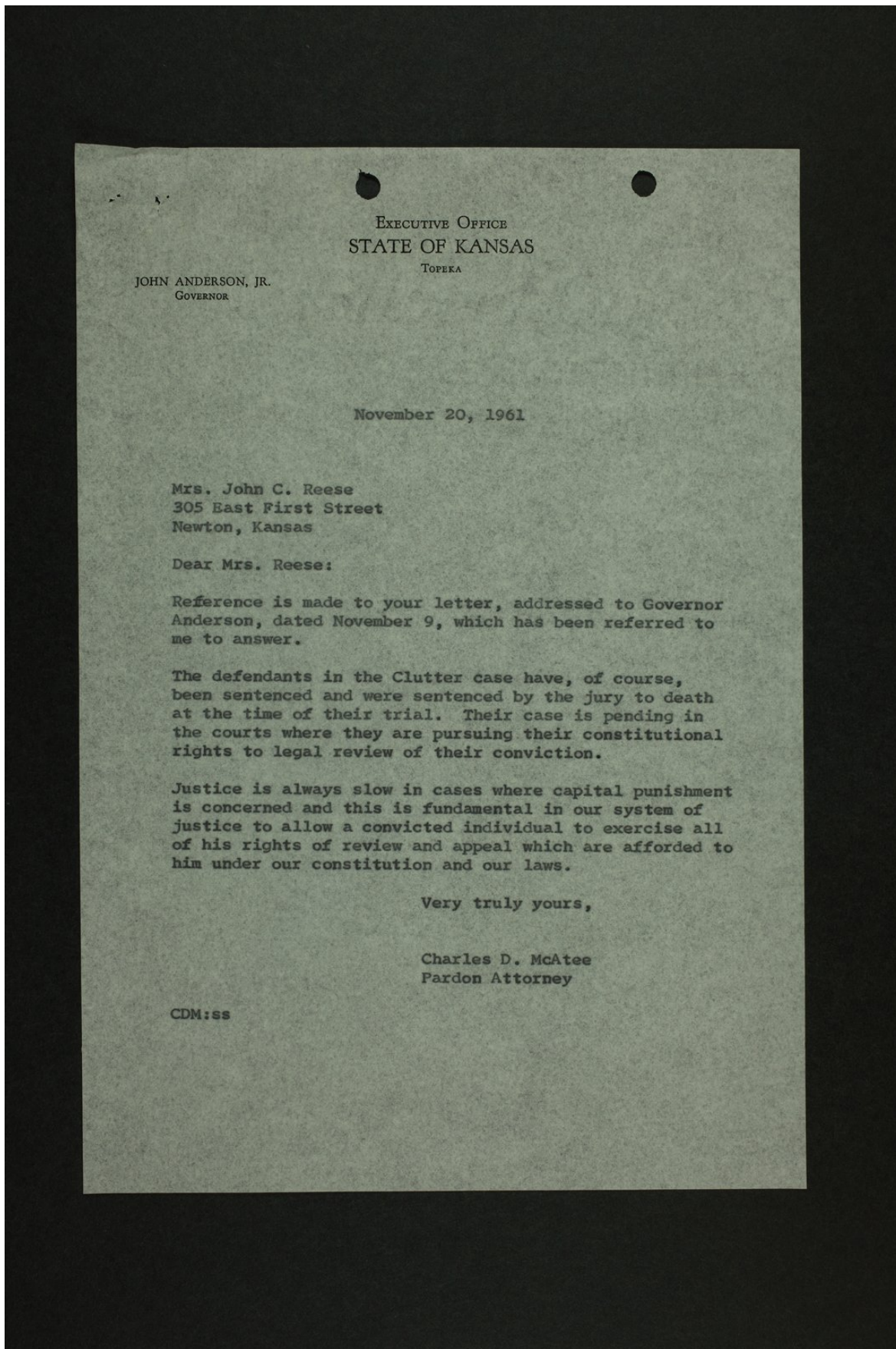
I think I speak for the majority of Kansas citizens when I say - Let justice be done so we can forget about the whole greasy mess.

Most Sincerely,
Mrs. Chester King
R#2 Salina, Kans.

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file



Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file



EXECUTIVE OFFICE
STATE OF KANSAS
TOPEKA

JOHN ANDERSON, JR.
GOVERNOR

November 20, 1961

Mrs. John C. Reese
305 East First Street
Newton, Kansas

Dear Mrs. Reese:

Reference is made to your letter, addressed to Governor Anderson, dated November 9, which has been referred to me to answer.

The defendants in the Clutter case have, of course, been sentenced and were sentenced by the jury to death at the time of their trial. Their case is pending in the courts where they are pursuing their constitutional rights to legal review of their conviction.

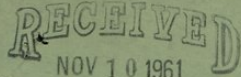
Justice is always slow in cases where capital punishment is concerned and this is fundamental in our system of justice to allow a convicted individual to exercise all of his rights of review and appeal which are afforded to him under our constitution and our laws.

Very truly yours,

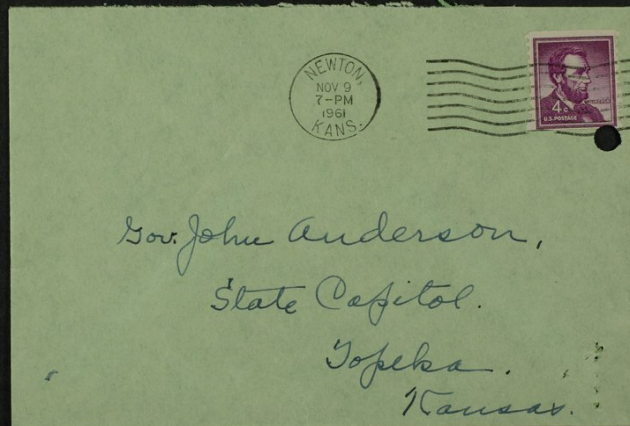
Charles D. McAtee
Pardon Attorney

CDM:ss

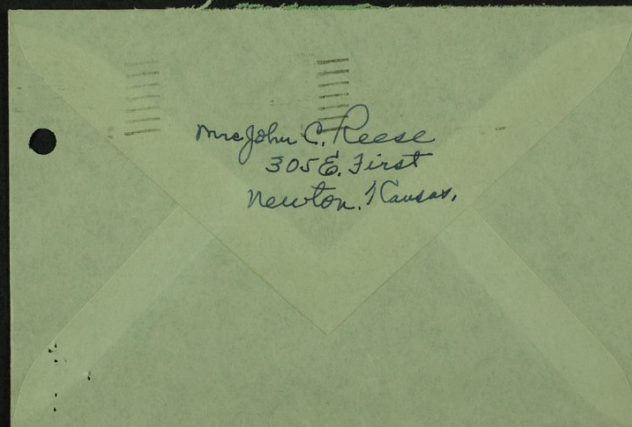
Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file


 NOV 10 1961
 Gov. John Anderson,
 Topeka, Kansas.
 Dear Sir: Could you tell
 me why the convicts that
 murdered the Clutter family
 near Garden City Kansas
 have not been sentenced
 after two years?
 I am frequently asked
 this question as I travel over
 Kansas and else where.
 Some say lawyers delay
 cases to receive more
 money. I would appreciate
 an answer. Justice is
 certainly slow in this case.
 Sincerely,
 Cornis R. Reese (Mrs John C.)
 305 East First.

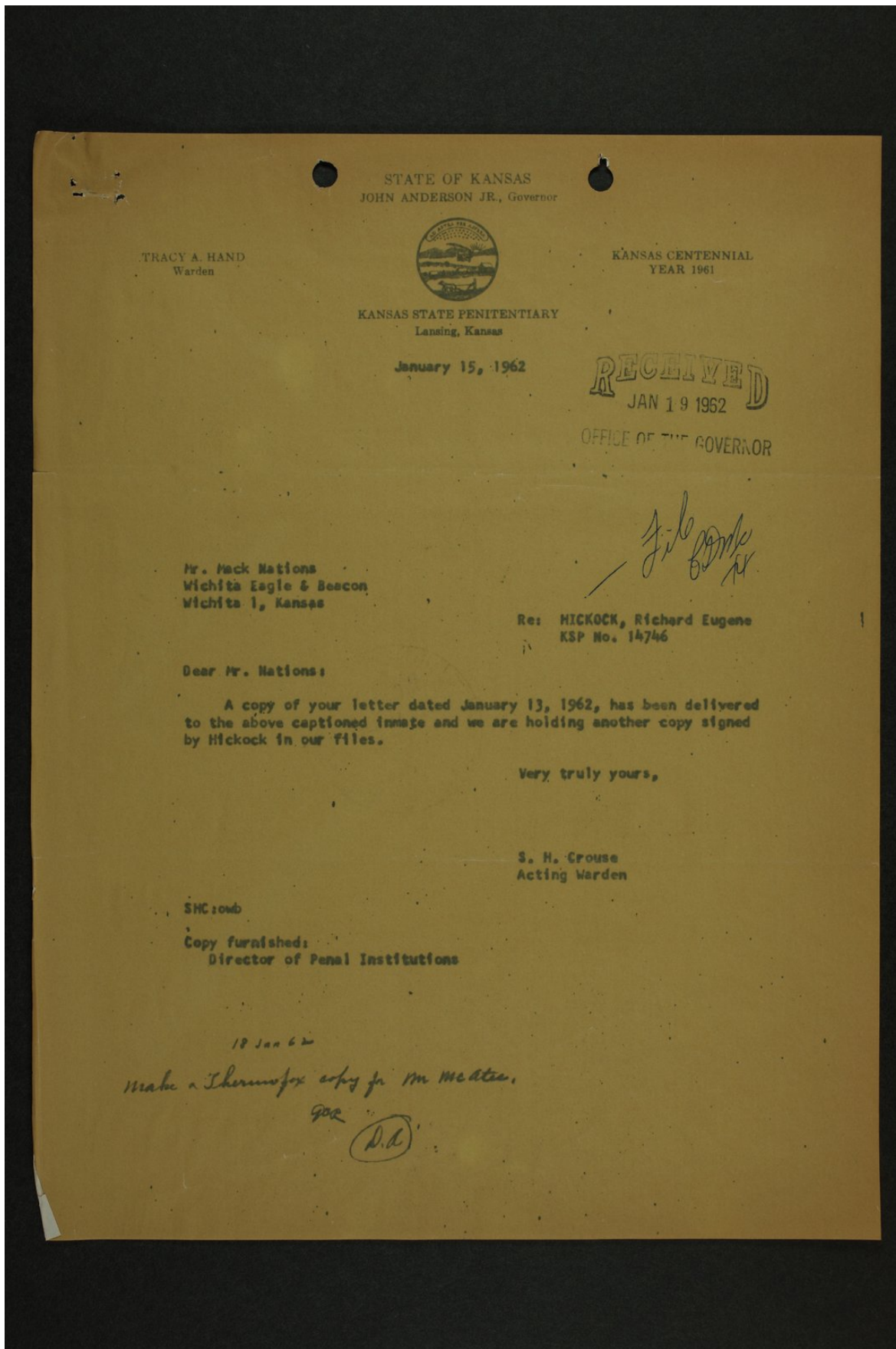
Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file



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Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

Wichita Eagle "Beacon"

Morning, Evening and Sunday

WICHITA 1, KANSAS

MARCELLUS M. MURDOCK, Publisher

January 13, 1962.

Warden Tracy Hand,
Kansas State Penitentiary,
Lansing, Kansas.

Dear Sir:

I have been informed by Coll. Guy Remond that he has granted permission to Truman Capote, a writer from New York, to interview Richard Hickock.

Inasmuch as the present prison rules prohibit all other writers, including myself, from seeing or corresponding with Hickock I would appreciate very much you conveying the following information to Richard Eugene Hickock:

"Under terms of the contract between Richard Eugene Hickock and Mack Nations whereby Mack Nations edited and made ready for publication the story of Richard Eugene Hickock's life, said Richard Eugene Hickock granted to Mack Nations exclusive rights to any and all of that story forever."

"The terms under which that contract was drawn-- at the request of Richard Eugene Hickock--have been and still are being carried out by Mack Nations in every detail."

"In the event that Richard Eugene Hickock violates that contract, verbally or otherwise, with and by giving interviews concerning his life to Truman Capote or any other person, then Richard Eugene Hickock automatically forfeits forever the one-half interest the contract calls for him to receive of any and all moneys received from sale of the story by Mack Nations."

I would also like Mr. Hickock informed that any or all moneys he received from Mr. Capote, or any other writer, for information concerning his life which violates this contract will be impounded insofar as legally possible pending a damage suit outcome which will be filed against him by Mack Nations.

If you will be so kind as to give Mr. Hickock this information, and acknowledge such to me I will be grateful.

Yours truly,

Remond

Mack Nations.

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

December 1, 1961

Col. Guy C. Rexroad, Director
Penal Institutions
State Office Building
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Col. Rexroad:

When you talked with us recently in regard to Richard Eugene Hickock's request to correspond with his attorney and publishers of his life story, your attention was called to our statute making a prisoner serving a life sentence civilly dead. Research of the question as related to Hickock discloses that in Gray v. Stewart, 70 Kan. 429, it was held that the statute must be strictly construed, and that it cannot be applied to one in prison awaiting execution. The result is that Hickock is not under any incapacity at this time and is free to transact business matters.

In Hickock's story as printed in the December issue of Male Magazine, as well as elsewhere, grave charges of unfair treatment are receiving publicity. To refuse Hickock permission to correspond with others in regard to his article, which is a means by which he hopes to finance his further defensive legal steps, would only appear to be, to many persons, further confirmation of his claim of unfair treatment. We think that he should be granted permission to write business letters necessary in connection with the sale of his story.

If Hickock has contracted with Nations or any one else

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

-2-

for exclusive rights to his life story, he should be advised that interviews with Capote or other writers might constitute a breach of his contract and result in loss of whatever financial gain he would be entitled to under his contract. Otherwise, if he requests that Capote be permitted to interview him, such permission should be granted. If refused, it might not only be claimed by him of further evidence of unfair treatment, plus any unfavorable publicity that the writers who are refused, might give it.

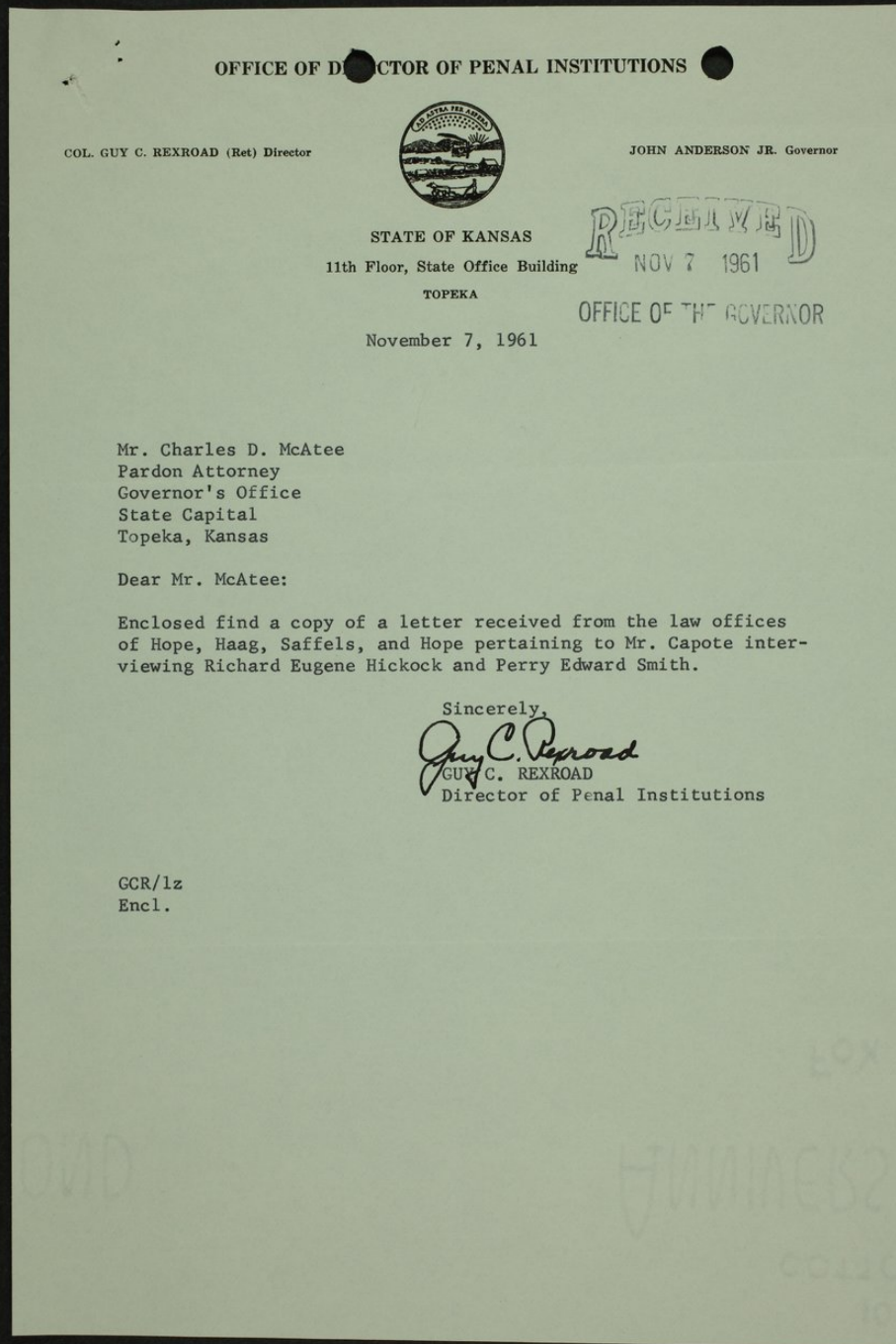
Your letter from Hickock and the pencil draft of reply left with us, is returned herewith.

Very truly yours,

WILLIAM M. FERGUSON
Attorney General

AJS:mh

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file



Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

CLIFFORD R. HOPE
LLOYD H. HAAG
DALE E. SAFFELS
CLIFFORD R. HOPE, JR.

LAW OFFICES OF
HOPE, HAAG, SAFFELS & HOPE
RELLER BLDG. — 118 GRANT AVE.
DIAL BRIDGE 6-4328
GARDEN CITY, KANSAS

November 6, 1961

Colonel Guy C. Raxroad
Director of Penal Institutions
State Office Building
Topeka, Kansas

Dear Colonel Raxroad:

Thank you very much for your letter dated November 1, 1961, regarding the visit of Mr. Truman Capote with Richard Eugene Hickock and Perry Edward Smith, both inmates at Lansing.

We appreciate very much the courtesy which you are extending to us in allowing Mr. Capote to interview these men and we assure you that he will abide by all the rules and regulations of the institution during his visit and that he will cooperate with you in every way.

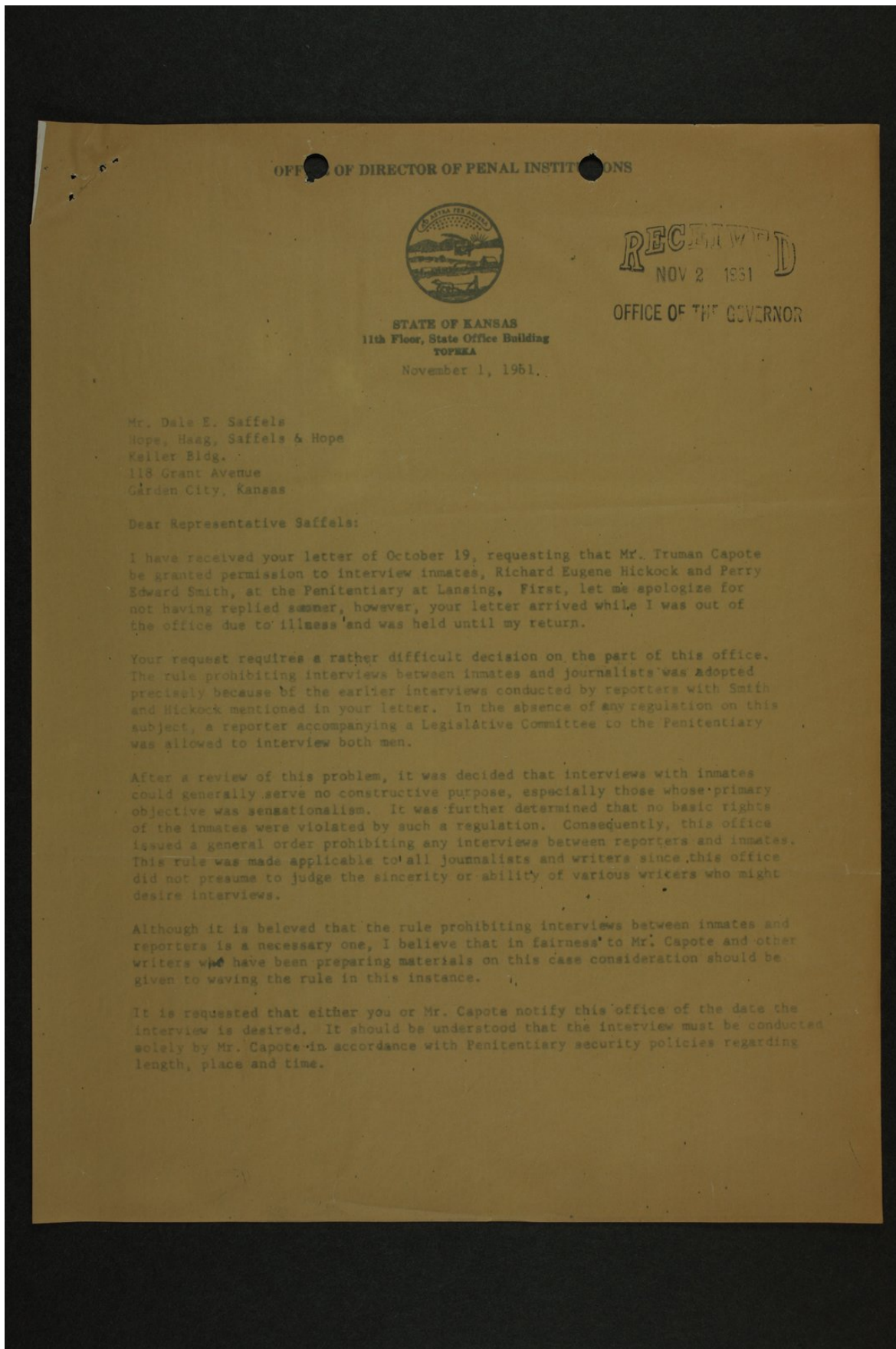
Thanks again for this courtesy.

Yours very truly,

of HOPE, HAAG, SAFFELS & HOPE

DES:mb

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file



Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

Mr. Dale E. Saffels:

To explain the procedures to be followed in the interview and to facilitate matters, it is requested that Mr. Capeten contact this office upon his arrival in Kansas.

Yours very truly,

Guy C. Rixroad
GUY C. REXROAD
Director of Penal Institutions

CCR/ms.

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

CLIFFORD R. HOPE
LLOYD H. HAAG
DALE E. SAFFELS
CLIFFORD R. HOPE, JR.

LAW OFFICES OF
HOPE, HAAG, SAFFELS & HOPE
KELLER BLDG. — 118 GRANT AVE.
DIAL BRIDGE 6-4328
GARDEN CITY, KANSAS

October 19, 1961

Colonel Guy Raxroad
Director of Penal Institutions
State Office Building
Topeka, Kansas

Re: HICKOCK, Richard Eugene
KSP No. 14746
SMITH, Perry Edward
KSP No. 14747

Dear Colonel Raxroad:

We are Kansas attorneys for Truman Capote. Soon after the Clutter murders in mid-November of 1959, Mr. Capote came to Kansas to look into the possibility of doing a series of articles for the New Yorker magazine on this case. He commenced his investigation at Kansas State College and other places for the purpose of getting background material on the Clutter family. He did extensive work in this area in an attempt to develop the facts surrounding this case. He then returned to Garden City for the trial of Hickock and Smith and has kept in touch with this matter all through the appeals of these cases and contemplates finishing his story upon the final determination by the court as to what disposition should be made of these cases and what punishment Hickock and Smith should receive.

After this matter was investigated by Mr. Capote it was determined that New Yorker magazine will publish this work and that it will probably be the longest article to be published in the history of that magazine. In addition, Mr. Capote's work will be published in book form by Random House.

Mr. Capote is very desirous of interviewing inmates Hickock and Smith who are now at the Kansas State Penitentiary. Senator Hope of this office made a letter request for this interview to Warden Hand and Warden Hand replied to Senator Hope on October 16th, with a copy of his letter to your office, that under the present rules and regulations it would be impossible for Mr. Capote to interview these inmates. Warden Hand indicated that any further questions concerning this matter should be directed to your office.

We are not unmindful of the necessity for rules and regulations of this type in the running of an institution such as the one at Lansing, and if this was a new venture being commenced by a writer we would not make this request. However, since Mr. Capote did commence this work some time ago and since we feel that he is attempting to do everything possible to develop a comprehensive presentation of this incident, we feel that we have just grounds in asking you to waive the rules and regulations as to this particular case.

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

- 2 -

It is common knowledge that other writers and correspondents have interviewed these two inmates so we believe that it is in their best interests as well as the public interest generally that Mr. Capote be allowed to interview these men since it is pretty well agreed that he is a writer of very high stature. In other words, we know that his story is not going to be of the "pulp magazine" variety but in fact will be written on a much higher plane than this. Mr. Capote would like to interview these men in January of 1962. We would like you to examine this matter and give us a favorable decision on our request at your very earliest convenience.

Colonel Rexroad, I am, of course, very much interested in the situation at Hutchinson Reformatory and sincerely hope that at the completion of the investigation there that it will be determined that many of the accusations and much of the publicity which has occurred are not based on fact.

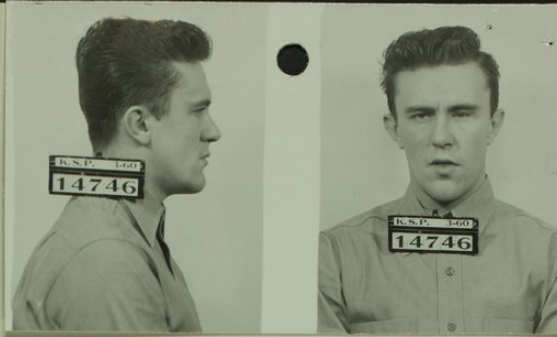
Yours very truly,

of HOPE, HAAG, SAFFELS & HOPE

DES:ab

cc: Warden Tracy A. Hand
Kansas State Penitentiary
Lansing, Kansas

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file



RECORD OFFICE

EXECUTIVE CLEMENCY HEARING
December 29, 1960

No. 14746 - Richard Eugene Hickock

CRIME:

Murder 1st Degree in Four (4) Counts

TERM:

To Hang

PLACE:

Finney County

SENTENCED:

4-4-60; Rec'd 4-5-60; He has served 8 months 25 days.
Advertised in the Garden City Daily Telegram.

TIME:

He was originally sentenced to hang 5-13-60; Kansas State
Supreme Court issued order 4-11-60 staying execution.
Presently pending disposition of his appeal.

NOTE:

1st application for Executive Clemency.

INSTITUTIONAL RECORD:

4-5-60 S&I Deat Row; He has been confined to the S&I Unit
since commitment with no work duties assigned and no reports
of misconduct.



Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

KSP No. 179

6/8
4-18-60

KANSAS STATE PENITENTIARY
Lansing, Kansas

ADMISSION CLASSIFICATION SUMMARY

Committed Name:	HICKOCK, Richard Eugene	Register Number	14746
True Name:	(As Committed)	Age:	28
Alias:	None	Color:	White
Place of Birth:	Kansas City, Kansas	Birthdate:	6-6-31
Offense:	Murder 1st, 4 cts Conc.	Sentenced:	4-4-60
Term:	Hang	Received:	4-5-60
County:	Finney	Minimum:	XXXXXX
Parole Eligibility:		Maximum:	5-13-60
G. T. Release Date:			

Place	Name & Number	Offense	Disposition
	F.B.I. Report Number 859 273 A		
9-13-49, SO, Olathe, Kansas	Richard E. Hickock # 303	Inv.	Pending
8-4-51, Marine	Richard Eugene Hickock #1110337	Enlisted	
8-30-57, SO, Olathe, Kansas	Richard Eugene Hickock # 303	Burglary & Grand Larceny	
8-29-57, SO, Olathe, Kansas	Richard Eugene Hickock # 303	Cheat & Defraud	Rel to Deputy 8-29-57
1-18-58, SO, Golden, Colorado	Richard Eugene Hickock # 2004	Outside Warr. (Kans) For GI	
2-6-58, SO, Fort Collins, Colorado	Richard Eugene Hickock # 8220	Hold for Sheriff Miami, Okla.,	
2-10-58, USM, Denver, Colorado	Richard Eugene Hickock # 5451	Viol Dyer Act	
2-10-58, PD, Denver, Colorado	Richard Eugene Hickock # 68109	Hold for US Marshall	2-12-58 rel to SO, Golden, Colorado
2-26-58, SO, Olathe, Kansas	Richard Eugene Hickock # 303	Burglary & Grand Larceny	5 yrs in Lansing 3-15-58
3-15-58, SP, Lansing, Kansas	Richard Eugene Hickock # 13651	Grand Larceny	0 to 5 years: Par 8-13-59:
4-30-58, USM, Topeka, Kansas	Richard E. Hickock # 58-71	WHC Ad Pros Dyer C. Act.	1 yr 1 day 6-20-58 on chg of Dyer Act
8-13-59, SO, Kansas City, Kans	Richard E. Hickock # 34200	Cheat & Defraud & Bad Checks	



Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

KSP No. 264
2/3
4-18-60

Page _____

KANSAS STATE PENITENTIARY
Lansing, Kansas

CLASSIFICATION STUDY

Committed Name	HICKOCK, Richard Eugene	Register No.	14746
12-30-59, PD, Las Vegas, Nev.,	Richard Eugene Hickock # M-31877	Fugitive from Justice (Kansas) Inv. Murder, Kansas	
1-11-60, PD, Garden City, Kansas	Richard Eugene Hickock # P-11728 # 19719	4 ctm 1st deg murder	
4-5-60, SP, Lansing, Kansas	Richard Eugene Hickock # 14746	Murder 1st Degree Hang 4 counts conc.	

Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

KSP No. 264

t/a
4-18-60

Page _____

KANSAS STATE PENITENTIARY
Lansing, Kansas

CLASSIFICATION STUDY

Committed Name HICKOCK, Richard Eugene Register No. 14746

DETAINERS: None

CO-DEFENDANTS: # 14747, Perry Edward Smith

PRIOR INSTITUTIONAL RECORD: # 13651, Kansas State Penitentiary,
Lansing, Kansas:

ESCAPES: None

CIRCUMSTANCES OF OFFENSE: Case No: 2322
Judge: Roland H. Tate
County Attorney: Duane E. West
Defense Attorney: Harrison Smith

Count I

"..... On or about the 15th day of November, 1959, in said County of Finney, and the State of Kansas, one Richard Eugene Hickock, and one Perry Edward Smith, then and there being, did then and there unlawfully, feloniously, willfully and with deliberation and premeditation, and while being engaged in the perpetration of a felony, kill and take the life of Herbert W. Clutter: Contrary to the form of the statutes in such cases made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Kansas."

Count II

"..... On or about the 15th day of November, 1959, in said County of Finney, and the State of Kansas, one Richard Eugene Hickock, and one Perry Edward Smith, then and there being, did then and there unlawfully, feloniously, and willfully, and with deliberation and premeditation, and while being engaged in the perpetration of a felony, kill and take the life of Bonnie Mae Clutter: Contrary to the form of the Statutes in such cases made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Kansas."

Count III

"..... On or about the 15th day of November, 1959, in said County of Finney, and the State of Kansas, one Richard Eugene Hickock, and one Perry Edward Smith, then and there being, did then and there unlawfully, feloniously, and willfully, and with deliberation and premeditation, and while being engaged in the perpetration of a felony, kill and take the life of Nancy Mae Clutter: Contrary to the form of the Statutes in such cases, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Kansas."

Count IV

"..... On or about the 15th day of November, 1959, in said County of Finney, and the State of Kansas, one Richard Eugene Hickock, and one Perry Edward Smith, then and there being, did then and there unlawfully, feloniously, and willfully, and with deliberation and premeditation, and while being engaged in the perpetration of a felony, kill and take the life of Kenyon Neal Clutter: Contrary to the form of the Statutes in such cases made and provided, and against the peace and dignity of the State of Kansas."



Richard Eugene Hickock inmate case file

KSP No. 264

t/s
4-18-60

Page _____

KANSAS STATE PENITENTIARY
Lansing, Kansas

CLASSIFICATION STUDY

Committed Name HICKOCK, Richard Eugene Register No. 14746

COUNTY OFFICIAL'S STATEMENT: None

INMATES VERSION: "...Murder first degree. I don't know what the reason is or was in committing the crime. I never done any of the killing or agreed to it. But I was judged guilty by a trial by jury. My sentence is death by hanging."

DEFENSE ATTORNEY: No statement.

SOCIAL HISTORY:

Family Background Father: Walter S. Hickock, age 59, good health, farmer and mechanic by occupation..V.
No prior marriages and lives with wife at Route #1, Edgerton, Kansas..V.
No known arrests..V.
Mother: Eunice Hickock, age 58, good health, has been married twice..V. Presently lives with husband near Edgerton, Kansas..V.

PARENTIAL HOME:

Subject came from a home that was of average financial circumstances, father being a farmer and mechanic and owning his own home, providing an adequate living for his family..V. Subject was well cared for in a congenial family atmosphere and the family never had to resort to welfare assistance..V. Although parents have only an average income they are ready and willing to do all possible to help subject..V.

SIBLINGS:

1. Subject	Age 26	KSP	
2. Walter D. Hickock	22	Edgerton, Kansas	Bro..V.

PERSONAL HISTORY:

This 28 year old, Protestant, white male was born June 6, 1931 at Kansas City, Kansas, the eldest of two children..V. Birth was normal and subject was an healthy, happy and well adjusted child, getting along fine with all members of the family..V. Home life was tranquil and congenial and parents gave both children normal discipline, advantages and opportunities of childhood..V

Subject began school at the age of 5, and was described as an excellent student, adjusted well with authority and maintained top grades..V. In school subject participated in all school activities and after graduating wanted to go on to college but parents did not have ample funds with which to send him so subject gave up college plans and went to work..V. After leaving school subject worked for the Santa Fe Railroad for about a year and later for a motor car firm in Olathe, Kansas, as a painter..V. While working for the auto firm subject had a serious car accident in which he suffered concussion and a severe eye injury which was never properly corrected..V. Afterward, however, he worked for one company five years painting cars and seemed even more ambitious during this period..V