

ROYAL COURT
(Samedi Division)

41.

1st March, 1995

Before: The Bailiff and Jurats
Coutanche, Blampied, Bonn, Orchard, Gruchy,
Le Ruez, Vibert, Herbert and Ruffitt

The Attorney General

- v -

Charles Thomas Salter Skinner

Sentencing by the Superior Number, to which the accused was remanded by the Inferior Number, on 17th February, 1995, following guilty pleas to:

1 count of maliciously setting fire to material, being the property of another, contrary to Article 17(2) of the Fire Service (Jersey) Law, 1959, as amended (count 1);
and

1 count of breaking and entry and malicious damage (count 2).

AGE: 34

PLEA: Guilty.

DETAILS OF OFFENCE:

Defendant plotted and executed an attack on Jersey Zoo in which he set alight to the entrance to the building which was used as a reception and visitors centre. Destruction was total. Damage assessed at more than £320,000. Several nights later, he broke into the Artificial Insemination Unit at Howard Davis Farm and did extensive damage to laboratory equipment. Damage costing some £6,000. He said he wanted to register protest against expansion of the Zoo and against genetic manipulation of cattle. Unrepentant. Wanted his crimes to be publicised. Use of smoke bomb and thunderflash to indicate terrorist type attack. No obvious psychiatric disorder.

DETAILS OF MITIGATION:

No danger to human or animal life. Gave himself up. Co-operative - wrote his own indictment. Guilty Plea.

PREVIOUS CONVICTIONS:

1979 - malicious damage £15.00 fine (effectively good character).

CONCLUSIONS:

Count 1: 4½ years imprisonment.

Count 2: 2 years' imprisonment, concurrent.

SENTENCE:

Conclusions granted (serious consideration was given to increasing conclusions).

**S.C.K.Pallot, Esq., Crown Advocate
Advocate S.J. Crane for the accused**

JUDGMENT

THE BAILIFF: The Crown Advocate has described the attack upon the Zoo as a dastardly act and we agree with that description. Skinner's malice towards the Zoo has not been well articulated or satisfactorily explained, but of the existence of his malice and of his intention to wreak serious damage, there can be no doubt. We accept that there is no evidence of an intention to endanger human life, nor the lives of any of the animals. Nevertheless, damage to a very considerable value was caused, particularly at the Zoo, but also to a lesser extent at Howard Davies Farm. There was at the Zoo, no doubt, some consequential financial loss which was the avowed intention of the defendant. There is no evidence of any remorse and, as the Crown Advocate submitted, the degree of planning, the dispassionate execution of the task and the arrogant assertion of right are aggravating factors.

Skinner, you have on a previous occasion made a peaceful protest about the work of the Jersey Wildlife Trust and you were perfectly entitled to make that protest, but there is a world of difference, as you know, between peaceful, legitimate protest and a violent, terrorist style attack upon the property of the Trust.

The Court has given very serious consideration to increasing the conclusions. Having regard, however, to your frank admissions, to your co-operation with the Police, to your previous good character and your guilty plea we have decided on balance that the conclusions are right. You are, therefore, sentenced on count 1, to imprisonment for 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ years; on count 2, to 2 years concurrent, making a total of 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ years imprisonment.

Authorities

Thomas: "Principles of Sentencing" (2nd Ed'n) p.171.

Coutanche-v- A.G. (3rd July, 1989) Jersey Unreported CofA.; (1989)
JLR. N.11.

A.G. -v- Drew (2nd July, 1986) Jersey Unreported; (1985-86) J.L.R.
N.19