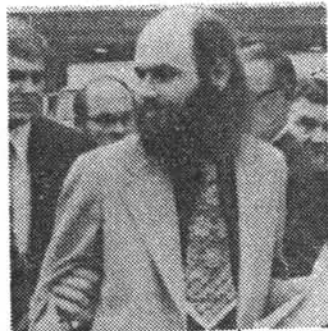


Views on Plea

Armstrong Reactions



KARLETON ARMSTRONG

By RICHARD BORSUK and GEORGE
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Karleton Armstrong has affected the lives of many people — some who never met him, some who worked on his capture, and some who knew him during his flight from lawmen.

Their reactions to his guilty plea to second-degree murder and an assortment of what he terms politically motivated bombings were predictably varied.

Some, including one of Armstrong's attorneys in Canada, hadn't kept up on the case and were surprised at the guilty plea.

Researcher's Father

Walter G. Fassnacht, South Bend, Ind., father of Robert Fassnacht, the UW researcher who was killed in an Aug. 26, 1970 blast at Sterling Hall, was one of those surprised.

"It seemed like sort of an about face of the type of things he (Armstrong) was saying three or four months ago," Fassnacht said Saturday. "I certainly disagree with the things he has said justifying what he did, and I'd like to ask him a few questions about that myself."

Fassnacht said the change from first to second-degree murder charges was "right, but I think he should be punished for what he has done."

He said his son's widow moved with her son and twin daughters to Copenhagen, Denmark, in June, 1972. When Armstrong was apprehended in Canada in Feb. 1972, she said she was glad he was caught, but "it's not a feeling of joy." She said then that she hoped the trial "doesn't turn into a big political show."

'Brilliant Move'

Madison Atty. William Bradford Smith, who helped Mrs. Fassnacht in connection with a family fund after the bombing, called the successful plea bargaining a "brilliant maneuver." He said he "would have to suppose" that a 25-year sentence would be a fair penalty.

Dan Schwartz, now a graduate student in journalism at Columbia University in New York, was an editor of the Daily Cardinal student newspaper during the search for Armstrong and the three others charged in the Sterling Hall bombing.

Armstrong's younger brother, Dwight, and Leo Burt and David Fine, both former University of Wisconsin students, are still wanted in connection with the Sterling Hall bombing.

Probation in 5 Years?

Karleton Armstrong's decision to plead guilty Friday to second-degree murder and other charges may result in his being eligible for parole in five years, his attorney said Saturday.

State law says that at least five years of a second-degree murder sentence must be served before a prisoner is eligible for parole.

Atty. Melvin Greenberg said the federal charges might extend the mandatory sentence, but he was hopeful that even then Armstrong would be eligible for parole in about eight years.

As a result of the plea bargaining, Armstrong is expected to receive a 25-year prison sentence.

Judge William Sachtjen will decide on the state sentence and parole period after a pre-sentence hearing set to begin Oct. 15. Sentencing in federal court by Judge James Doyle is expected to wait until completion of the state hearing.

Schwartz was active in Armstrong's fight against extradition from Canada, and said Saturday, "I support him more now than I ever did before. As far as I'm concerned, he shouldn't have been tried in the first place."

'Political Decision'

Armstrong's guilty plea was a "political decision Karl had to make as an individual,

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