

State Farm, Va  
March 27, 1938.

Hon. James H. Price  
Governor of Virginia  
Richmond

Sir:

In March 1935, in order to protect myself from the fury of my wife, I fired my pistol and happened to hit her and she later died from the wound.

This sounds strange, but I am totally blind. I married a woman who had had two children out of wedlock before I married her. After our marriage she continued to see the father of one of her children. We had some arguments over her acts, and on previous occasions she had hit me over the head and knocked me down, one time she used an iron poker and the other time a radio stool. I still have a hole in my head from one of these blows.

On the occasion of the shooting she had been out with one of her children and on her return she told what neighbors she had been to see, when her own child spoke up and told me that his mother had left him at that neighbor's

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home and had gone across the road and spent a long time with the man who was the father of one of her children.

This information brought on an argument and she jumped up and said she would swat me again. We had been sitting on the side of the bed and when she ran toward the fire-place, as I thought to get the poker, I reached under the pillow where I had kept a pistol for several years and got my gun and shot toward the fireplace to scar [sic]. She had stopped over and the bullet hit her on the head from which wound she later died.

I am a poor colored man and did not have money with which to fight the case and pleaded guilty to 2<sup>nd</sup> degree murder and was given the maximum of 20 years.

I have never felt that I did more than any one would have done who had been knocked unconscious by a woman on two previous occasions, and thought I was in for another beating from her with the poker. I did not mean to kill her, but I did want to scare her so she would not hit me.

I am a musician by trade and can make a good living at music. I also have relatives in Baltimore with whom I can live. I have now served more than the minimum for 2<sup>nd</sup> degree murder and I respectfully petition your Excellency for a conditional pardon.

My conduct record is good.

I was convicted in Culpeper County in Apr. 1935.

Respectfully yours  
James Strother  
#33927