

# Outlaws Seem Favored Over Victims

THE DEATH sentence was decreed recently for the convicted slayer of six people in an Oklahoma City restaurant massacre.

The same day, friends were mourning the purposeless slaying of a popular Oklahoma pastor and his wife and the critical wounding of their two children. Two transients, at least one a parole violator, are being sought as suspects in the killing.

From Nebraska came another story that same day. A jury "found innocent by reason of insanity" the admitted and previously convicted slayer of six people in a 1975 atrocity in that state.

The public defender declared this verdict was a perfect example of why Nebraska should not have a death penalty, because the killer might already have been executed before his second trial.

For the same reason, it might also be argued the death penalty should be in effect. After a sanity hearing, the killer probably will be released into society. He might kill again and again.

The brother of the convicted restaurant killer, also suspected of participating in the crime, died in a traffic accident. The condemned man likely will live a protected life for years while lengthy appeals are completed at taxpayers' expense.

It is claimed the state of Oklahoma has vitalized its death penalty law, though officials admit it may be years before the new drug injection method is used, if it ever is.

Public opinion polls merely sample what people think or say but are accepted as a reflection of trends. In 1953, a Gallup Poll found 68 percent support for the death penalty, 25 percent against it, and 7 percent of respondents had no opinion.

In succeeding years, attitudes changed. Support dropped to 42 percent in 1966, while opposition rose to 47 percent, as "rights" demonstrations flourished. Executions stopped and murders increased.

The latest reported Gallup Poll on this issue indicates public opinion has swung back, showing 62 percent for the death penalty, 27 percent

against it and 11 per cent "no opinion."

Large numbers of outlaws roam about with no scruples whatever against robbing, raping or committing other acts of violence. If the notion strikes, they murder victims to eradicate witnesses.

Do you want to get an idea of how we have fallen regarding fear of punishment as a deterrent of crime? Ask some friends whether, if moral standards did not restrain them, they would fear punishment for taking what they wanted and killing if it suited their situation.

We have reached a point where rights of outlaws are being given greater consideration than those of their victims, and no home or business is safe from their intrusion and criminal acts.

The state pardon and parole board has adopted guidelines intended to make it harder for killers to regain freedom. This should help put public wellbeing ahead of "rights" of outlaws.