

**Transcript of KMYR series on The Public Affair:  
“The Georgelle Durcan Story”  
Aired January 20-22, 1975**

**&**

**“Poor Man’s Friend”  
Aired January 23-24, 1975**

**PA2019.068.008**

**Albuquerque Museum, gift of Zane Blaney**

This radio program is a three-part series on the attempts of Georgelle Durcan to marry Richard Wayne Greer, who was convicted of, and later acquitted of, the murder of William Velton. Includes promo.

*Keywords and topics:* murder, prison, prison reform, criminal justice, Georgelle Durcan, Zane Blaney, Richard Wayne Greer, William Velton, Jr., death row, New Mexico prison reform

The second radio program is a two-part series on unemployment issues in the United States, with street interviews with job-seekers in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

*Keywords and topics:* recession, the Great Depression, unemployment

ZANE BLANEY: Next week, on “The Public Affair”.

[Grateful Dead singing “Second one is prison, baby / The sheriff’s on my trail / And if he catches up with me / I’ll spend my life in jail” from their song “Friend of the Devil”]

GEORGELLE DURCAN: You know, we can’t touch, we can’t go to bed together, we be together, we can’t even talk together.

[Joan Baez singing “Help us raze / raze the prisons to the ground” from her song “Prison Trilogy (Billy Rose)”]

BLANEY: Georgelle Durcan tells the story of her love of Richard Greer, one of four men living on death row. Also, next week:

[Jesse Winchester sings “That’s why I like Roosevelt (poor man’s friend)” from his song, “Tell Me Why You Like Roosevelt”]

BLANEY: The Recession: part one. The story of recessions in Albuquerque. People are lining up for job interviews for everything from University President to scrubbers at local beaneries. "The Recession: Part One" and "Georgelle Durcan" next week on "The Public Affair".

[Jesse Winchester sings "Good God in Heaven that's the poor man's friend" from his song "Tell Me Why You Like Roosevelt"]

[01:25]

[music]

BLANEY: On February thirteenth of last year, the mutilated body of William Velton, Jr. was found in an arroyo near the Western Skies Motel. The body had been slashed across the chest with a hot knife. He'd been shot through the head four times and he had been sodomized. On June fifth of last year, four members of a California motorcycle gang, to quote newspapers, were found guilty of first-degree-murder in the mutilation slaying of William Velton, Jr., and sentenced to die in the New Mexico gas chamber. Those four men are Clarence Smith, Jr., alias "Sandman"; Richard Wayne Greer, alias "Doc Sly"; Ronald B. Keine, alias "Grub"; and Thomas Gladish, alias "Ten-Speed". Upon hearing the sentence passed upon him, Richard Wayne Greer told the court, "Maybe we're the type of people you don't understand in this town, but you've got the wrong people. You've got the wrong people this time." During the trial, a freelance writer, Georgelle Durcan, met and fell in love with Richard Greer. And this is her story.

[music]

DURCAN: I, uh, heard about the case through some friends of mine just as I was about to leave New Mexico, as a matter of fact. The night before I was about to leave New Mexico some friends said, "No, stay. You know, you can do some good work here and there's this case coming up about these bikers who, uh, did this horrible murder." And that's how it was presented to me and I said, "Oh. Okay. Well maybe I'll make my introduction into news that way." I was working for KUNM. And my main curiosity about the case was I just wanted to find out the consciousness of people who would do a crime like that. So I began to research it and I found out what – uh, that the defendants were saying that they were not guilty, which was really news to me. And, uh, I walked into the court room the first day and I looked over at the defendants. It was just when they were picking the jury and I, uh, I just didn't see the consciousness in those men, you know? When I did look over at those defendants, I took a second look and I – I saw this man, um, and it just seemed as if I had known him forever, or I had known him before. It was that kind of familiarity that we had. And I took a long time to look into him and he was a little befuddled and perplexed as to why this woman was looking at him so deeply. And, um, about halfway through the jury selection, his – one of his attorneys, a woman, came over to me and said, "Um, my client over there with the balding head told me to tell you that he's in love with you." And it was done in a joking fashion and I said, "Well, please

tell him I'm in love with him." And so began, um, our relationship. And, you know, although we were joking, it certainly seemed to be true. I know it's hard for a lot of people to believe, but that really is what happened. And so we had a correspondence, which we passed letters. We got letters back and forth to each other there in the court room. And, uh, I visited him in jail a few times and got to know him.

The second day in the court room, uh, again in a joking fashion, he asked me to marry him. You know, uh, he pointed to his ring finger and he shook his head as if to say, let's get married, you know? And it was, of course, joking you know. He wasn't saying "I love you" at that point and neither was I. On June the eleventh, which was about two weeks after the trial, or a week after the trial, I went up there and I asked – I said, "Would you please tell Mr. Greer that I want to marry him?" And, uh, I was informed by the counselor under no circumstances would I be allowed to come into the prison. Uh, because I had tried to get up there as a writer. An attorney had advised me that I should say I was a writer and ask if I could go up there. And so I did, and of course the prison said, why by no means can you come up as a writer. And that really initiated the misunderstanding between the prison and myself, I think.

[music]

BLANEY: The story of Georgelle Durcan is more than just a romance. It encompasses what some believe to be a frame-up and cover-up of the true facts surrounding the death of William Velton and the civil rights of inmates and penal reform. I'm Zane Blaney on KMYR.

[music]

[06:19]

BLANEY: Georgelle Durcan's legal attempts to marry Richard Wayne Greer, waiting on death row for an appeal of his death sentence, ended in confusion and ill-prepared court presentations. There was no precedent for an inmate to marry, even by proxy, which the prison warden, Felix Rodriguez, had offered and later retracted, and was turned down by Miss Durcan. To this day, the prison has refused permission for any kind of correspondence or communications between the two. With the warden having the last word.

DURCAN: It's up to the warden's discretion. Any contract that the prisoner enters into is totally up to the warden's discretion, you know? He's – He can marry if the warden thinks it's good for him, but he has not any right to, you know – to marry in – there's no precedent, anyway, for his right to marry without the warden's discretion. In fact, most cases have ruled against his right to marry if the warden has said no. And, uh, I talked to a really nice warden up in Colorado. He's the warden who is against the death penalty, you may have read about him. He had said that he, he wouldn't uh, he just was against the death penalty and he wouldn't – he would resign if he had to preside at one again. And, uh, he said that of course – Oh, you want a face-to-face

marriage? My God, he said, that no prison would like that, that's just too much publicity. And apparently prisons are terribly afraid of any kind of publicity. I don't know why.

BLANEY: I asked Georgelle the question asked by attorneys and prison officials: Why marry Richard Greer?

DURCAN: Well, there are really two points. There's, in the first place, a very practical point, you know. And that's the legal situation in places it makes me legally his wife. It, uh, he's in a position where things must be legal, you know? If you are legally his family or legally his wife, then you can see him. And you can write to him and, uh, if need be, act on his behalf. But there's also the other, um, the other thing which is it's really the only way – the only material bond that we can make, you know? We can't touch, we can't go to bed together, we can't be together, we can't even talk together. There's always the possibility, in the first place, of the death penalty can be revoked. It's coming up for review and there's always the possibility that, uh, they will be found innocent if they have a new trial. I mean, there's always the possibility and there's always hope. There is a man now who was convicted of the death penalty and uh, that death penalty was revoked at some time during his stay in prison at the New Mexico State Penitentiary. And he then spent totally on serving a life sentence but he's now out. And he's working for the Governor's Council on Criminal Justice and, uh, he was as good as dead in the first four years of his tenure there, you know? The first two years of his tenure there. So you just never know, you know, I – you don't give up hope. There's never – how could I give up hope?

[music]

BLANEY: during a meeting of the State Corrections Commission on January tenth at the state prison, Miss Durcan again asked permission to correspond with Richard Greer. The request was denied. Prison officials said Miss Durcan constituted a threat to the security of the institution. No further explanation was given. The matter of correspondence is now under consideration by the New Mexico Civil Liberties Union and Georgelle Durcan is lobbying for prison reform. I'm Zane Blaney on KMYR.

[music]

[10:22]

[music]

BLANEY: Prison reformers in New Mexico have not been met with open arms by officials in Santa Fe. It's not uncommon for prison activists to be followed and kept under surveillance. Georgelle Durcan is now at the front of penal reform in New Mexico, taking the advice of attorneys.

DURCAN: One attorney told me – one of the last attorneys I went to told me that I really did not have very much legal recourse in this matter. That if I really wanted to do something, I should seek to make change through political avenues. And I, at first, said, oh come on, all I want to visit my man, you know? I don't want to be a political mover, thank you. Well at that point, David Steinberg's articles in the journal were out and, um, and prison profile. He was, uh – a lot of people in the state, judges and parole workers, were very dissatisfied with the state of the penitentiary here and of the whole corrections department and their own experience had been the same as mine. That it was very isolated, that they were not really concerned with reform, that they paid mouth service to that. As one judge who wanted to remain anonymous – he said in the paper that the penitentiary seems to be run by guys trying to cover their fannies. That worry about politics and not about improving the corrections system. And that seemed to be right, to me. So, I thought, well, okay what can I do? Uh, so I began to call the people that I saw in the paper and find out where in Washington [D.C.], actually, if any big lobbies – prison reform lobbies were in Washington and I found out there was and I called them. That was the Prison Project in Washington. There had been many, many communities in Wisconsin, Iowa, California, uh, Michigan, uh came up with a study of the corrections system in their state. Mainly because it hasn't been working. People – the recidivism rate is incredible. People go in and out of prison – men. It doesn't rehabilitate. It was clear to the people and it was costing a fortune. So many more prisoners were coming that they were going to have to spend a million bucks to build another prison and they said well, there's gotta be some another way.

Their whole idea of the Prison Project is to abolish prisons totally by beginning in a slow way to put – to, uh, rehabilitate within the community and to really put more stress on rehabilitation. Give more rather than punishing or taking away, because that's just never worked. So I put together a draft bill, which is based on the research that I've done and the experiments across the country. And, uh, I have asked in this bill – number one, again, for an interim committee. Last year, Eddie Barboa – Senator Eddie Barboa put forth a bill to the legislature also asking for an interim penology study committee. That bill did not pass. Um, I'm asking, in this bill for the same thing. For an interim penology study committee but I would like to see that that committee -- composed of, number one, a corrections commissioner from out-of-state, or a deputy commissioner, who has been involved in instituting these new programs in their own state and who knows something about the problems. Um, somebody working in criminology, a professor in one of the schools. Uh, members of the parole board, and inmates. It's very important that inmates and parolees be on this board. Uh, I'd also like to see an attorney from the American Civil Liberties Union on there, and a judge, and citizenry who are concerned with prison reform as well as legislators. Um, I also have asked for an audit of the monies that have been used so far by the corrections department in the last four years. So that we can have an idea of where the money's been spent effectively and ineffectively. And I've also asked that this committee be kept, uh – that this committee inform the public of what they're doing. The public – one of the main problems in corrections reform is that the public and the legislature is just not informed. If the legislature would take it upon themselves to study the corrections

department and the people were informed, we would have much, much quicker response. I have the aid of a legislator in writing up this bill, but he told me that he would not introduce it until he found that his constituency was behind him. And behind this bill. Until he found that he had public support. It's the lives of an awful lot of people. I mean, you never know, you yourself could be behind bars one day. You just never know.

[music]

[Carey Bell singing his song, "Last Night": "I want you to tear me down / what we gonna do" from a blues song]

BLANEY: I was once told if you want to keep people out of prison, let them see the inside. You never know, you yourself could be behind bars someday. You never know. I'm Zane Blaney on KMYR.

[music]

[15:59]

[Start of "Poor Man's Friend" report on KMYR]

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: Do you mind if I talk to you a little bit on tape? I won't take any names or anything, but how long have you been looking for work?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Uh, we just came from New York about two days ago, looking for work here.

[Jesse Winchester sings "Tell me why you like Roosevelt (Poor Man's Friend)" from his song "Tell Me Why You Like Roosevelt"]

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: What made you think there'd be work here?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: We have friends here and we weren't really sure, but we thought we check it out. We may be going on, the way things look here.

[Jesse Winchester sings "That's why I liked Roosevelt (Poor Man's Friend)" from his song "Tell Me Why You Like Roosevelt"]

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: What's the job situation like in New York?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Uh, better than here, it seems to me.

[Jesse Winchester sings "That's why I liked Roosevelt (Poor Man's Friend)" from his song "Tell Me Why You Like Roosevelt"]

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: So you're going to move on to some other place?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Maybe, I don't know yet.

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: How long can you afford to be without a job?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Uh, she's collecting – uh, my wife's collecting unemployment. So another four months or so. [laughs]

[Jesse Winchester sings, "Good God almighty, he's the poor man's friend / 'Cause in the year of nineteen and thirty-two / We had no idea just what we would do / All our finances had flowed away / Till my dad got a job with the WPA / And that's why I like Roosevelt (poor man's friend) / That's why I like Roosevelt (poor man's friend) / That's why I like Roosevelt (poor man's friend) / Good God almighty that's the poor man's friend / Good God almighty that's the poor man's friend" from his song "Tell Me Why You Like Roosevelt"]

BLANEY: Nobody needs any reminding that things are bad all over. For some, more than others. Those who should know say it will take at least a year to turn things around barring unforeseen calamities. So the only thing any of us can do is hold on tight and hope we don't fall off.

[Audio clip about the value of a nickel]

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: How long can you afford to, uh, be without a job?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: This day is the last day, you know. [laughs]

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: What are you going to do?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: I don't know.

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: What kind of a job do you want?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Uh, right now, it doesn't matter.

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: You're willing to take anything that comes along?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Anything.

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: If you could do what you want to do, what would you do?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: If I could do what I wanted to do, I'd probably be a construction worker. Brick layer.

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: What do you think about the economy? Do you think it's gonna get better or worse? And is that affecting you?

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Worse. Yeah.

["The Money Song" from Monty Python: "There is nothing quite as wonderful as money! / There is nothing quite as beautiful as cash! / Some people say it's folly, but I'd rather have the lolly, / With money you can make a smash! / There is nothing quite as wonderful as money! / There is nothing like a

newly minted pound! / Everyone must hanker for the butchness of a banker, / It's accountancy that makes the world go round!"

UNIDENTIFIED REPORTER: Do you feel instinctively that it's going to get better or worse? Or what do you think about it?

UNIDENTIFIED WOMAN: I think it's gonna get a lot worse before it gets better. I think we need a change up in Washington [D.C.]. [laughs]

[Jesse Winchester sings "That's why I like Pierre Trudeau (poor man's friend) / That's why I like Pierre Trudeau (poor man's friend) / That's why I like Pierre Trudeau (poor man's friend) / Good God almighty that's the poor man's friend / Good God in Heaven that is the poor man's friend" from his song "Tell Me Why You Like Roosevelt"]

[music]

BLANEY: But, for those who lived through it, 1932 was something to have missed. Tomorrow, circa 1932. I'm Zane Blaney on KMYR.

[music]

[21:55]

BLANEY: The Labor Department says almost one million more Americans filed for claims for unemployment insurance during the first week of 1975. The highest of any week since unemployment compensation was first paid in 1937 during the Great Depression.

[Ginger Rogers singing "We're in the money! / We're in the money! / We've got a lot of what it takes to get along! / We're in the money! / The skies are sunny! / Ol' Man Depression, you are through, you done us wrong!" from "The Gold Diggers' Song (We're in the Money)" from the film *Gold Diggers of 1933*]

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: I do know that the last depression did bring people together and they did cooperate.

BLANEY: The Los Angeles Police Department is training its police officers in crowd control because of concern over possible food riots.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: It will become better and, uh, hopefully – maybe I'm an optimist, but I have been through this before.

BLANEY: Barring some unforeseen event radically changing the situation, it would appear that at least for the first three months of 1975, the estimated forty million small, independent businesses have a reasonable job security.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: Something good came out of it that people became closer together. Uh, they helped people out a great deal more. They – they were more – had more empathy for people and, uh, there wasn't this, uh, looking out for themselves only. It was a matter of sort of a community thing and if one person was in a jam people would try to help him out.

BLANEY: Thus far, fifteen hundred people have applied for the three-hundred-and-thirty-one public service jobs.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: If they would do a little more walking, maybe a little – and eat better foods and, uh, possibly the whole thing will turn out better for the whole country as far as health-wise and everything else.

BLANEY: In economic declines in the past, it's been noted that these smaller, independent firms are much less prone to dismiss employees than the big complexes.

UNIDENTIFIED MAN: We'll find ourselves, what I'm saying possibly is a way of expressing it – I think now everyone is concerned with his own little , little ballpark, you know? He's not totally unconcerned, he's – oh yes, he feels for the person, another person, but not the same way that he did back in those days.

[Ginger Rogers sings “We never see a headline 'bout a bread line today, / And when we see the landlord, / We can look that guy right in the eye! / We're in the money! / Come on, my honey! / Let's lend it, spend it, send it rolling along!” from the song “The Gold Diggers’ Song (We’re in the Money)” from the film *Gold Diggers of 1933*]

BLANEY: The size of the average gumball has shrunk three times this year due to the price of sugar. Two years ago, gumballs were solid, now not only are they smaller but they have a hole in the middle.

[“The Gold Diggers’ Song (We’re in the Money)” instrumental music]

[Audio clip of a man saying: “And the moral of the story is, smoking can ruin your health. The end.”]

[music]

BLANEY: I'm Zane Blaney on KMYR.

[26:27]

[end]