

News Roundup

Author : Jeff Welty

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I intended to have a deep, substantive post ready for today. But in the press of holiday preparations, I didn't complete it -- and in any case, there's been some significant criminal law news this week.

The top story, of course, is that former governor Easley pled guilty yesterday to a single felony count of violating the campaign finance laws, by failing to report a helicopter flight he took with a supporter. He did not receive an active sentence, will pay a \$1000 fine, and plans to fight to keep his law license according to the *News and Observer* coverage [here](#). In other news:

1. The Greensboro *News and Record* [reports](#) that Superior Court Judge John Craig has rejected a challenge to the new video sweepstakes ban, G.S. 14-306.4, discussed [here](#). Related litigation apparently remains pending in Wake County, with just one week to go until the ban takes effect.
2. The new, more invasive, screening procedures being used by the TSA have been a hot topic for several weeks now. The Associated Press reports [here](#) that the controversial imaging devices used at airports are also being used at some courthouses. As suggested in [this blog post](#), the Fourth Amendment issues may be more serious in the courthouse setting, because courthouses can't be used as flying weapons, and because for many people, there is no alternative to going to court. (Hat tip: Crime and Consequences.)
3. In the rapidly evolving area of lethal injection, an Oklahoma court has approved the use of pentobarbital for executions, [according to Sentencing Law and Policy](#). The state has made the switch as a result of a shortage of sodium thiopental, discussed previously [here](#).
4. In Atlanta, a number of cases have been [dismissed on speedy trial grounds](#), at least in part as a result of resource shortages. This is reminiscent of the situation in California, discussed [here](#).
5. Finally, a helpful reader directed me to [this interesting story](#). The short version is that a mother pleaded guilty to charges in connection with the death of her son, but reserved the right to withdraw her plea if her son was resurrected. Fair enough, I suppose.

On that note, happy Thanksgiving, everyone. My colleagues and I will be back on the blog next week. Among the many things for which I am grateful is the work of so many dedicated people, in so many different roles, in our criminal justice system.