

Long Begins Bouncing Men Who Crossed Him



—Associated Press Wirephoto.

Earl's the kingfish again.

Governor Cleared in Minutes

COVINGTON, La. (AP)

—Violently angry, Gov. Earl K. Long of Louisiana bulldozed his way out of a state mental hospital Friday and charged along a vengeance trail against politicians he figures have done him wrong.

The 63-year-old governor—27 days in two mental hospitals behind him—savored his freedom less than an hour, then picked his first victim. He was Louisiana's state police chief, John Nick Brown.

In the same hoarse breath Gov. Long fired Brown and named E. P. Roy, a former state police head, his successor. Brown's police helped guard the governor at Southeast Louisiana (mental) Hospital in Mandeville, La.

In Baton Rouge, where political hurricane signals are flying, an informed source said of Long: "He's damn sore about people turning their backs on him."

Another source indicated Gov. Long would call a special session of the Louisiana legislature, which just completed an uproarious fiscal session at mid-June. Some of the governor's pet bills went down the drain at that session.

But, anyone who actually knew where the slings and arrows of an outraged governor would fall next wasn't talking.

The actual sequence that provided freedom for Gov. Long came rapidly and as a surprise.

It started with an emergency meeting of the Louisiana Hospital Board in the schoolhouse where hundreds of Louisianans had gathered to watch the governor fight his legal battle for freedom by habeas corpus.

Seven members of the 14-member hospital board plus two proxies, gathered with the governor. Rapidly, with board recommendation, Long fired Jessie Bankston, state hospitals director, and Dr. Charles Belcher, acting superintendent of Southeast Hospital.

In their places, Gov. Long appointed Charles Rosenblum, a board member, and Dr. L. H. McClendon, a Long friend.

In the aftermath, Bankston released a statement in Baton Rouge citing four doctors' contentions that Long needed further hospitalization. Among them were Dr. Robert Heath, chairman of the psychiatry and neurology department of Tulane University in New Orleans, and Dr. Charles Watkins, chairman of Louisiana State University's department of psychiatry.

The doctors said they examined Long individually within the past week and all reached the same conclusion—he needs more hospitalization.

In the courtroom, Joe Arthur Sims, the governor's chief counsel, read to Judge Robert Jones of the 22nd judicial district a letter disclosing the firings of Bankston and Belcher. Then he read letters showing appointment of Rosenblum and Dr. McClendon.

Finally, he read a letter from Dr. McClendon to Rosenblum which said: "I have been a lifetime acquaintance of Earl Long and have observed him in recent weeks. In my opinion, there is nothing wrong with him. He should be released and I intend to do so."

Attached to the letter was an endorsement in which Rosenblum approved the governor's release.

Sims then made formal motion to dismiss the habeas corpus petition filed by Gov. Long and announced that Atty. Gen. Jack Gremillion wanted to speak.

Gremillion said: "The actions just read are self-explanatory in that no one has the authority to hold Gov. Long. The state joins in the motion."

In effect, said Judge Jones as he dissolved the action, the governor was a free man before he came into the hearing room.

A lot of people yelled themselves hoarse and shoved and hauled and pushed to pat the governor's back or grab his sweating hand.