

Rice Bass, along with his brothers and possibly father, was a loyalist/outlaw during the Revolutionary War.

This initial Page is from the Blackshear Family research. (By **Pamela Pearson** May 26, 2009)

<https://www.genealogy.com/forum/surnames/topics/blackshear/330/>

Re: James Blackshare (Blackshear) and Martin Franck c. 1784

What little I know comes from a 10-page article I found in the Blackshear Vertical File at the NC State Library. It was written by David Blackshear in 1948. It seems to be largely based on two other articles, the first being a history of the Blackshear family (a typescript, not a book) written by Dr. Thomas Hart Raines (1878-1918) and housed at the VA Historical Society in Richmond. The second is "Memoir of General David Blackshear" by Stephen Franck Miller (1805-1867). There are several errors in this document, the most prominent being the assertion that the family came to American c1732 from Germany. No sources are cited.

Here's what is said about the murder of James Blackshear and Martin Franck. I haven't personally looked for the court records to support this story.

"Alexander Blackshear's son, James Blackshear, married about the year 1758 Katharina Franck Bush, widow of Hardy Bush, and daughter of Johan Martin Franck (1682-1744) and of his wife, Civella Miller Franck, who was born in 1695. James Blackshear, who died in 1788, became the father of James Blackshear Jr., who was killed about the year 1781 by the Tories of the Revolution; and father also of Edward Backshear(etc). On July 14, 1781 the House of Commons of North Carolina resolved that the said James Blackshear, Jr. and his first cousin, Martin Franck, were to [be?] appointed as lieutenants of troops to be raised in defense of the Province; but shortly thereafter these two young men were captured by the Tories, and each of them was tied to a stake, and shot dead. After the Revolutionary wa was over, in November, 1784, Governor Alexander Martin of North Carolina offered a reward of fifty pounds, each, for the capture of the men who murdered these two young men, alleging that the murderers were Rice Bass, John Bass, Herman Bass, William Roberts, Thomas Dean, Jr., and Daniel Miller. In December, 1785, one Paul Martin claimed the reward for the capture and incarceration in the New Bern jail of two of the alleged murderers, viz: Rice Bass and Herman Bass. The undersigned [David Blackshear, the author of this document] has not yet ascertained as to whether or not those two men were ever punished."

The following accounts shed light into their actions.

Folder: 1782 Information: Indictment of William Hines, Benjamin Bright, John Smith, **Rice Bass**, John Bass, John Bright, Joseph? Massey, John Stewart, Nathan Newel, John Parker, and William Parker, all of Duplin, planters; William Brown, Edward White, Jesse Harper, William Robertson, all of Dobbs, planters; Daniel Miller, Thomas Dean the elder, and Thomas Dean the younger, all of Jones, planters for murder of James Blackshire. States that Daniel Miller shot Blackshire in the breast, yielding a mortal wound from which Blackshire instantly died. The other men were indicted for being 3present, aiding, helping, abetting, comforting, and maintaining Miller.

Date: 26 Oct 1781 County: Duplin/Dobbs/Jones

Folder: 1782 Information: Appearance bond for Thomas Cole to appear and testify against **Rice Bass** & John Bass charged with the murder of Martin Franks & James Blackshire, Jr. & robbing the house of James Blackshire on the 26 Oct 1781 or thereabouts.

Date: 19 Nov 1782 (date of bond) County: Craven

Folder: 1782 Information: Arrest warrant for William Hines, Benjamin Bright, John Smith, **Rice Bass**, John Bass, John Bright, Joseph Masill, John Stewart, Nathan Newel, John Parker, and William Parker on a charge (with Daniel Miller and others) of murder.

Date: 26 Nov 1782 (date of Warrant) County: Duplin

The North Carolina Archives MARS section shows the following:

May 20, 1784: Report on the petition of inhabitants of Duplin, Wayne, and Dobbs counties. The petition of inhabitants of Duplin, Wayne, and Dobbs counties regarding a group of outlaws that have been involved in robberies and murders in the area. The group, which included members of the Bass family, ""joined with the British in their march on New Bern"" and afterwards have harassed the people of the area. Petition requests a redress of the situation. The committee declares an Act of Outlawry for the group and offers a reward for their capture.

Personal Names: Hermon, John & Rice Bass, Thomas Dean Jr., Daniel Miller, William Roberts

8 May 1784, Duplin Co., NC: A petition to the NC State Assembly notes offences in Duplin and Wayne Cos by Tories and Loyalists, specifically three Basses: Rice, Harman, John; and an Absalom Davis

Victims included : Mt (Mr. or Matthew?) Whitfield, whose house and storehouse were broken into & arms, ammunition among articles stolen.

John and Rice Bass were caught and imprisoned for the murder of Solomon Bearfield (Frederick recovered) but they escaped.

No further information (NC Gen. Soc Journal 1979 issue 4)

Minutes of the North Carolina Senate (Oct 25, 1784 - Nov 26, 1784) Thursday, November 25, 1784 page 486

Recd. from the House of Commons a message informing of their having rejected the bill empowering the Governor to issue a Proclamation requiring John Bass, and others therein named, to surrender themselves.

Friday, November 26, 1784.

Recd. from the House of Commons a resolution of that body of the 25th Inst., respecting Rice Bass, John Bass, Thomas Bass and others, which being read was concurred with and returned.

Colonial and State Records of North Carolina <http://docsouth.unc.edu/csr/index.html/document/csr17-0070>

Proclamation by Alexander Martin concerning the surrender of Rice Bass et al. Martin, Alexander, 1740-1807 November 26, 1784 Volume 17, Pages 106-107 A PROCLAMATION BY THE GOVERNOR. [From Executive Letter Book.]

State of North Carolina, November 26, 1784.

By his Excellency, Alexander Martin, Esquire, Governor, Captain General and Commander in Chief of the State aforesaid.

A PROCLAMATION.

Whereas it has been represented to the Honorable, the General Assembly, that **Rice Bass**, John Bass, Harrison [Herman] Bass, William Roberts,

page 107 -----

Thomas Dean, jun., and Daniel Millor, stand indicted in the Superior Court of Law and Equity, for the district of New Bern for the murder of Martin Franks and James Blackshare, two of the citizens of this State, and although process of Law hath several times issued against them, yet by their continuing in arms, shifting from County to County, they have hitherto eluded the execution thereof, and still lie out in obscure places, committing thefts and other depredations on the property and sometimes violence on individuals. Therefore in compliance with the request of the Honbl. Legislature, by their resolution of the 25th inst, I hereby issue this my Proclamation, requiring the said **Rice Bass**, John Bass, Horman [Herman] Bass, William Roberts, Thomas Dean, jun., and Daniel Millor, and each of them to surrender him or themselves to some one of the Judges of the Superior Courts, or Justices of the Peace in this State, within ninety days after the date hereof, to be dealt with according to the nature of his or their offence. And in case the said **Rice Bass**, John Bass, Horman [Herman] Bass, William Roberts, Thomas Dean, jun., and Daniel Millor, do not surrender themselves agreeable to this the tenor of my Proclamation, I hereby offer a reward of fifty Pounds, current money, pursuant to the resolution aforesaid, to any person or persons, for each and every of the said offenders, whom he or they shall apprehend and bring to Justice. And that this service shall have full aid and assistance, I do further command all officers, civil and military together with others, the good citizens of this State, to use their utmost endeavours to apprehend the said persons for the purposes aforesaid, as they will answer the contrary at their peril.

Given under my Hand and the Great Seal of the said State, which I have caused to be hereunto affixed, at New Bern the twenty sixth day of November, in the year of our Lord 1784, and in the ninth year of the Independence of the said State. ALEXANDER MARTIN. By his Excellency's command. James Glasgow, Sect'y. God save the State.

Received from the Senate the Petitions of sundry of the inhabitants of the Counties of Dobbs and Wayne, relative to certain persons of evil fame by the name of Bass, &c. Endorsed in Senate, 13 May, 1784, read and referred to the first Committee of Propositions and Grievances, which being read were referred as by the Senate.

Friday, 21 May, 1784, page 627 and 628. General Butler, from the Committee of Propositions and Grievances, reported as follows, vizt.:

That having read the Petition of a number of the Inhabitants of Wayne, Duplin, and Dobbs Counties, and a number of affidavits, with the Copy of the Bill of Indictment found in the Superior Court of New Bern District, against **Rice Bass**, John Bass, Hermon Bass, William Roberts, Thomas Dean, Jun., and Daniel Miller, by which it appears that they have been guilty of sundry murders and robberies in the year one thousand seven hundred and eighty one, and that they still lie out and commit depredations on the inhabitants.

Resolved, That it be recommended, that an Act of outlawry should pass against the said **Rice Bass**, John Bass, Hermon Bass, William Roberts, Thomas Dean, Jun., and Daniel Miller offering a reward of fifty pounds each for apprehending and bringing to justice the aforesaid persons or killing them in case of resistance. JOHN BUTLER, Ch.

The House taking the said report into consideration concurred therewith.

Minutes of the North Carolina House of Commons (Oct 22, 1784 - Nov 26, 1784) Friday, 26 November, 1784, page 835 and 836 Whereas, it hath been represented to this Assembly that **Rice Bass**, John Bass, Herman Bass, William Roberts, Thomas Dean, junior, and Daniel Miller stand indicted in the Superior Court of Law and Equity for the District of New Bern, for the murder of Martin Franks and James Blackshare, two of the citizens of this State, and although process of Law hath several times issued against them yet by their continuing in arms and shifting from County to County they have hitherto eluded the execution thereof and still lye out in obscure places frequently committing thefts and other depredations on the property and sometimes violences on the persons of individuals.

Therefore resolved, That His Excellency the Governor, or commander-in-Chief for the time being, be and he is hereby authorized, empowered and required to issue a Proclamation thereby requiring the said **Rice Bass**, John Bass, Herman Bass, William Roberts, Thomas Dean, junior, and Daniel Miller, and each of them to surrender him or themselves to some one of the Judges of the Superior Courts or Justices of the Peace within ninety days after the date of such proclamation to be dealt with according to the nature of his or their offences; and in case, the said **Rice Bass**, John Bass, Herman Bass, William Roberts, Thomas Dean, Jun., and Daniel Miller do not

surrender themselves agreeable to the Tenor of such Proclamation, then or in such case the Governor or Commander-in-Chief as aforesaid is also authorized, empowered and required to offer a reward of fifty pounds to any person or persons for each and every of the said offenders whom he or they shall apprehend and bring to Justice.

Ordered that this Resolve be sent to the Senate for concurrence.

Received from the Senate the above resolve concurred with.

Minutes of the North Carolina Senate (Nov 19, 1785 - Dec 29, 1785), page 78 Wednesday, 21 December, 1785.

General Rutherford presented the Memorial and Petition of Paul Martin setting forth that he had apprehended and delivered to the Keeper of New Bern District Gaol two Felons, for which he wished an allowance and praying that some order might be taken thereon; Whereupon, resolved, That Paul Martin in consideration of his apprehending and delivering to the keeper of the District Gaol of New Bern, **Rice Bass** and Herman Bass, two capital offenders against the laws of this State, be allowed the sum of fifty pounds and that the Treasurer pay him the same and be allowed therefor in the settlement of his public accounts.

Joint Standing Committees: Committee on Propositions and Grievances May 13-26: reports & papers

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Duplin Co, NC 8th May 1784

Gentlemen:

You will have handed to you a Petition from Sundry of the Inhabitants of Duplin and Waine Counties by Mr. Whitfield relating to the conduct of the three Basses who still continue to lie out and Commit Depredations & Robberies on the Inhabitants, The Facts alluded to in the Petition will be Supported by Sundry Depositions tho the most material ones cannot be had at Present as they have heretofore been Transmitted to the Clerks Office of the Superior Court at Wilmington and filed there.

I make no Doubt but Each of you are well acquainted with the Character of these outlying Persons and are also acquainted with some of the Charges laid against them, tho many of them were never fully proved, we have every reason from circumstances to believe they were the Persons Guilty, I will just mention some matters they have been charged with and Mr. Whitfield will perhaps be able to inform how far some of them have been proved.

In the first place after attaching themselves to the Enemies of the State and taking up Arms and the Enemy had gone through Duplin to Newbern in August 1781 they lay out & Committed Murders & Robberies. Rice or Herman Bass robed Hooks's Cart when he was moving his Effects for safety and took

his Horse & which has been proved in the County Court of Duplin, Next John Bass & Rice Bass attempted to Murder Capt. Offey Williams when they waylaid him in the Night and Shot his mare under him. They Robbed Capt. Blanshard's and Mr. Whitfields houses and took their arms and ammunition and Sundry other Persons they Robbed of arms and other things. Rice Bass is charged with being one the the three that Murdered Arthur Adams; Rice Bass and John Bass were both of the Company that Murdered Franks, Blackshire and Boston, but I cannot assert they were both present the last[act?] was Committed. John Bass, Rice Bass and Abraham Davis were the Party that waylaid the two young Bearfields in their Corn field, when they all three Discharged their Guns at the two Bearfields and did Execution, for Solomon Bearfield soon after died of his wounds which he then received from them and Frederick Bearfield after some months under the Doctor recovered.

Herman Bass when the British Troops left Newbern following them in their Rear, called in at the House of John Stevenson and murdered him in the presence of his wife and Family, the circumstances of this fact perhaps you may get more particular information from some of the members or other Gentlemen from Craven. Hermon Bass also attempted to murder George Kornegy in Duplin, by meeting him in the woods and firing upon him and wounding him in his arm the then pursuing him to Take his life, when Kornegy fortunately made his Escape in a nearby Swamp after all these outrages they left their place of abode and retired to some of the back Parts of Cumberland or Bladen where they remained till they found they were likely to be Apprehended, they then return to Duplin to their old rendezvous and afterwards John & Rice Bass were Apprehended & Sent to Wilmington Gaol(Jail) for the Murder of young Barfield where they both broke Goal(Jail) and made their Escape, Since then, they have all three continued to lie out and sometimes appear armed to some persons who are not able to Take them, and threaten the lives of some who they Bear Malice against for endeavoring to take them and bring them to Justice, a very few days ago Mr. Whitfields Store House was found broke open in the Night time and Sundry articles Taken away. Supposed to be them and their accomplices, Capt. Blanchard and Charles Homes had proposed or said it would be Necessary to raise men and go in Search of the Basses and in two of three Nights afterward their saw mill or Gristmill was Burned down.

It appears that these fellows have accomplices or friends who have been Good Characters amongst us, for it has ever been the Case when men were raised to Go in Search of them they had Notice & were not to be found—tho then in the Neighborhood, if any Persons ever speak any Invectives or say any thing against them in ay company we soon afterwards heard they they are threatened Vengeance for it. A Number of Persons seem to be Distressed with fear of these fellows and I believe some have reason to be in fear of their lives and Property. Many of us think that if Government do not interfere and devise some means to apprehend and bring to Justice of Expell, or Destroy these out lyers that Sundry Good Citizens are in Danger of their lives and of having their property Destroyed, and it is requested by the Good people of this Neighborhood that you will Each of you render Mr. Whitfield every Possible Service in your Power, that you can think Just and reasonable in Supporting our Petition and Giving it its due weight in order to rid the Community of such Perniscious and Detested Characters, I am –

With all due respect – Gentlemen

Your most Obedient Servant
Wm. Dickson

Mess'r Clinton, Gillespie
And Gray

In Senate 23rd May 1784 read & referred to the first Committee of Propositions & Grievances

Richard Clinton\
James Gillespie \ Esquires
& Thomas Gray \

May 13, 1784

To the Honorable the General Assemble of the State of North Carolina

The humble Petition of Sundry Inhabitants of Duplin, Wayne & Dobbs Counties whose names are herewith subscribed

Showeth

That your Petitioners consider themselves greatly Distressed and some of them from experience have lost part of their property and their lives threatened by the following persons viz. Hermon Bass, John Bass, & **Rice Bass** Brothers, who were raised in Duplin County and at the time of the British Armies marching from Wilmington to Newbern the aforesaid Basses attached themselves to their protection and that the said Harmon Bass Murdered a certain John Stevenson while he was with them & ever since they have been committing Depredations upon several of your Petitioners and others properties and they being outlying Men and well acquainted with every Swamp and secret place to Harbour in so that no persons who are enemies to these preceeding can have any chance of detecting them.

Your Petitioners humbly pray that your Honorable Body in your great Wisdom would provide some way either by allowing them some time to return to their respective homes or outlawing and offering a reward for them or either of them or any other way that may seem Just

And your petitioners will ever pray .

May 1784

Signed by Joseph {?} Williams, Jacob Kornegy
Leaven Wadkins, Benjamin Whitfield, Lewis Whitfield
Wm. Whitfield, Junr; William Whitfield, Senr, Nathaniel {?} Whitfield
Joseph W**field, John Beck, Jedidiah (X) Blansherd, John Holmes,
Buckner *illelmon

Duplin County May 1784

We whose Names are here under Subscribed do certifie that the within Named **Rice Bass** was committed to Wilmington Gaol (Jail) for the murder of a certain Solomon Bearfield a Lad and the wounding and an attempting to murder a certain Frederick Bearfield, as appears by Several Depositions which were taken on Oath and are filed in the Clerks Office in Wilmington and therewithin Named John Bass was also committed to Wilmington Gaol (Jail) the same time for being present and assisting in the said Murder and Attempt of Murder etc. and that the said John Bass and **Rice Bass** did Brake Gaol(Jail) and make their Escape before they had any Tryal for the said Murder etc. and have continued ever since to ly out & Commit Depredations and Robberys on the Inhabitants of Duplin and Waine Counties

Signed

Hillary Hooks

Th'd Hooks

John Wright

Stephen Barfield

Thomas Hill

Wm Dickson

Dan'l Glisson

C. Brown

George Kornegy

William *avid

Frederick Barfield

Sam'l Oates

John Wright

Ln'o Molten

D. Ba**tried

J. {?} Cannan

John Armstrong

James Bezzel

George Frazar

Wm. Taylor, JP

Lanier Blount

Stephen Fleming

John Hill

Jacob Taylor

James Wright

John Gibbs

Wm Lanier

Wm Haysop {?}

[And a couple other signatures I could not decipher – N.R. 5/15/2018]

State of No Carolina
Wiane County

This Day Jedediah Blansherd Came before me and made Oath on the hold Avengelest that about the Meddle of November 1781 He was Cutting of Wood near his fathers house Absalom Davis, John Bass & Rice Bass & Theophelous Dinkens came up to him and asked him if his Father was at home and if his Guns was there at the Same Time they saw William Burn going from * Blansherds to Capt Homes Mill Davis said yonder goes a Man meaning Burn with that Davis said we will go and Take his gun with that they Called to him who stopped and they Come up to him & Took his gun Out of his hand The Deponent Further saith that Rice Bass & Theophles Dinkins went Toward the House and Brought away Two Rifle guns Belonging to his Father Uriah Blansherd the Deponent further saith not.

Sworn Before me this
8th Day May 1784
Wm Whitfield

Signed
Jedediah [his mark] Blansherd

State of No. Carolina
Weane County

This Day Uriah Blansherd came personally before me and made Oath on the Holy Avengetist that some time in November 1781 Two Men Came to his House and Said Deliver your Fire Arms or I will Blow your Damde Eternall Branes Out the Sd. Deponent made answer and said he was not able to Diliver them being down with the Small pox they said make your wife hand them. She said I am as Ill able to hand them as he is Meaning the Deponet and with that one of them said Hand Them along with a Cocked gun in his hand. With that he the deponent deliverd them Two Rifle Guns and Two Powder horns and Shot Bags to them and on seeing Rice Bass since Knows him to be one of the same men.

Sworn Before me this
8th Day May 1784
Wm Whitfield, J.P.

Signed
Ur'h Blansherd

State of No. Carolina
Wane County

This day William Burn Came before me and made Oath on the Holy Avengetist that Near about the middle of November 1781 he the Deponent was coming from Uriah Blansherds and going to Capt Homes Mill. Absalom Davis, **Rice Bass** & John Bass & Theophilus Dinkins Come Out of the Wood to him and said they thought he had been Homes and if it had they intended to Kill him there and Ordered him the Deponent to Diliver his gun & ammonition which he did. He the Deponent also saith that Theophelous Dinkins & **Rice Bass** went toward Blacsherds house and soe Little time afterward Come back with Two guns and said they were Blansherds Guns and that they took them away from him the deponent Further Saith Not

Sworn Before me this
8th Day May 1784
Wm Whitfield, J.P.

Signed
William Burn

State of No. Carolina
Weane County

November 26th Day 1782

The Examination of Benjamin Sasser Taken on Oth Before me one of the Justices for the County Aforesaid who on his Oath saith that a few days after the defeat at Rockfish he was going hom in Company with John Bass and **Rice Bass**. Near the plantation where William Winfield Formerly lived Just after dark he heard som body Ride he Run out of the Path and after a small time he heard Two guns fire with that John Bass and **Rice Bass** Came to him and John Bass said to him god I Believe there is some of them down for I heard a scrambling amongst the Leaves and they Both Loaded their guns at the same time and John Bass said he thought it was Offey Williams going from his plantation to his mother in laws John Bass and the Same Time Said he was afraid to go up for fear they might not be dead and might Shute him this depotent further Saith not – Sworn Before

Wm Whitfield, J.P.

his
Signed Benjamin (X) Sasso
Mark

Duplin County

Frederick Bearfield came personally before me & made Oath on the Holy Evangelist that some Time near about the first of October 1781, he this Deponant with his Brother Solomon Bearfield were walking in his cornfield and being near the fence were suddenly fired upon by which the Deponent received a Shot thru his leg, that he ran a small distance towards the fence where he discovered the Smoke of the Gun – that he saw one person behind the fence watching the Deponant, that the Deponant fired his piece at him and the same instant another gun was fired thro the fence at the Deponant, the Deponant & his brother then ran to make their Escape, and were immediately pursued by two men with Guns, that when the Deponant & his brother had got over the fence on the opposite side of the field, and other gun was fired after them which wounded both the Deponant and his Brother, that his Brother Solomon Bearfield fell and the Deponant turned round and saw Absalom Davis and **Rice Bass** both leap over the fence with their guns in their hands in pursuit of him & his brother, that his Brother recovered and ran again that Absalom Davis and **Rice Bass** Stopped as soon as they were over the fence and appeared as if they were loading their guns, that the

Deponant then gained a Thicket and Saw them no more that he got to the house about Dark in the Evening and his Brother was there before him on the Bed with his wounds which he had then received of which wounds the said Solomon Bearfield Died about Thirteen days after and the Deponant lay several months before he recovered of his wounds which he then received, & further he sayeth not.

Sworn before me the 6 May 1784

John Wright, J.P.

signed Frederick Barfield

State of No. Carolina

Duplin County

George Kornegy came personally before me and made oath on the Holy Evangelist that sometime about the middle of July in the year 1781 he this Deponant was in the woods looking after his Creatures and was suddenly fired upon by which Sttes he received a wound in his left arm that immediately after the Gun fired a man discovered himself from behind a Tree which he perceived to be Harmon Bass who after giving Several Abusive words the said Harmon Bass Swore he would kill him the said Deponant, that he the Deponant then ran and the said Harmon Bass Pursued him with his gun till at length being close up with the Deponant the said Harmon Bass fell in a branch by which means the said Deponant made his Escape and further this Deponant sayeth not.

Sworn before me the 6 May 1784

John Wright, J.P.

signed George Kornegy

Your Committee of Propositions and Grievances

Having Rec'd the Petition of a Number of the Inhabitants of Wayne, Duplin and Dobbs Counties and a number of Affidavits with the Copy of the Bill of Indictment found in the Superior Court of Newbern District against **Rice Bass**, John Bass, Herman Bass, William Roberts, Thomas Dean Junior and Daniel Miller by which it appears that they have been guilty of sundry murders and Roberies in the year of one thousand seven hundred and Eighty One, and that they *** lye out and Commit depredations on the Inhabitants

Resolved that it be recommended that an act of Outlawing should pass against the said **Rice Bass** John Bass Hermon Bass William Roberts Thomas Dean Junior and Daniel Miller. Offering a reward of fifty pounds each for apprehending and bringing to Justice the aforesaid persons or for killing them in case of Resistance.

May 1784

John Butler, Clk

Henry Aug't Wood Ck

In the *** 20 May 1784

Read and Concurred with

By order J Hunt CHC

Tho's Benbury SC

On the Outside

North Carolina

In Senate 22nd May 1784

The written Report was read & concurred with

Signed R Casnell Sp [?]

By Order

John Haywood Ch

Image 46

Petitions of Sundry of the Inhabitants of the Counties of Dobbs Wayne relative to certain persons of evil Fame by the name of Bass

2 Senate 13th May 1784

Read & Affirmed by the first Committee of Propositions and Grievances

By Order

John Haywood, Clk

In the House of Commons 13 May 1784 read & affirmed as by the Senate

By Order

J Hunt LHC