

13 Stories III
Story Options 2022

Option #4: Clifford Zipse

In 1940 Clifford Zipse, 16, nearly became the youngest person ever executed in Idaho. On March 1, 1940, Zipse gunned down classmate Wesley Curtis, 15. He claimed Curtis caused him to get in trouble with their school teacher and bullied him. His defense attorney called no witnesses, simply imploring the jury to consider his age and fragile mental state. Immediately following the jury's recommendation to hang Zipse, Governor C.A. Bottolfsen received pleas for the young man's life. In May 1940 Bottolfsen told the Idaho Statesman, "I intend to grant the boy a reprieve solely because of his tender years, so he can be removed from the death cell." On July 10, 1940 the state officially spared Zipse's life and commuted his sentence to life imprisonment. After nearly fifteen years of exemplary behavior, Zipse was deemed fit for parole and released.

