

## American female executions 1900 - 2014.

A total of 53 women have been lawfully executed in 20 states of the USA between 1903 and February 2014, including two under Federal Authority. 52 of them died for first degree murder or conspiracy to first degree murder and one for espionage.

39 executions took place between 1903 and 1962 and a further 14 since the resumption of the death penalty in 1976, between 1984 and 2014. Shellie McKeithen (executed January 1946) is erroneously included in some lists, but Shellie was male, despite his first name.

25 died in the electric chair, 12 by lethal injection, 9 by hanging and 7 in the gas chamber.

63 women were on death row as of January 2013, accounting for just 2.0% of the current death row population.

1) Thirty eight year old Dora Wright (black) became the first woman to be executed in the 20th century when she was hanged in Indian Territory at South McAllister, in what would become Oklahoma, on July 17, 1903. She was executed for the murder of 7 year old Annie Williams who is thought to have been her step daughter. Dora had beaten and tortured Annie repeatedly over a period of several months before finally killing her on February 2, 1903. According to a local newspaper it was "the most horrible and outrageous" crime in memory in the area.

On May 29, 1903 the jury took just 20 minutes' deliberation to reach a guilty verdict, but were divided upon the sentence, with three voting for life and nine for death. After a further half an hour the three had been won round and death was the unanimous recommendation. Dora's attorney travelled to Washington D. C. at his own expense to try and obtain clemency from U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt and Attorney General Philander Knox but this was denied. He had to appeal to the President as at the time there was no state governor. Having read the medical evidence of Annie's injuries, Roosevelt remarked "If that woman was mean enough to do a thing like that, she ought to have the courage enough to meet her punishment." Apparently the only reason for asking for clemency was that Dora was female.

Beside Dora on the gallows was Charles Barrett who was executed for a separate robbery/murder, by shooting, of James Hennessy in December 1902. Dora met her fate calmly after being allowed to say goodbye to the other female inmates. Just before 7 a.m. both prisoners ascended the gallows, Dora first, and were given a drop of 7 feet, dying without a struggle according to contemporary press reports. She took 13 minutes to die, after Deputy Marshall Henry Donathan pulled the lever. Some 100 people witnessed the executions from inside the stockade that had been erected around the gallows, with many hundreds more on the outside hoping to be able to catch a glimpse.

2) The next female execution was that of Mary Mabel Rogers, a 21 year old white housewife who walked unaided to the gallows for the murder of her estranged husband, Marcus, on August 12, 1902. She wanted rid of him so that she could have another man, one Morris Knapp, and also get Marcus' life insurance of \$400. She persuaded Marcus to go on a picnic in Bennington, Vermont, together with Leon Perham where they tried out a Houdini rope trick that Mary had learned. After demonstrating on herself how easy it was to get free Mary persuaded Marcus to let Perham tie him up and once secured, she chloroformed him, before rolling his unconscious body into the Walloomsac river where he drowned. The body was discovered the following day. As Marcus' hands were still tied he had clearly not died by accident or suicide.

Mary came to trial on December 9, 1903 and pleaded not guilty. 17 year old Leon Perham was the key prosecution witness and admitted to helping Mary. She was convicted on December 22 and sentenced to death a week later. After a lot of unsuccessful legal maneuvering, including an appeal

to the Supreme Court, which was dismissed on November 27, 1905, Governor Bell signed her death warrant and set the date for December 8, 1905. Bell received over 7,000 letters calling for a reprieve. Perham, got a life sentence for his part in the crime. It has been alleged that Mary had managed to have sex in prison with a convicted rapist, presumably in the hope of getting pregnant and thus being spared.

The hanging took place just after 1 p.m. at Windsor prison in Vermont on a gallows erected in a closed courtyard, the drop being sufficient to break her neck. At 12.45pm Mary changed into a purpose made long black dress for her execution. She walked unaided to the gallows and climbed the steps without assistance. She was allowed to sit for a moment and asked if she had any last words simply replied "No." She asked that her glasses be given to her sister. Deputies tied her arms behind her and bound her legs with a cord tied around her dress. A long black hood that covered her head and shoulders was applied. Thus pinioned, hooded and noosed, Deputy Sheriff Spafford told Mary "I now proceed to execute the sentence of the law and may God have mercy on your soul". The drop fell immediately after he had finished speaking at 1.13pm and she was pronounced dead 14 ½ minutes later. Only a small number of witnesses were permitted, including three reporters. Mary was reported to be the calmest person present. Such was the public interest in the case that a film reconstruction of the hanging was made a week later and shown in movie theatres. Click [here](#) to view .Her execution made front page news in papers across the country.



Mary Rogers



MARY, MARCUS AND THEIR BABY



Newspaper photo of Mary

3) 29 year old, Irish immigrant, Mary O'Brien Farmer was convicted of the ax murder of her neighbor, Sarah Brennan in a bizarre property fraud. The murder took place at Brownville in Jefferson County, New York on April 23, 1908. Having killed Sarah, Mary stuffed her body into a trunk where it was discovered four days later in what had been Sarah's house but was now Mary's as she had forged a deed to transfer the house into her name and then evict Sarah's husband, Pat.

Mary came to trial June 16, 1908, in the Jefferson County Courthouse before Justice Watson M. Rogers and was convicted of the murder by an all male jury. She showed no emotion as she was sentenced to death in the electric chair. Her appeal was rejected and she was electrocuted at Auburn prison just after 5am on March 29, 1909, Edwin Davis sending three jolts of 1840 volts through her body to ensure death. The execution was witnessed by five women, including two prison officers. Mary was only the second woman to be electrocuted in the U.S. Prior to her death

Mary wrote a letter exonerating her husband, James, who had also been condemned for the murder. He was later acquitted of the forgery charge as well.

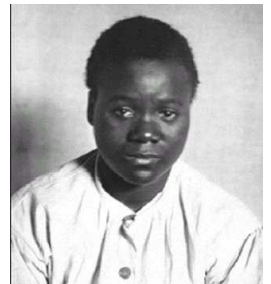
From 1916 all New York executions took place at Sing Sing prison at Ossining on the Hudson River which had a new Death House constructed at the huge cost of \$268,000. This could accommodate 24 male and three female inmates and had its own kitchen, hospital and autopsy room and was separate from the main prison. It also had its own generator facility to provide the power for executions. In total 614 men and women were executed here.



Mary Farmer



4) Virginia Christian (black) was the youngest female executed in the 20th century, when at age 17 she was electrocuted in Virginia for the murder of her employer, Ida Belote on March 18, 1912. She was the first woman to be put to death in Virginia and it was not until Teresa Lewis in 2010 that another Virginian woman would share this fate.



The murder took place on March 18, 1912 at Hampton after Virginia got angry over being reprimanded by Mrs. Belote for her poor work as a wash woman and accused of stealing. Virginia hit Ida with a broom handle before suffocating her by forcing a towel, her hair and her tongue down her throat. The body was soon discovered and Virginia arrested. She confessed to hitting Ida and to stealing some money and a ring but claimed not to know that she had killed her, saying that she acted in self defense. She was found guilty of murder on April 9, 1912 and all appeals, including a letter to Governor Mann from her mother failed. On August 16, 1912, just one day after her 17th birthday Virginia was led to the electric chair in Richmond prison at 7.18am. She showed no sign of fear and was pronounced dead at 7.25am, the execution having taken two minutes. Her body was returned to her family for burial in Hampton.

5) The next female execution took place at Forest, Mississippi on January 13, 1922, when Pattie Perdue (black) was hanged, together with her co-accused, Leon Viverett. They were executed for

the robbery murder of Alton Page, a white man whom they had cut up after death and attempted to burn the body parts. Little other information on the crime and execution remains.

6) Ann Knight (black) was hanged at Leaksville, Mississippi with her co-defendant Will Green on October 13, 1922, for the murder of her husband. She denied her guilt to the last and prayed and sang on the gallows. Ann's was one of four executions carried out on the same day in Mississippi at three different locations.

7) Ruth Brown Snyder was a 32 year old housewife who was electrocuted in New York's Sing Sing prison on January 12, 1928, together with her boyfriend Henry Judd Gray, for the murder of her husband Albert on March 20, 1927 in Queen's Village, Queens, New York.

She and Judd had been having an affair since 1925 and evolved a plan to kill Albert as he was in the way of their relationship. To compound the crime a \$48,000 double indemnity life insurance had been taken out on Albert's life. Gray hid in a closet until the couple returned home from a night out. He then hit Albert over the head with a sash weight, strangled him with picture wire and stuffed chloroform soaked rags up his nose, before tying him up and throwing his body on the bed, trying to disguise the crime scene as a burglary gone wrong. Gray also tied Ruth up to add verisimilitude. Their daughter, Lorraine, found her parents and called the police. They were immediately suspicious of the burglary ploy and by Ruth's lack of grief or emotion. The police then discovered Ruth's allegedly stolen jewelry hidden under the mattress. They also found a note signed J.G. Ruth asked the detective what Judd Gray had to do with the crime which made him suspicious as Gray had not been mentioned and in fact this particular J. G. was Albert's former wife.

Both were arrested on the day of the murder. They came to trial at Long Island City Courthouse in April 1927 amid huge publicity, with each defendant blaming the other for the murder. It took the jury just 1 ½ hours to reach guilty verdicts on May 9, 1927 and the pair were sentenced to death.

On January 10, 1928 Governor Smith refused a reprieve for them. At a minute after 11 p.m. on January 12, 1928, Ruth Snyder was led into the death chamber. She had to be assisted by prison matrons into the chair. "Jesus, have mercy on me, for I have sinned", she sobbed. She prayed, and as the mask went over her face, she again said, "Jesus, have mercy." State executioner Robert Elliott threw the switch, and she was pronounced dead in two minutes. 10 minutes later Judd Gray calmly met the same fate. An illegal, but very famous, photograph of Ruth in the chair at the moment of death was taken by New York Daily News reporter, Tom Howard, using a concealed camera strapped to his leg. Ruth was only the second woman to be executed in Sing Sing's chair, the first having been Martha Place in 1899.



Ruth



Judd Gray



At trial



Famous photo of Ruth's final moment



Sing Sing's electric chair

8) Ada Bonner LeBoeuf, 38, was a wife and mother of four, who lived in Morgan City, Louisiana. In 1925 she started suffering from migraines and was attended by 46-year-old Dr Thomas Dreher, the LeBoeuf family doctor. The migraines tended to occur when Ada's husband James, who was the superintendent of the local power plant was out and it wasn't long before Ada and Dreher were having an affair. For two years this continued without James discovering it. But eventually the local rumor mill alerted him and he confronted both his wife and Dreher. This convinced Ada that Thomas would have to die before he killed them, so they hatched a plan to persuade James to go out on Lake Palourde with Ada for a romantic boat ride on the night of July 1, 1927. At a pre-arranged spot the LaBoeuf's boat was intercepted by another boat containing Dreher and his friend James Beadle. A shotgun blast rang out and James collapsed in the boat. Ada went home by car while Dreher and Beadle disposed of James' body in the lake. It remained concealed until July 6 when a badly decomposed corpse was discovered by fishermen. It was identified as James' by his dentist.

Ada, Dreher and Beadle were all arrested and charged with the murder. Guilty verdicts were returned on all three on August 6, 1927. The jury recommended mercy for Beadle and he was sentenced to life in prison. Ada and Dreher were sentenced to hang. No mercy was forthcoming

from Louisiana Governor Huey Long so after their appeals had been rejected the couple were hanged at noon on February 1, 1929 in the jail yard of the parish prison at Franklin, Louisiana. Both maintained their innocence until the end.

Ada was executed first and complained that the noose was too tight. Her last words were "Oh God, isn't this a terrible thing ? Oh God, who can do this? It is worse than murder itself." She dropped through the tap at 12.10pm and was certified dead at 12.27. As soon as her body had been removed Dreher was hanged. He was certified dead at 12.52. In both cases their necks were broken. She was buried beside her husband in the Morgan City cemetery and Dreher was interred at Clayton.

The case received huge publicity nationwide, especially as she was the first white woman executed in Louisiana.



A younger Ada



Ada



Ada and Doc

9) Selina Gilmore, (black) became the first woman to die in Alabama's electric chair when she was executed on January 24, 1930 at Kilby Prison in Montgomery, Alabama. She had murdered a waiter (white) who had asked her to leave his restaurant because she was drunk and abusive. She left as requested, but soon returned with a shotgun and killed the waiter.

Her last moments were described by the victim's uncle as follows:

"Jesus Loves Me Because I First Loved Him" she sang in her cell as I stood against the rail just before the (electric) chair. Then I heard the clank of the jailer's keys and I heard the lock turn. And then Selina Gilmore walked in to the room. She had a towel tied about her head. She walked in strong, and without asking mercy, or saying anything, she sat in the chair, and the men began to strap her down. She and the preacher were singing. They were singing, "I'm Going Home Where The Angels Dwell."

When the towel was pulled off, I saw her head had been shaved. Then the warden asked her if she had anything to say. She said corn whiskey had made her do it. They tightened the throat strap and dropped a black rag over her face, and a minute later there was a great whining sound. The straps were creaking and straining as her body strained outward against them. A little blue coil of smoke twisted upward from her head. All of a sudden the current stopped. She collapsed just like a wet towel. She sank back in the chair.

The doctors straightened out her fingers and started to test her heart when Selina Gilmore moved her head. Twice it wagged. Her chest rose and fell, once she breathed. It was a great puff of wind bursting out from tortured lungs. Quickly the lever was thrown and there she was, once more rigid, once more the straps creaking and groaning, and once more the blue coil of smoke. The smell in the tiny room was all of singed flesh. One man clapped his hands over his mouth and ran for fresh air.

And then once more she collapsed. The doctors examined her heart. They said she was dead. When they said that I felt a great relief."

10) At 5.02 am on February 21, 1930, Eva Duggan (white, age 51) was hanged at Florence, Arizona for the robbery murder of her former employer, Tucson rancher Andrew J. Mathis in Pima County. She had worked for him as housekeeper for just two weeks before he fired her.

In January 1927 Mathis was reported missing as was his Dodge car and his cash box. She was arrested in March of that year and charged with the car theft for which she received a prison sentence. While serving this Mathis' body was discovered in a shallow grave on his ranch. He had died from multiple ax blows. Eva was charged with the murder and was convicted mostly on circumstantial evidence.



She was the only woman ever executed in Arizona. She accepted her fate bravely but due to a wasting disease of the neck muscles when the trap was released she was decapitated by the force of the drop, to the horror of the 70 witnesses, particularly the seven female ones. Her body was buried in the prison yard. Arizona used the gas chamber for all future executions.

11) Irene Schroeder was the first woman executed in Pennsylvania when she was electrocuted on February 23, 1931, a week after her 22nd birthday.

On December 27, 1929 Irene with her brother, Tom Crawford, and boyfriend Walter Glenn Dague, had carried out an armed robbery at the P.H. Butler Co. grocery store in Butler at around 11.15 in the morning. The police responded immediately and set up a road block on the New Castle Road leading from Butler. Here officers Cpl. Brady Paul and Pvt. Ernest C. Moore of the Pennsylvania Highway Patrol began stopping cars heading west. They stopped a Chevrolet, containing two men, a woman and a 4 year old boy about 11.30 am.

A shoot-out ensued and witnesses in a nearby house saw Irene shoot Officer Paul at least twice. He died later in the day. The fugitives escaped and car-jacked another vehicle and drove south on Route 18 into Beaver County before returning to Wheeling later in the evening. Here Irene and Dague dropped off Crawford and Donnie before going on the run again. It is thought that Crawford died in separate shoot out with police.

Police were able to identify Irene and then discovered the whereabouts of Donnie, who told them "My mamma shot one cop and laid back of the car groaning." According to chief of police, Francis Moran, Donnie continued "Uncle Tom shot another one in the head. He shot right through the windshield."

Irene and Dague were finally arrested after another shoot out in Arizona and returned to Pennsylvania for trial in March 1930. They were both convicted and sentenced to death. Governor Pinchot declined clemency for the pair and they were electrocuted at the Rockview Penitentiary in Bellafante Pa. Irene went first at 7.00 am and was certified dead at 7.05. Dague was brought to the death chamber at 7.08 and certified dead five minutes later. Neither spoke during their execution nor showed any sign of fear. Unusually for couples facing execution neither turned on the other or sort to shift the blame. Irene's son Donnie thought his mother "would make an awful nice angel".

The press had a field day with this case, variously dubbing Irene as the "Blonde Bandit" the "Trigger Woman" and "Iron Irene".



Irene



Irene and Dague



MRS. IRENE SCHROEDER

12) Anna Antonio, a 28 year old daughter of Italian immigrants got the death penalty for organizing the murder of her abusive husband Salvatore. She allegedly hired two men, Sam Feracci and Vincent Saetta, to kill him, promising them \$800 of Salvatore's life insurance payout. Salvatore was shot and stabbed on a highway outside of Albany, New York on March 27, 1932, his corpse left on the side of the road. He had fifteen knife wounds and five bullet holes in his body. It didn't take long for cops to pinpoint Ferraci and Saetta. They told police that they killed Salvatore, but that it was Anna who wanted him dead. All three suspects were arrested on May 5, 1932 and charged with murder.

After a 26 day trial, at Albany County Court during the Spring of 1933, Anna, Saetta and Feracci were all convicted of murder in the 1st degree and sentenced to death on April 15, 1933. The original execution date was set for May 29, 1933. Her attorney, Daniel Prior, filed numerous appeals and so several stays were granted, it being 16 months before the trio were finally executed. "I am almost dead now. I feel at times, I am not breathing!" Anna told reporters on the eve of her death on August 9, 1934. Anna lost weight during her time on death row and on the day of execution was a mere 85 lbs, hence why she was dubbed "Little Anna" by the press.



Just after 11pm on August 9, 1934 Anna was escorted to the electric chair in Sing Sing prison, managing to walk unaided to her doom. The three matrons who had been hired to look after her lined up in front of the chair to prevent another photograph as had happened with Ruth Snyder.

Robert Elliot threw the switch and Anna was pronounced dead at 11.16pm. As soon as her body had been removed Feracci was executed, followed by Saetta. Anna was buried in Albany.

Governor Lehman, stung by a barrage of criticism for not sparing Anna, issued the following statement: "The law makes no distinction of sex in the punishment of crime; nor would my own conscience permit me to do so."

By a cruel twist of fate Anna's execution date was also her daughter's 10th birthday.

13) Julia Moore (black) was hanged in Louisiana on February 8, 1935 for the murder of one Elliot Wilson. No other details of the case, which received minimal publicity, remain.



14) 55 year old May Hitchens Carey (white) became the first woman executed in the state of Delaware in modern times when she was hanged at 5.07 am. on June 6, 1935 in the yard of the Sussex County Prison in Georgetown. She suffered for the murder of her brother, Robert R.



Hutchins in November 1927. The motive was his life insurance of \$1954.36. Mr. Hitchens was found dead in his house in the town of Omar having been beaten and shot. The only clue was a bottle of whisky beside his body. For seven years the crime remained unsolved and the insurance company paid out. In 1934 another Carey son, Lawrence, burgled a house during which a shot was fired. He was arrested and spilled the beans on the murder of his uncle, leading to the arrests of May and her sons, Howard, 27 and James 23. It is claimed that May told her sons "I'll buy you a car if you help me kill your Uncle Robert."

All three were convicted of the killing. May and Howard were sentenced to hang and James was given a life sentence. Her third son, Lawrence, was in the same prison serving a sentence for the burglary.

The gallows was erected and fenced off to prevent the public witnessing the scene. A canvas sheet was erected over it to prevent aerial photography. Twelve official witnesses were permitted together with a small number of reporters.

Mrs. Carey May was taken from her cell at 5:02 a.m. (EST) and walked unfalteringly between two guards the 100 or so paces into the courtyard and up the 13 steps of the gallows. Before she was hooded she turned to the witnesses and said in a trembling voice: "My way is clear, I have nothing to say." The trap was sprung by Warden Hugh Smith from his booth at the side of the platform at 5:07 and she was pronounced dead at 5:24, death being caused by strangulation.

Howard was taken from his cell at 5:31. The trap was sprung ten minutes later and he was pronounced dead at 6.08 a.m. This was bumper day for executions with one other man being hanged and five more electrocuted, nationwide.

15) The next US female execution was that of 40 year old Eva Coe in New York's Sing Sing prison at Ossining, also for an insurance payout.

Eva was the proprietor of a "speak easy" during prohibition which was an illegal bar and brothel. Among her employees was 52 year old handyman Henry "Gimpy" Wright who was slightly retarded and a heavy drinker. His mother had left him a house and some money in her will and Eva had also taken out life insurance on him. On June 14, 1934 Wright's body was found in a road near Oneonta, New York, less than half a mile from Eva's business, apparently the victim of a hit and run accident. The police were not initially suspicious of foul play because Wright had wandered off from the roadhouse before, when drunk, but the life insurance company was. A full autopsy was thus carried out and the medical examiner also raised suspicions about the nature of the injuries. It is alleged that Eva, assisted by another employee, Martha Clift, had repeatedly hit Wright on the head with a mallet and then driven him to place where he was found and run him over several times with Eva's car. Thus the case became known as "The mallet murder". When police arrested the two women Martha Clift confessed to the crime and implicated Eva.



Eva came to trial at Cooperstown in August 1934 with the proceedings lasting three weeks. In the end it took the jury just an hour to convict the two women. Eva was found guilty of first degree murder and sentenced to death. Clift received a life sentence for 2nd degree murder and served 13 years.

Eva's defense was to say the least poor, her attorneys seemingly more interested in making money out of the case than saving their client. Her appeals were dismissed and Governor Herbert Lehman refused to spare her. So at 11pm on June 27, 1935 she was electrocuted. She walked unaided to the chair and having been strapped in said "Goodbye, darlings" to the matrons who had accompanied her. Robert Elliot threw the switch sending 2000 volts at 9 amps through her body.

Leonard Scarinici was executed a few minutes later for a completely unrelated murder. As Eva was led past his cell to the death chamber, she called out "Good bye, Scarinici" to which he responded "Keep your chin up, Eva", something which indeed she was able to do.

16) Mary Frances Crighton was a 38 year old housewife, living in Baldwin, Long Island, New York. She and husband, John and their daughter Ruth, age 14, were like many American families struggling during the Depression in the 1930's and to save money decided to share their home with their friends Ada and Everett Applegate and their daughter Agnes, age 12. Everett Applegate began molesting Ruth and was soon having sex with her. Before long her mother was also having sex with Applegate, although she would later claim that he blackmailed her into this. In September of 1936, 34 year old Ada was taken ill and sent to hospital. The hospital could find nothing wrong with her, other than her obesity and she was discharged. A few days later, on September 27, she

died. The doctor certified death as due to heart failure in the 250lb woman and Mary would have got away with the crime, if it hadn't been for someone tipping off the police about previous suspicious deaths of those close to her. She had twice previously stood trial for murder, firstly of her brother Ray and secondly of her mother in law, Anna, but on both occasions been acquitted. The police stopped the burial and ordered an autopsy on Ada's body which revealed arsenic poisoning.

Mary was arrested on October 9, 1935 and made a confession and implicated Everett. The apparent motive for the murder was to enable Everett to marry Ruth! Mary was concerned that Ruth would become pregnant and didn't want her to grow up with the stigma of being a single mother. Mary also confessed to the two previous murders.

Applegate was charged with statutory rape initially, which he admitted. He was later charged with Ada's murder too.

Mary and Applegate came to trial on January 12, 1936. On January 22 Mary took the witness stand and claimed that Applegate had put arsenic in Ada's eggnog on several occasions and that she had taken the poisoned drink to Ada.

The following exchange took place between District Attorney Elvin Edwards and Mary. He asked her if she had taken a glass of milk that contained arsenic to Ada, to which she answered "Yes, I did. Applegate told me." "Knowing this, you took it to her to drink?" "Yes" she replied. "You stood by and watched this woman, who was your best friend, die?" the D.A. asked. "Yes."

This sealed Mary's fate. Applegate too made a poor showing in his defense. He admitted the relationship with Ruth but simply denied everything else.

On January 25, 1936 both were found guilty and received the mandatory death sentence.

Their appeals were dismissed and July 16, 1936 was set for the executions. During their time on death row at Sing Sing there were no less than ten executions, something given the layout of the Death House, they would have been painfully aware of.

Mary became ill through the stress and tension of her predicament and the other executions. On the night of her execution she was in a state of total collapse and had to be taken to the death chamber in a wheel chair, barely conscious, if at all. She was lifted into the chair by the guards and at 11.04 pm was electrocuted. Applegate managed to walk unaided to the chair a few minutes later.



Mary Frances Creighton



Mary in court



John Creighton with Mary

17) On April 29, 1937, Mary Holmes became the last woman to suffer judicial hanging in the USA. Mary (black, age 35) was hanged at 12.48am at Rolling Fork, Mississippi. Her co-defendant, 32 year old Selmon Brooks was hanged on the same gallows at 1.32 a.m.

They had been jointly convicted of the robbery murder of Mary's employer, Mr. E W Cook at Anguilla in Sharkey County on May 20, 1936. Mr. Cook was attacked in his home, beaten about the head and shot before being robbed of \$850. Around 3 am the following day Holmes and

Brooks returned to Mr. Cook's home to retrieve Brook's gun and to set the house on fire to destroy the evidence.

Initially the two confessed to the crime but later recanted these confessions, however the jury convicted them both and they were sentenced to death. The pair were held in the Vicksburg jail prior to execution and transferred to Rolling Fork by train on the day prior to the hanging after the Supreme Court had rejected their final appeal.

"I didn't do it" "Lord, I didn't do it" "I don't know nothing" were Mary's last words as she was placed sobbing on the trap door of the Sharkey County gallows. The drop fell at 12.48am and Mary was pronounced dead 12 minutes later.

18) 37 year old Marie Porter ordered the murder of her brother, William Kappan at Belleville, Illinois on his wedding day, July 13, 1937, after he refused to make Marie the sole beneficiary of his \$3,300 life insurance policy. He had decided that his new wife should be the beneficiary. Marie had hired 22 year old Angelo Giancola, allegedly her lover, and his 20 year old brother John to help her. Stupidly they dragged William's body into a field containing poison ivy and were soon apprehended. John Giancola confessed to his involvement and implicated his brother as the shooter and Marie as the organizer of the crime. At trial in the St. Clair Circuit Court, Angelo Giancola admitted firing the fatal shots. She was convicted of conspiracy to murder and Angelo of 1st degree murder. Both were sentenced to death, while John was given a 99 year sentence.

On January 20, 1938 Acting Governor John Stelle announced a one week stay for the pair after a plea from Giancola's mother.

The executions were carried out at the Southern Illinois State Penitentiary in Chester on January 28, 1938 after Governor Henry Horner had denied clemency. Marie was not immediately informed of his decision, but told later by Warden Joseph Montgomery

At 12.06 am Angelo Giancola was electrocuted, having said goodbye to Marie in her cell in the solitary confinement block, 17 steps below the 2nd floor execution chamber. He told reporters that "He was ready to go, if she does" and that "I am guilty, I had it coming to me." He was pronounced dead at 12.08.

Eight minutes later, the by now 250lb, Marie, assisted by two guards, made her final ascent to the chair wearing a specially made blue denim overall (jump suit) with legs only to knee level to permit the attachment of the leg electrode. Marie went calmly to her doom but her size made the strap down process longer. Asked if she wished to make a final statement, she thanked prison officials and told Warden Montgomery "I have no malice toward any one". "Is that all, Mrs. Porter?" asked Montgomery. "Yes" she whispered. The warden said, "good-bye Mrs. Porter," and gave the signal at 12.17. 2300 volts surged through her body and she was pronounced dead at 12.19am. Marie was the first woman to die in the electric chair in Illinois and only the 2nd woman executed there. The first was Elizabeth Reed who was hanged for murder in 1845.



19) Anna Marie Hahn was a 32 year old German immigrant who went to live in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1927. She had been married and divorced in Germany and married again in 1930 to Philip Hahn in Ohio. She had a twelve year old son, Oscar from her first marriage who lived with her and her new husband.

Initially Anna worked in one of the Cincinnati bakeries the couple owned but tiring of this and needing money to support her gambling it is thought that she began arson attacks to get insurance payouts and also tried to get insurance on Philip's life which he strongly resisted. She was suspected of trying to poison him too.

In 1933 Anna decided to offer her services as a live in "nurse" to elderly men in Cincinnati's German community, despite having no qualifications for the role, other than being able to speak German. However she soon had her first client, 73 year old Ernst Kohler (also given as Koch), who died on May 6, 1933, leaving Anna a house in his will.

Four further victims were to follow, 72 year old Albert Parker, 78 year old Jacob Wagner, 67 year old George Gsellman and 67 year old George Obendoerfer who was the last to die on August 1, 1937. Anna had persuaded George to visit Colorado Springs with her and her son. Once there he was taken ill and died in his hotel room. An autopsy revealed arsenic in his body. George had booked the three of them into the hotel using their correct names and saying that they were from Cincinnati which gave the police something to work with. At the time of Anna's stay in the hotel some diamond rings had gone missing and it was for this crime that she was initially arrested. Anna told a number of lies when questioned by the police in September 1937 and charged with George's murder. She was lodged in the Hamilton County jail to await trial. Autopsies on the four other men that Anna had worked for also revealed that they had been poisoned. It was decided to proceed first with the murder of Jacob Wagner.

After a four week trial, the jury of eleven women and a man found Anna guilty on November 6, 1937 after 2 ½ hours deliberation and made no recommendation to mercy. Thus she received the mandatory death sentence from Judge Charles S. Bell.

Anna's appeal was denied by the Ohio Supreme Court on April 13, 1938. Governor Martin L. Davy refused clemency for her on December 6, 1938.

The execution took place on Wednesday December 7, 1938 at the Ohio State Penitentiary in Columbus and was not an overly easy affair. Anna, dressed in blue pajamas with one leg slit for the attachment of the electrode, was escorted from her cell to the execution chamber by two matrons, but on entering it, collapsed and had to be carried to the chair by two guards. Seated in the chair, she said "Don't do this to me." After the preparations were made she cried out "Won't somebody please help me – anybody, anybody!" To Warden Woodward she said "Don't let them do this to me." To which he replied "I am sorry Mrs. Hahn, there is nothing I can do now". Her spiritual advisor, Fr. John Sullivan began reciting the Lord's Prayer with Anna following him. At 8.11 pm, as she reached the words "but deliver us" the switch was thrown and 1950 volts of electricity coursed through her body. She was certified dead at 8.13 ½. Her body was buried in Mount Calvary Cemetery in Columbus. Anna, dubbed by the press as the "Blonde Borgia" and "Arsenic Anna" was the first woman executed in Ohio's electric chair.



Anna Marie Hahn



Anna Marie Hahn



Ohio's electric chair

20) Ethel Leta Juanita Spinelli was born in Kentucky on October 17, 1889 and made history by becoming the first woman legally executed in California and the first woman in the US to die in the gas chamber. In 1937 California had introduced lethal gas to replace hanging.

Ethel was the leader of a criminal gang who nicknamed her "the Duchess". Her gang comprised Michael Simeone, her common-law husband, Gordon Hawkins, 19 year old Robert Sherrard, and Albert Ives. By 1940 she and Simeone were living in San Francisco with their three children, including their daughter Lorraine known as "Gypsy", who also became a gang member, who was employed for luring victims. Various armed robberies of stores, gas stations and motorists were carried out.

The murder committed by the gang was on April 8, 1940, when they robbed a barbecue stand in San Francisco, resulting in the shooting death of its owner, Leland S. Cash. After they fled to Sacramento.

Robert Sherrard became obsessed with murder but to the dismay of the other gang members, talked too much. So Ethel organized a picnic on April 14, 1940 on the banks of the Sacramento River in Sacramento, ostensibly to discuss plans for further crimes. Ethel added chloral hydrate to a glass of whisky which she persuaded Sherrard to drink. When he became unconscious the gang removed his clothes and put on his bathing costume before taking him to the Freeport Bridge in Sacramento, off which they threw him into the river to drown, in the hope that it would look like an accident. His body was found the next day and the police were immediately suspicious.

When Ethel was arrested the 38 caliber revolver used to kill Mr. Cash was found, with both hers and Sherrard's fingerprints still on it. Ives and Hawkins showed the police where they had thrown Sherrard's body off the bridge. The gang members soon turned on each other while in custody. With the co-operation of the San Francisco authorities it was decided to try them all on the charge of murdering Sherrard, leaving the Cash killing until later if necessary.

They were tried in Sacramento County before Superior Court judge Raymond Coughlin and a jury of five women and seven men. Judge Coughlin refused the defense's motion to bar the confession evidence.

At the end of the trial guilty verdicts were returned against all four defendants. Ethel, Hawkins and Simeone were the death sentence, while Albert Ives was found "innocent by reason of insanity" and was sent to the Napa State Asylum for the Insane.

The usual appeals and stays followed but finally after another brief stay Ethel took her final walk to the gas chamber on November 21, 1941. Because of this last minute stay San Quentin's Warden, Clinton Duffy had let the witnesses stand down so when Ethel reached the gas chamber they were

not in the room. Duffy offered to let her go back to her cell but she was quite happy to chat to him (about the weather) just outside the gas chamber while waiting their return. Ethel sat herself in one of the two chairs and appeared unconcerned as the preparations were made and the door closed and sealed. She declined a mask and witnesses could see her looking up intently at the light bulb. Under her dress she had pictures of her children taped to her chest together with the head of the stethoscope. The execution began at 10.25 am and took 11 minutes to kill her. She was observed to cough, her head dropped forward and then her neck arched back, before she coughed again and then exhaled deeply. It was suspected that the folds of her long dress impeded the rise of the cyanide gas from under the chair. Subsequently for female gas chamber executions the inmate was given a much shorter dress and in fact a bikini was suggested although there is no evidence that one was ever used.

One week later on November 28, Simone and Hawkins were gassed simultaneously for their part in the murder.



Ethel Spinelli



San Quentin's gas chamber

21) Toni Jo Henry was born Annie Beatrice McQuiston on January 3rd 1916 near Shreveport Louisiana, the third of five children. She became the only women to get the electric chair in Louisiana when she was put to death on the 28th November of 1942 for the brutal murder of Joseph P. Calloway on St. Valentine's Day, February 14th 1940. Originally Toni Jo was sentenced to be hanged but Louisiana changed it method of execution while she was in prison. Had the original sentence been carried out she would have been the last woman hanged in the U.S. For a detailed account of this case click [here](#).



Toni Jo Henry

22) Rosanna Lightner Phillips (black, age 26) and 29 year old Daniel Phillips were executed in North Carolina's gas chamber on January 1, 1943 at the Raleigh Central Prison. The couple were employed as domestic servants by Durham County farmer, 64 year old Harry F. Watkins, in early 1942. On August 3, 1942 Watkins was reported missing and a search of the property revealed his decomposed body at the bottom of a well. The corpse showed ax wounds to the neck and head. Two days after the killing the couple married. Rosanna and Daniel were the prime suspects and robbery was the alleged motive.

Their trial, before an all white jury lasted just 13 hours. Both had



implicated and blamed the other. Their appeals were dismissed and Governor Broughton refused clemency to Rosanna on the grounds that he didn't accept the idea that no woman should ever be executed in North Carolina.

However the Parole Board requested that Daniel be executed first, in case he exonerated Rosanna.

The couple were allowed 15 minutes together before Daniel's execution and The New York Times, of Jan. 2, 1943, reported that they forgave each other by the end, according to the prison chaplain, Mr. L. A. Watts.

Daniel entered the chamber at 10.01 but due to a fault with the cyanide release mechanism which required re-opening the chamber for the guards to fix, it was 10.08 before the gas was released and he was certified dead 12 minutes later. Once the residual cyanide gas had been purged, Rosanna was strapped into the wooden chair at 11.01 and took just 7 ½ minutes to die. This was the shortest time on record. Rosanna was the first woman executed by the state of North Carolina.

23) The next female execution occurred in neighboring South Carolina and was also the first for that state by electrocution. The condemned was Sue Stidham Logue (white, age 43) a former school teacher and a farmer's wife.

In September 1940 a neighbor, Davis Timmerman's, mule got into Wallace Logue's field and the mule kicked a calf to death, an incident that would ultimately claim the lives of eight people. Logue initially asked for \$20 in compensation which Tinnerman agreed to. However by the time he had gone to Timmerman's store to collect the money the price had risen to \$40, which Tinnerman didn't accept and the two got into an argument. Logue took up an ax handle and attacked Tinnerman who responded by shooting him twice. Tinnerman then locked up the store and drove Edgefield to report the killing to Sheriff L. H. Harling. Harling arrested Tinnerman and charged him with the killing, but at trial in March 1941 the jury found that he had acted in self defense and acquitted him.

Sue and her brother in law, 55 year old George Logue did not accept the verdict and decided that Tinnerman must die. She offered her nephew, Joe, \$500 to kill him and he in turn hired Clarence Bagwell. On September 17, 1941 Joe drove Bagwell to Timmerman's store and Bagwell went in and shot him five times.

The identity of the killer was soon established when a young woman went to the police saying that Joe had told her, while drunk, that he had killed a man for \$500 at the behest of his aunt. Bagwell was arrested and told that he had been seen at Timmerman's store at the time of the killing. He confessed and implicated Joe, who in turn implicated Sue and George Logue.

On Sunday, Nov. 16, 1941, newly elected Sheriff Wad Allen and Deputy W.L. "Doc" Clark, armed with warrants went to the Logue farm to arrest Sue and George. Someone had tipped George off to this and he, together with one Fred Dorn lay in wait for the sheriff. A gunfight ensued resulting in the death of Sheriff Allen, the later death of Fred Dorn and an injury to Deputy Clark from which he also died, two days later.

State Governor Jefferies ordered the farm surrounded by armed officers. In the hope of preventing further bloodshed the Governor prevailed on a family friend of the Logue's, local Circuit Court Judge Strom Thurmond to mediate, which he successfully did and they were arrested without incident.

Sue, George and Bagwell went on trial in January 1942 later in Lexington County, the venue having been moved to try and secure a fair trial. The proceedings lasted three days and the jury were out for just two hours before finding all three guilty. They were sentenced to death. Their appeals and other legal wrangling were unsuccessful as was an appeal for clemency to Governor Jefferies.

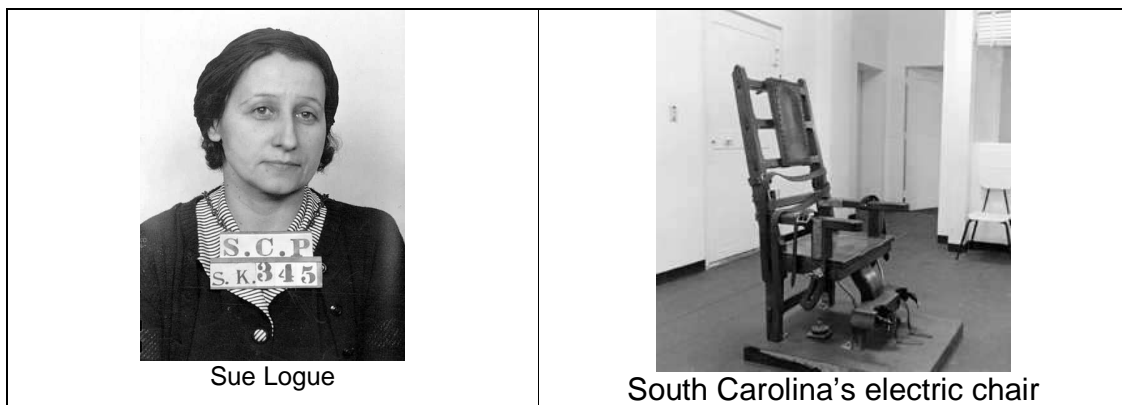


On January 12, 1943, Sue was transferred from the Columbia women's prison to the death house at the Central Correctional Institution in Columbia. It is claimed by his driver that Strom Thurmond took Sue in his official car and that he and Sue kissed and cuddled throughout the journey.

The trio had their heads shaved on January 14 and just after 6 am on the 15th Sue was the first to go to the chair, wearing a white blouse, grey slacks and white socks and with a towel around her shaven head. It was reported that she looked pale but was calm. After she was secured in the chair the Warden asked her if she had anything to say, to which she replied "No sir, I am ready to die."

At 6.18 the current was turned on and Sue was pronounced dead 3 minutes and 14 seconds later. George and Bagwell followed and by 7.30 am all were dead.

Joe Frank Logue also got the death penalty for his part in the killing. His execution date was originally set for Jan. 23, 1944. He ate his last meal and was prepped for the electric chair. Shortly before midnight on the 22nd, Governor. Olin D. Johnston visited Joe and decided to commute his sentence to life. He was paroled in 1960.



24) Mildred Louise Johnson (black, age 23) was executed in Mississippi's portable electric chair on May 19, 1944.

She had been convicted of the robbery murder of her landlady, Annie Laura Conklin, a partially disabled 74 year old, whom she beat to death in her home with Annie's fire irons. Mildred was observed in Annie's yard on the day of the murder and was quickly arrested. In her purse were found a blood stained blouse and Mildred's rent receipt, signed by Annie. Mildred had also taken Annie's rent receipt book which she threw away but later led the police to. She confessed to the killing but implicated her common law husband, Jessie James and her father in law, Charles Bartley. But prior to her trial she told the judge that she alone committed the crime.

At trial the court accepted that her confession was consistent with the physical facts of the case and that it had been freely and voluntarily given and therefore sentenced Mildred to death.

She faced her electrocution with amazing calmness and was certified dead at 4.16 am.

It is unclear from the little remaining information on this case whether Annie was white or black, both being claimed.

25) Helen Ray Fowler (black, age 36) had been married several times and was the mother of five children who lived in a notorious red light area, at 144 Memorial Parkway in Niagara Falls in up state New York. Also living in the house was 25 year old George Knight, who was described as her "boarder" – whether or not this meant her live in lover is unclear.



Helen and George were jointly convicted of the murder of one 63 year old William Fowler who was not related to Helen. William Fowler owned a gas station in Ransomville. His wife was in Cleveland for medical tests so he decided on a day out with his cousin Lee Clark of Niagara Falls on Oct. 30, 1943. It appears that both men did a lot of drinking and indulged themselves with prostitutes. Fowler also had a lot of cash on him, which he was stupid enough to show off in bars. Clark and Fowler separated and at the end of the day when Clark could not find Fowler he reported him missing. His corpse was not discovered until December 8, 1943, having been washed up behind the Niagara Falls Power Company. His wife was able to identify the body. Fowler's skull had been fractured according to the autopsy so the police began a homicide investigation.

A car that had been seen on North Grand Island Bridge was traced via its owner to Helen and Knight, who had borrowed it. Questioned by police Capt. Robert Fitzsimmons, each made a statement implicating the other.

It is impossible to know what actually happened to William Fowler and what parts Helen and George had in his killings, as each of them told different stories about how Fowler died as did Helen's children at the trial.

Helen and Knight were tried together before State Supreme Court Justice William Munson during the week of February 12, 1944 at the Niagara County Court in Lockport, the proceedings lasting five days. Both defendants were represented by experienced attorneys. The jury retired but after two hours returned to ask the judge a question which was whether two people could be guilty of first-degree murder when only one was responsible for the death. Judge Minson directed them that "Both parties engaged in commission of a felony are equally guilty." Thus the jury bought back guilty verdicts against them both and on February 19, 1944 Judge Munson sentenced them to death. Whether Helen took an active part in the killing is unclear, but she was certainly present, did nothing to prevent the murder and helped dispose of the body. On February 21, Helen and Knight were taken by train to Sing Sing and placed in the Death House.

The New York State Court of Appeals upheld the verdicts and sentences in June, but their attorneys got a stay from Gov. Thomas Dewey so that they could apply for a new trial. This was denied. Initially the couple were to die on September 4, 1944, but received two further stays, a new execution date being set for November 16, 1944.

Both declined special final meals. Helen remained silent and composed, according to witnesses, as guards strapped her into Sing Sing's electric chair. At 11:17 p.m., she was declared dead. Knight was strapped into the chair eight minutes later, offering a few final words. "Can I talk?" he asked. "I want to thank you all for being so nice to me."

26) Bessie Mae Williams (black, age 19) and Ralph Thompson (age 18) were executed in North Carolina's gas chamber at Raleigh for the murder of a taxi cab driver in Mecklenberg County in a dispute over the fare.

It would appear from the little information available that Bessie, Thompson and a younger girl, 15 year old Annie May Allison were in the taxi cab of a Mr. Minyard. Thompson confessed to stabbing him and Bessie to stealing two 50c coins from the car. It has been claimed that Allison beat Mr. Minyard with a brick.

At trial it was claimed by a witness that Bessie took an active role in the slaying, while she claimed that she pleaded with Thompson not to harm Mr. Minyard.

Bessie's actual age at the time of the murder is unclear – whether she was 19 as stated in court records or younger. Her birth certificate could not be found and even she wasn't sure. However this would not save her. In Allison's case her death sentence was commuted to life in prison by Governor Broughton, solely on the grounds of her age.

On December 19, 1944 Bessie became the first of three inmates to be executed. Clad in blue, striped short leg pajamas and crying as she entered the death chamber to face 28 witnesses, she was strapped into the chair and took eight minutes to die after the cyanide fumes started rising. Thompson followed, his death taking 13 minutes. A third prisoner, Melvin Wade who had been convicted of raping a 12 year old girl was the last to die.

27) 44 year old Lena Baker (black) was the first and only woman to be executed in Georgia's electric chair. She was convicted of the murder of Ernest B. Knight, a local gristmill owner in Cuthbert, Georgia, who had employed Lena as a maid while he was recovering from a broken leg. That she shot Knight is not in dispute, she immediately reported the shooting. She claimed that on the night of April 29, 1944 she acted in self defense after Knight locked her in the gristmill and threatened to beat her. She managed to get his gun and fired to prevent him killing her. She was tried before Judge Charles Worrill sitting with an all white jury in the Randolph County courthouse on August 14, 1944. The proceedings lasted less than the whole day.

She was sentenced to death but got a 60 day stay from Governor Ellis Arnall to allow the Board of Pardons and Parole to review her case. Clemency was denied in January 1945 and so on February 23, 1945 Lena was transferred to Reidsville State Prison.

She was executed on March 5, 1945, going to the chair calmly but proclaiming her innocence.

Her last words were, "What I done, I did in self-defense, or I would have been killed myself. Where I was I could not overcome it. God has forgiven me. I have nothing against anyone. I picked cotton for Mr. Pritchett, and he has been good to me. I am ready to go. I am one in the number. I am ready to meet my God. I have a very strong conscience."

She was pronounced dead at 11:26 a.m., after six minutes. However that was not the end of this case. Most unusually Lena received a posthumous pardon from the Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles in August 2005. They accepted that they had made a serious error in not granting her clemency and that she was only guilty of voluntary manslaughter.



28) 20 year old Corrine Sykes, an illiterate black housemaid, was electrocuted in Pennsylvania on October 14, 1946 for the murder by stabbing of her employer, Freda Woodlinger (white), on December 7, 1944. Three rings, \$50 in cash and a sable fur were stolen from Mrs. Woodlinger's house in West Oak Lane, Philadelphia.

Corrine had been hired by Mrs. Woodlinger three days before the murder and had given a false name and references to hide the fact that she had just been released from prison having served 11 months for the theft of jewelry.

She was arrested and implicated three men, including her boyfriend, J. C. Kelly, who was later given a five year sentence for receiving the stolen property. She claimed that he had threatened to kill her and her mother if she did not steal for him.

Corrine is alleged to have made a signed confession (remember she was illiterate) which she afterwards withdrew and of which no trace could later be found. Doubts were raised as to whether the petite Corrine would have had the physical strength to inflict the several stab wounds and also as to her mental state. She was prone to hysteria and had an IQ of just 63 when tested in school at age 13. Today this alone would bar her from the death penalty. The US Supreme Court ruled in *Atkins v. Virginia* that a defendant with an IQ of less than 70 cannot be put to death.

At trial in March 1945, Corrine was defended by Raymond Alexander. His strategy was not to try and show that Corrine didn't commit the murder, but rather that her low intelligence and mental problems and his assertion the J. C. Kelly persuaded her to carry out the murder should be accepted as mitigation and that she should not get the death penalty. The all white jury didn't buy this and convicted her of first degree murder after five hours of deliberation and recommended death, which Judge Vincent A. Carroll sentenced her to.

After the usual appeals had been turned down and Governor Edward Martin had refused clemency the by now 22 year old Corrine was prepared for execution on October 14, 1946 at the Rockview Penitentiary in Belefonte. Her hair was only partially shaved and she was permitted a last meal. She walked calmly to the chair, sat herself into it and looked around at the witnesses. The usual preparations were made and she was electrocuted without incident. Her execution divided the Philadelphia communities along racial lines.

29) South Carolina's only other female execution was that of Rosa or Rose Marie Stinette which took place at the Central Correctional Institution in Columbia in the same electric chair that had been used for Sue Logue's execution.

Rosa (black) was a 49 year old "Root Doctor" or herbalist from Williamsburg County who conspired with three men to murder her husband on whose life she had no less than eight insurance policies. His mutilated body was found on a railroad track.



At trial two of the men, one her boyfriend, got life sentences for their part in the killing while Rosa and the other man got the death penalty. He was reprieved by Governor Williams and Rosa went to the chair alone. As the switch was thrown, the resultant electrical surge blew the light fuse and the witnesses now in virtual darkness observed sparks coming from Rosa's head and arms.

Her daughter, Katie Grant, could not afford a funeral for her mother so she was buried within the penitentiary cemetery.

As is so often the case with black female murderers there is very little information available.



30) Louise Peete Judson (white, age 64) had lived a life of crime, despite having an expensive education and a cultured background. She originated from Bienville, Louisiana, born Lofie Louise Preslar on September 20, 1883. She had been accused of three murders. The first took place in 1912, when her boyfriend Joe Appel was killed in Waco, Texas. She was acquitted of this on the basis of self defense, claiming that he tried to rape her. In 1915 she married Richard Peete but left him in 1920.

The next murder occurred on May 30, 1920 when Jacob Charles Denton was shot in Los Angeles, California. Louise buried his body in the basement. For this she received a life sentence in January 1921, of which she served 18 years in California's Tehachapi Prison (the original California Institution for Women) before her release on parole on April 11, 1939. Her final murder, the one that would send her to San Quentin's gas chamber, is thought to have occurred on or around May 30, 1944. The victim was Margaret Logan of Pacific Palisades, California who was Louise's social worker who had helped her win parole. In the same month she married Lee Judson.



After her release from prison she went to live with her parole officer, Emily Latham in Los Angeles. After Mrs. Latham died Louise went to live with the Logan's and soon managed to get Arthur Logan certified insane. She and Judson then moved into the Logan's home. Judson was suspicious of various things about his new home, a bullet hole in a wall, a mound of soil in the garden and an insurance policy with Louise as the beneficiary. Louise had started forging her own parole reports and the parole supervisor became suspicious and reported it to the police who called at the Logan's home in late December 1944. Lee Judson mentioned his suspicions and Margaret Logan's body was soon unearthed. Louise claimed that Arthur had killed her due to his insanity and that she had buried the body because nobody would believe Arthur was the killer. The police arrested Louise and charged her with Margaret's murder.

She came to trial in May 1945, before Judge Harold Landreth and the prosecution laid out the many similarities between the killing of Margaret and of Jacob Denton. Louise was convicted on May 28 with the jury just needing three hours to find her guilty. She was formally condemned on June 1, 1945. Her appeals were dismissed and Louise was transferred to San Quentin for execution on April 11, 1947, still maintaining her innocence of killing anyone. On that morning she wore the gray and burgundy print dress that she had worn at the trial. She walked to the chamber calmly and acknowledged Warden Clinton Duffy whom she had known for some years. She was strapped in by 10.03 am and certified dead ten minutes later. There were no scenes and no emotional outbursts, because as Louise said, "I am not built that way." No less than 80 people witnessed her death. She was buried in the Angelus-Rosedale Cemetery, Los Angeles. It is unclear how many victims Louise really had, there were at least three murder victims, but as many as five together with two husbands, Richard Peete and Lee Judson whose suicides she was largely responsible for.

31) Martha Beck was born Martha Jule Seabrook on May 6, 1920 in Milton, Florida. She had an unhappy and difficult childhood, largely as a result of being over weight due to glandular problems. She was teased and bullied at school and allegedly molested by her brother. Love never seemed to come to Martha. She got pregnant but the boyfriend didn't want anything further to do with her. She returned to Florida and met and married Alfred Beck in Pensacola. She was soon pregnant again, but Beck left her before the baby boy was born. So, alone, unemployed and with two small children, she placed an advertisement in a lonely hearts column in 1947. This was answered by Raymond Fernandez, who was 5 ½ years older than Martha and of Spanish descent, with a wife and four children still living in Spain. Fernandez visited Martha in Florida but soon she was living with him in New York having dumped her kids on the Salvation Army. Fernandez responded to lonely hearts ads as a means of meeting women, whom he would rob after he got bored with the relationship. He told Martha about his criminal past and she agreed to go along with the scheme, posing as his sister or sister in law to lure unsuspecting women into the net. However she was also very jealous of Fernandez and got angry if he had sex with his victims. The couple's first victim was Miss Ester Henne who Fernandez married in Virginia. He managed to steal her car and money when she left his New York apartment for good after less than a week of marriage. Next came Myrtle Young from Arkansas. Fernandez drugged her when she protested about his money grabbing activities and put her, still unconscious, on a bus back to her home. She died the following day, her estate \$4000 lighter.

Next came 66 year old Janet Fay who became engaged to Fernandez in 1949 and stayed at his Long Island apartment. Martha found Janet in bed with Fernandez and in a jealous rage smashed her skull with a hammer. Fernandez finished off the poor woman by strangling her.

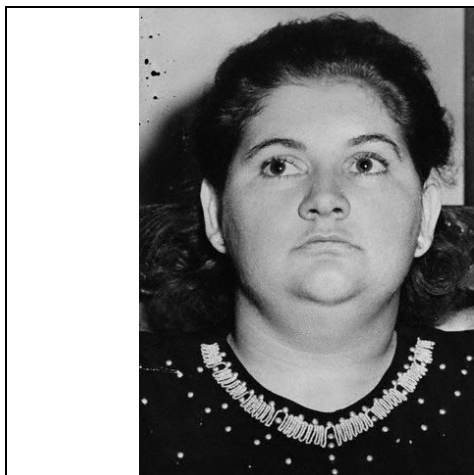
In January 1949, Martha and Fernandez left New York and went to Grand Rapids, Michigan to meet up with 41 year old widow, Delphine Downing, whom Fernandez had been writing to. Delphine had a 2 year old daughter called Rainelle. Fernandez soon seduced Delphine and the couple's sexual activities enraged Martha. After a fight Fernandez gave Delphine a sleeping pill to stop her arguing. This worked but Rainelle wouldn't stop crying so Martha strangled her into unconsciousness. Fearing that when Delphine woke up she would see the marks on her daughter's neck, Fernandez used Delphine's former husband's gun to shoot her in the head as she slept. Rainelle had survived the attempted strangulation and for the next two days kept crying and wanting her mother. In the end Martha drowned her in a bath tub in the basement. Neighbors had become suspicious and reported their concerns to the police who visited the apartment. Martha and Fernandez were arrested on February 28, 1949 and soon confessed in the hope of a plea deal. Michigan did not have the death penalty so they thought they would be okay, but they were extradited to New York in March 1949 charged with the Janet Fay murder.

Their trial opened on June 28, 1949 before Judge Ferdinand Pecora and was a media sensation from the get go, the pair being dubbed "The Lonely Hearts killers". Fernandez took the stand on July 11 and denied killing Mrs. Fay. He admitted that he had confessed in Michigan, but only to save Martha, but now wished to retract that confession. However the detailed confessions really left the jury of ten men and two women with no alternative but to convict them. The guilty verdicts were bought in on the evening of August 18, 1949, after 44 days. There was no recommendation for mercy for either defendant and they were formally sentenced to the electric chair on August 22. Both were transferred to Sing Sing prison. On death row they wrote love letters to each other. The routine appeals failed and March 8, 1951 was the date set for the executions, after Governor Thomas Dewey declined to intervene and a Federal judge had denied a writ of habeas corpus earlier that day.

At 11pm the first of four electrocutions set for that night were carried out by Joseph Francel when he threw the switch on 22 year old John King. King was followed by 22 year old Richard Power, the two young men being executed for killing William Hupe during a hold up. Next came Raymond Fernandez and finally at 11.21pm, Martha, considered the strongest of the four and therefore left to last. She was a tight fit in the electric chair due to her bulk. She appeared to smile and winked at one of the matrons. 32 people witnessed their executions. Her body was claimed for burial by her mother.

In her final statement she said "What does it matter who is to blame?" she said. "My story is a love story, but only those tortured with love can understand what I mean. I was pictured as a fat unfeeling woman...I am not unfeeling, stupid or moronic...in the history of the world how many crimes have been attributed to love?" The chaplain had asked her if she repented and she replied "I know my sin is great, but the penalty is great too. That makes things even, I guess."

It is notable that Martha's weight was mentioned in all the newspaper reports I have read.



Martha



Fernandez and Martha

32) Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were a married couple who were executed under Federal authority for conspiracy to commit espionage. Ethel was the only one of these 52 women not to die for murder. The couple were charged with passing information regarding the US's atomic bomb to Russia. At this time this was an incredibly sensitive military issue as well as a very controversial one.

Julius and Ethel Greenglass, who were both Jewish, met as members of the Young Communist League. He was an engineer with the U.S. Army Signal Corps and she was a secretary. They married in 1939 and had two sons, Michael and Robert. By 1942 both had become members of the American Communist Party and soon after, Julius' espionage activities began. In January

1950 authorities discovered that Klaus Fuchs had passed key information to the Soviets via a courier named Harry Gold, who was arrested on May 23, 1950. In his confession Gold implicated Ethel's younger brother, Sgt. David Greenglass, a former machinist at Los Alamos, the secret atomic bomb facility. Greenglass confessed to passing secret information to the USSR and implicated the Rosenbergs. Julius was arrested in July 1950 and Ethel on August 11, 1950.

In August 1950 the couple were indicted by a Grand Jury and came to trial, amidst huge media interest, in New York on March 6, 1951, before Judge Irving Kaufman. David Greenglass was the prosecution's star witness. He claimed that Ethel had typed notes containing secret information which were given to Gold who passed them on to Anatoly A. Yakovlev, the Soviet vice consul in New York. The Rosenbergs were convicted under Section 2 of the Espionage Act on March 29, 1951. Prior to sentencing on April 5, 1951, Judge Kaufman told them "I consider your crime worse than murder... I believe your conduct in putting into the hands of the Russians the A-Bomb years before our best scientists predicted Russia would perfect the bomb has already caused, in my opinion, the Communist aggression in Korea, with the resultant casualties exceeding 50,000 and who knows but that millions more of innocent people may pay the price of your treason. Indeed, by your betrayal you undoubtedly have altered the course of history to the disadvantage of our country. No one can say that we do not live in a constant state of tension. We have evidence of your treachery all around us every day for the civilian defense activities throughout the nation are aimed at preparing us for an atom bomb attack."

The usual appeals followed and were turned down, as was an appeal for clemency to President Eisenhower. He commented "I can only say that, by immeasurably increasing the chances of atomic war, the Rosenbergs may have condemned to death tens of millions of innocent people all over the world. The execution of two human beings is a grave matter. But even graver is the thought of the millions of dead whose deaths may be directly attributable to what these spies have done." In Federal cases, only the President can commute a death sentence.

At this time there was no Federal Death Row, so Federal executions were "contracted out" to the state in which the trial had taken place and used the method prevailing in that state, under the provisions of US Code, title 18, section 3566. The Rosenbergs were thus taken to Sing Sing to face electrocution. Normally executions at Sing Sing took place at 11pm, but because of the start of the Jewish Sabbath the Rosenbergs were electrocuted earlier in the evening of June 19, 1953. At the time of execution Julius was 35 years old and Ethel 38. Julius went first, at about 8 p.m. A few minutes after his body was removed from the electric chair, Ethel Rosenberg was brought in. She was pronounced dead at 8:16 pm, having required five shocks to ensure death. Both proclaimed their innocence to the end.

David Greenglass was sentenced to ten years for his part in the conspiracy.





Ethel



Julius



33) Our next case is another arsenic poisoning murder for insurance money. Two year old Shirley Dianne Weldon was poisoned by her aunt, Earle C. Dennison, whom she was very fond of and who gave her an orange drink laced with arsenic at the child's home in Wetumpka, Elmore County, Alabama on May 1, 1952. Shirley rapidly became ill and began vomiting. Her mother, Cora Belle, rushed her to the Wetumpka hospital where coincidentally 55 year old Earle worked as an operating room nurse. Shirley died later the same day and the autopsy revealed arsenic. A week later Earle was arrested and made her first attempt at suicide by taking an overdose of sleeping pills. When she had sufficiently recovered she was charged with murder. She was later charged with murdering Shirley's older sister, Poly Ann in the same way two years earlier after her body was exhumed. This case was not proceeded with.



Investigating the case police discovered the life insurance policies taken out on Shirley which amounted to \$5,500. Her parents later successfully sued the insurance company for issuing policies to a person who had no legal interest in the child's life. Earle was transferred to the Julia Tutwiler Prison for Women in Wetumpka to await trial where she made a written confession to the murders to Superintendent, Edwina Mitchell and Sheriff Lester Holley. Her trial should have begun on August 14, 1952 but was delayed by a day because Earle had attempted to slit her wrists with a razor blade on the 13th. Armed with the confession, the forensic and witness evidence the prosecution had no trouble in getting a guilty verdict and death sentence recommendation from the all male jury. Her defense of insanity was not accepted. Earle was the first white woman to get the electric chair in Alabama and her case made national news as a result. The Alabama Supreme Court unanimously affirmed the sentence (Dennison v. State, 259 Ala. 424 (1953). On the day prior to execution, September 3, 1953, Governor Gordon Persons refused clemency, saying "I will not interfere with the sentence". At 12.09 am on September 4, 1953 Earle was led to the "Yellow Mama" as Alabama's bright yellow electric chair was known. She complained that the straps were too tight and that the head electrode hurt. The warden at Kilby prison, where the electric chair was situated, Mr. C. P. Burford, asked Earle if she had any final statement. She replied "Please forgive me for everything I did. I forgive everybody and I hope everybody has forgiven me." According to newspaper reports once the execution preparations had been made only one guard remained with Earle in the chamber. When all was ready he held up a lollypop shaped yellow

paddle to signal for the current to be turned on. The same report stated that it took just one shock of 17 seconds to kill her.

34) Bonnie Brown Heady (age 41) and Carl Austin Hall were both alcoholics. She was a former gangster's moll and prostitute and he a drug addict who had served prison time for robbery, despite having come from a wealthy family where he had never had to work. Hall was released from the Missouri State Prison on April 24, 1953 and soon met Bonnie. It seemed to be love at first sight for this couple and Bonnie took him to live with her in St. Joseph, Missouri. She was fascinated by Hall's plan to kidnap and murder the six year old son of Robert Greenlease Sr. who was a multi millionaire car dealer. Bonnie commented "Why, that's better than sex."

The abduction of Robert Greenlease Jr. was planned for September 28, 1953 and the couple had prepared a grave in Bonnie's back yard the day before. On the morning of the 28th Bonnie took a cab to Robert's school, the French Institute of Notre Dame de Scion in Kansas City. Here she told Sister Morand that she was the boy's aunt and that she had come to collect young Robert because his mother had had a heart attack. Sister Morand later felt uneasy about letting Robert go and telephoned Robert's home, only to find his mother was fine.

The Greenlease's received a ransom note the following day demanding \$600,000, by which time Hall had already Robert and buried the body in the makeshift grave in Bonnie's yard.

The kidnapping was major news nationwide. The FBI wanted to assist but under provisions in the 1932 Lindbergh Kidnapping Law could not get involved for seven days. The police similarly held off at the insistence of the Greenlease family, while the ransom payment was negotiated. Having got the money Bonnie and Hall went to St. Louis where they partied until Hall deserted Bonnie and moved to the up-market Congress Hotel. Staff at the Congress became suspicious of his lavish spending and reported it to the police. When they searched Hall's room they found nearly a quarter of a million dollars in cash and a revolver with three empty chambers. This was enough to arrest him. Bonnie was picked up at home the following day. On October 7, 1953 Robert's body was unearthed at 1201 South 38th Street in St. Joseph, Missouri. They were charged under the Federal Lindbergh Law as they had crossed the state line from Missouri to Kansas where the killing took place. This law provided for the death penalty where the kidnap victim was harmed.

On October 30, 1953, Hall and Bonnie appeared before Judge Albert L. Reeves in Kansas City, Missouri. Both pleaded guilty. As a result there was a sentencing hearing which concluded on November 19, 1953, with the jury recommending the death penalty after only an hour and eight minutes of deliberations. Judge Reeves said, "I think the verdict fits the evidence. It is the most coldblooded, brutal murder I have ever tried."

As normal in Federal Cases, the couple's execution would be carried out in the state where the crime was committed and using the execution method of that state. In Missouri this was lethal gas. From September 1937 Missouri executions took place in a small purpose built stone building in the grounds of the State Penitentiary in Jefferson City. The gas chamber had two chairs and thus it was possible to execute Bonnie and Hall side by side.

As they had pleaded guilty they could not appeal and the execution was set for one minute after midnight on December 18, 1953, just 81 days after the murder.

Warden Ralph N. Eidson had originally wanted Carl to wear a swimsuit and Bonnie to wear a bikini for their executions, to avoid cyanide gas getting trapped in folds of clothing but under pressure from women's groups allowed Bonnie to wear a green dress and slippers and Hall to wear a green shirt and slacks. At around 11.30 pm they were driven the quarter of a mile to the gas chamber

and placed in a holding cell together. Here it seems they spent the time kissing and cuddling and Ward Colwell, one of the reporters present, noted lipstick on Hall's face and neck as he entered the execution room. At midnight they were blindfolded and led to the gas chamber. Bonnie joked with the guards strapping her into the chair, saying "Its tight, I am not going anywhere." To Warden Eidson Bonnie said "Thanks for everything. You've been very kind." She asked Hall "Are you all right, honey?" He replied "Yes, Momma." US Marshall William B. Tatman made a last vain attempt to get Hall to say where unrecovered half of the ransom money was but both refused to tell. The door was closed at 12.04 am and the couple could be seen still conversing inside the chamber. 30 seconds later the cyanide pellets were released into the bowls of sulfuric acid under the chairs. Hall took a deep breath as the cyanide hit his face and was quickly unconscious but Bonnie tried to fight the lethal fumes and struggled somewhat. Hall was pronounced dead at 12.12, Bonnie at 12.14 and 10 seconds by the doctors outside the chamber listening to their hearts through Bowles stethoscopes. Neither had showed any fear of their fate.



Bonnie and Carl



The mugshots of Carl & Bonnie



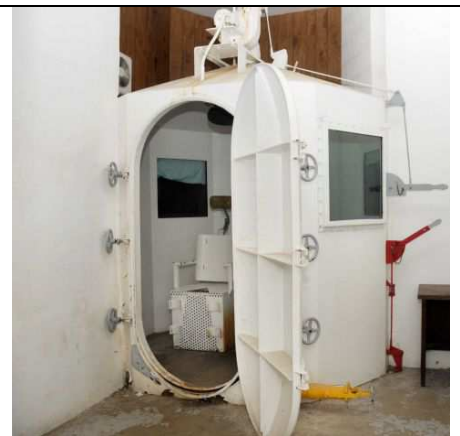
Inside Missouri's gas chamber



Bonnie



Bobby Greenlease



Missouri's gas chamber

35) On April 13, 1952, 54 year old Dovie Blanche Myers became Dovie Blanche Dean, when she married 69 year old Hawkins Dean, the day after divorcing Carl Myers who was in prison for sexually abusing one of their children. Dovie had six children and eight grand children. Hawkins Dean was a reasonably well off farmer living on 115 acres in Clermont County, Ohio. The marriage was largely one of convenience rather than romance, as Dovie put it "He wanted a housekeeper and I wanted a home." She moved into the farmhouse near Owensville with her son, 31 year old Carl Myers Jr.

Hawkins made a will in favor of Dovie which would leave her \$27,106. On August 21, 1952 Hawkins died and an autopsy revealed arsenic poisoning. In fact Dovie had used "Zip Rat" a commercial rat poison, a bottle of which was found by the police hidden in the coal shed. Dovie, Carl and son in law, Clyde Bryant were taken in for questioning by Clermont County Sheriff, Clyde Derricks. Dovie initially blamed her son, but later confessed to the poisoning, telling the police "I got him before he got me" and claiming that they fought a lot because Hawkins could not meet her physical needs.



Dovie's trial began in the Clermont County Courthouse on Monday December 8, 1952 before Judge Harry Britton and would last a week. After 40 minutes the jury returned a guilty verdict on Dovie's 55th birthday and did not recommend mercy. Judge Britton passed sentence as follows: "It is therefore the judgment of this Court that the death sentence be executed under these findings, by causing a current of electricity of sufficient intensity to be passed through your body to cause your death. . . the execution of this death penalty shall be put into effect under the law on June 5, 1953."

She was transferred to the Ohio State Penitentiary in Columbus and then to the Marysville (Ohio) Reformatory for Women. Due to Dovie's total lack of emotion throughout the proceedings she underwent a mental health assessment. She had become known as "the woman who wouldn't cry", however she was found to be legally sane.

Her appeals were dismissed and Governor Frank Lausche refused to grant clemency.

On the afternoon of Feb. 15, 1954 Dovie was transferred back to the Ohio State Penitentiary for execution at 8 pm. She wore a cheap blue dress, flat heeled shoes, and white anklets. The usual preparations were made and Dovie went calmly to her death. She made the following final statement : "When I got the witness stand they made light of me because I couldn't cry. . . I had grief inside like knives." Warden Ralph W. Alvis gave the signal for the execution to begin and 1,950 volts coursed through her body for 10 seconds followed by 500 volts for 40 seconds and then a final application of 1,950 volts for a further 10 seconds.

Dovie was interred at the cemetery in St. Albans, West Virginia, beside her son, who had died in accident some years earlier.

36) The next female execution took place in the same electric chair four months later when Betty Butler became the third woman to be electrocuted in Ohio, on June 11, 1954. Originally both Betty and Dovie Dean above were scheduled to die on the same day, but Betty's appeals delayed her execution. Betty Evelyn Butler was a 26 year old black mother of two young children who was separated from her husband and down on her luck, receiving no assistance from the state or her family. She was convicted of drowning 35 year old Evelyn Clark (black) in Sharon Woods Park in Hamilton County Ohio. It would appear that Evelyn offered to help Betty financially in return for sex. Betty went to live with her in Cincinnati and may have had a sexual relationship with Evelyn, but also got into frequent fights with her and was apparently repulsed by lesbian sex. On September 6, 1952 the two women were on a fishing trip in the park with one Deezie Ivory. Another fight ensued and Betty attempted to



strangle Evelyn with a handkerchief. Finding that she was still alive she dragged Evelyn into the lake and held her head under the water, drowning her. The drowning was witnessed and Betty and Ivory detained by park rangers until the police arrived and arrested them. Ivory was released without charge but testified for the prosecution at trial.

Betty did not and indeed could not deny killing Evelyn, but her defense was that she was a sex slave and killed Clark to escape her perverted intentions. The jury did not accept this and convicted her of first degree murder. She was sentenced to death.

The Ohio Appeals Court found no reason to interfere with the verdict and her execution was set for January 15, 1954. Her attorneys took the case to the Ohio Supreme Court who similarly upheld the verdict. Again Governor Frank Lausche refused to grant clemency.

While in the Marysville (Ohio) Reformatory for Women, Betty discovered that she had quite a talent for drawing and made charcoal sketches of her children, Here she was nicknamed "The Sphinx" due to her quiet and reserved behavior.

She was transferred to the Ohio State Penitentiary in Columbus at 7pm on June 12, 1954. An hour later she went calmly to the electric chair wearing a pink and black print dress and white bobby socks. Three contacts were necessary to kill her and she was pronounced dead at 8 10 pm.

Ohio's electric chair, built in 1897, was unusual in that it had adjustable leather covered metal restraints for the shoulders and wrists that were locked into position once the inmate was seated. Most other states used simple leather straps over the torso and arms to secure the inmate.

37) Barbara Graham together with Emmet Perkins and Jack Santo were executed for the robbery murder of called Mrs. Mabel Monahan. They died in the gas chamber at San Quentin prison in California on June 3, 1955. A fully detailed account of this case can be found [here](#)

38) Rhonda Belle Martin was a confessed serial killer of six people, including three daughters, her mother and two husbands. The prosecution alleged that her motive was to get life insurance payouts but this was probably not really the case. She only seemed to get enough to cover the funeral expenses and did not make a profit out of the murders. She left a note in her bible in prison which was found after her execution and which read "At my death, whether it be natural or otherwise, I want my body given to some scientific institution to be used as they see fit, but especially to see if someone can find out why I committed the crimes I have committed. I can't understand it, for I had no reason whatever. Something is definitely wrong. Can't someone find it and save someone else that agony I have been through." Clearly she didn't seem to know what drove her to kill six people and attempt to kill her last husband too.

At the time of her execution Rhonda was 50 years old and prior to her arrest had worked as a waitress in Birmingham, Alabama. Her crimes came to light when police investigated the illness of her last husband, Ronald Martin in March 1953. Under questioning Rhonda admitted to the poisoning in 1951 of her fourth husband, Claude Martin, who was Ronald's father. Rhonda married her stepson who was 21 years younger than her, eight months after his father's death on April 27, 1951. Ronald was left paralyzed from the waist down from the effects of the poison.

On May 19, 1956 a Montgomery Grand Jury indicted Rhonda on six counts of murder. These were of Claude Martin in 1951, George Garrett, her second husband, in 1939, Carolyn Garrett, their six



year old daughter in 1940, her mother Mary Francis Gibbon in 1944, 3 year old Emogene Garrett who died in 1937 and 11 year old Ellyn Garrett in 1943.

Having signed a written confession all Rhonda could do in her defense was to plead insanity. A psychiatric examination had found her to be schizophrenic. However the jury at her trial rejected the insanity argument after three hours and ten minutes of deliberation on June 5, 1956. In Alabama condemned inmates have an automatic appeal which was heard on March 14, 1957 and denied a re-trial. An appeal for clemency was denied by Governor James E. Folsom. At 12.07 am on October 11, 1957, wearing the white and black print dress that she had worn at her trial, Rhonda, clutching a bible, was taken to the electric chair in Kilby Prison in Montgomery. Her execution was delayed by three minutes because the electrodes had not been connected. At 12.10 am she received a shock of 2,200 volts and was pronounced dead at 12.16 am.

39) Elizabeth Ann "Ma" Duncan made several pieces of history when she was put to death in the gas chamber at San Quentin, California on the morning of August 8, 1962. She was the last woman executed in California to date, the last woman to be gassed, the last pre-Furman female execution in the US and one third of the last triple execution in California. At the time of her execution Elizabeth was 58 years old and had been married countless times. Some of the marriages were bigamous. She retained the name Duncan as apparently this husband had the best credit score!

The case is bizarre and centers around her all consuming passion for her son Frank. She had five other children, one of whom died of a brain hemorrhage, but none of them meant anything much to her. Elizabeth had striven to put Frank through law school and he had become an attorney. By November 1957, Elizabeth was living with 29 year old Frank in Santa Barbara and they quarreled over a proposed beauty parlor that they were going to set up. Frank told his mother to leave and having done so she took an overdose and was admitted to hospital. Visiting his mother there, Frank met 29 year old nurse, Olga Kupczyk and the two quickly formed a relationship. Elizabeth was horrified by this and ordered Frank to stop seeing Olga. When he refused she threatened to kill Olga.

In June 1958 Frank and Olga married in secret. Frank slept at his mother's, including on his wedding night, to keep up the charade. After a few days he moved into Olga's apartment. In August Elizabeth persuaded Frank and Olga to move in with her. Elizabeth's next ploy was to go to the Ventura County Superior Court with one Ralph Winterstein and pass themselves off as Olga and Frank and seek an annulment of the marriage. This was successful. Elizabeth also made numerous threats to Olga and constantly harassed her.

In the Spring of 1958 Elizabeth learned that Olga was pregnant by Frank. This was too much for her to bear so she hired two men to kill Olga. They were 22 year old Luis Moya and 25 year old Augustine Baldonado who were paid \$175 up front to cover expenses. The original plan was to take Olga over the border into Mexico to kill her. They were allegedly going to receive the balance of \$3000 on successful completion of the task and a further \$3000 when Elizabeth could come up with it.

The murder took place on the night of November 18, 1958. Moya and Baldonado went to Olga's apartment in Santa Barbara and Moya told Olga that Frank was in the car and had been injured in an accident. She went out to the car with him and was hit on the head and dragged into the car. At this time Olga was 7 months pregnant. Olga put up a valiant fight for her life and was repeatedly hit with a gun, which became inoperable. They drove into the California hills at the Casitas Dam construction site near Ojai. Instead of shooting their victim, as intended, Moya and Baldonado had to resort to strangling her and burying her, possibly still alive, in a shallow grave in an orange grove. In the early hours of next morning Moya and Baldonado went back to Elizabeth to collect

the remainder of the money she had promised them. All they got for their botched murder was \$380.

The police arrested Moya and Baldonado on unrelated charges and during questioning Moya confessed to Olga's murder and implicated Elizabeth. She contended that she had paid the pair money because they had threatened Frank. Olga's body was discovered on Sunday, December 21, when Baldonado led them to where she was buried.

One might think Frank would have been just a little bit angry about having his wife and unborn child murdered at his mother's instigation, but apparently he wasn't and helped with his mother's defense and appeals. He reportedly said that Elizabeth was the best mother a son could have.

Elizabeth came to trial in Ventura County on February 24, 1959. As she could not deny organizing the murder plot she pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity.

District Attorney Roy Gustafson presented some 44 witnesses during the four week trial, who testified to Elizabeth's unhealthy relationship with her son, her threats to Olga, and her attempts to recruit killers. On March 16, 1959 the jury came back with a verdict of guilty of 1st degree murder. On March 20, after hearing reports from court-appointed psychiatrists that Elizabeth was sane she was sentenced of death.

Moya and Baldonado had already pleaded guilty at separate trials and had also been sentenced of death.

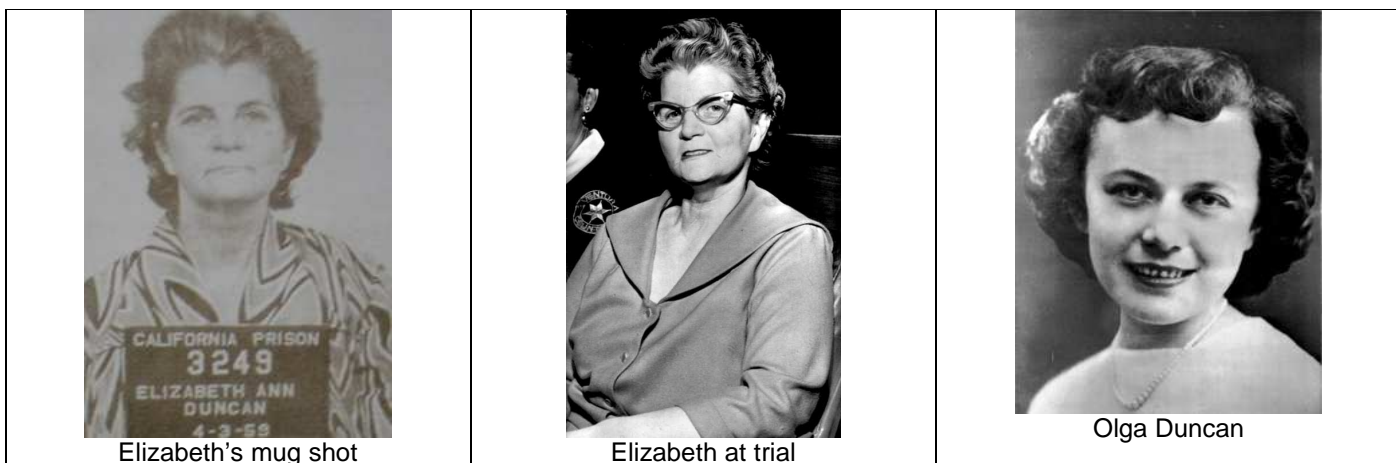
Three years of appeals followed. Edmund "Pat" Brown, the then governor of California declined clemency after having the case carefully examined, including the psychiatric evidence. "From a clinical psychiatric standpoint there is no evidence of mental illness, and she can best be fitted into the category of character behavior neurosis, which is relatively synonymous to a sociopathic personality," and, "every psychiatrist who examined her could find no evidence of psychosis or mental illness in the legal sense sufficient to justify a commutation or an act of clemency in this matter."

Finally an the execution date was fixed and Elizabeth was driven to San Quentin in San Francisco from the Corona Women's Prison near Los Angeles, a journey of some 400 miles.

At 10 am on August 8, 1962 she walked calmly to the gas chamber wearing a of red and white striped seersucker dress but without her normal horn rimmed glasses. Her last words to Warden Fred Dickson were "I'm innocent. Where's Frank?" The cyanide pellets were released at 10.04 am and she was pronounced dead at 10.12. 57 people witnessed her death. There were anti-death penalty protestors outside the prison.

Three hours later Moya and Baldonado died side by side for the murder.

Frank could not witness his mother's execution because he and Arthur Warner were at the U S Court of Appeal, trying to get a stay for Elizabeth, which was denied by Judge Walter S. Pope. Frank later claimed his mother's body. Frank went on to marry twice more and have a successful career as a lawyer.



There were no female executions for the next 22 years and would be three women executed in the period November 1984 – December 1999.

40) The first post-Furman execution.

Velma Marge Barfield made international headlines when she became the first woman to be executed in America for 22 years and first since the re-introduction of the death penalty in 1976. She was also the first woman to be executed by lethal injection.

She was put to death at 2.00 a.m. on November 2, 1984 at the Central Prison in Raleigh, North Carolina. Velma was another serial poisoner. A detailed account of her case is [here](#).



41) Karla Faye Tucker became only the second woman ever executed in Texas. In a case that again made international headlines, she was put to death by lethal injection on February 3, 1998, for the brutal pickax murders of Jerry Lynn Dean and Deborah Thornton on June 13, 1983.

A detailed account of her case is [here](#).



42) Judias (Judi) Buenoano - Florida's "Black Widow".

Judi poisoned a husband with arsenic, drowned her paralyzed son and tried to blow up her fiancé with a car bomb. For this she was executed in Florida's electric chair on March 30, 1998.

A detailed account of her case is [here](#).



43) 62 year old Betty Lou Beets was convicted of the murder of her husband, Jimmy Don Beets, a retired Dallas Fire Department captain, in Gun Barrel City, Henderson County, Texas, in 1983. She was also indicted for the murder of her fourth husband, Doyle Barker, but this case was not proceeded with as the DA's office already had a death penalty conviction in the first case. Both men had been shot in the head with a 38 caliber revolver which was later found in the home and their bodies buried in the yard. Betty had also been convicted of shooting her second husband, but he survived the attack.

On August 6, 1983, Betty reported Jimmy missing and his boat was later found in Cedar Creek Lake in Henderson County, with various personal belongings, but no sign of a body. Two years



would pass before the police received a tip off about the case and arrested Betty. Armed with a search warrant they soon discovered Jimmy's and Doyle's bodies and the murder weapon.

Betty was tried the 173rd District Court of Henderson County and found guilty on October 11, 1985. As a result the case moved into the penalty phase and the jury recommended death on October 14.

Two of Betty's children, Robert Branson and his sister, Shirley Stegner, told detectives that Betty had told them of her plan to kill Jimmy. Shirley had assisted her mother in burying the body of Barker in Oct. 1981.

The prosecution alleged that Betty's motive for killing Jimmy was to collect his \$86,000 life insurance policy and a \$760 monthly pension.

Betty's original conviction and sentence were overturned by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals but reinstated on September 21, 1988.

Various appeals and motions were filed to try and prevent the execution, but all were dismissed. The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles is the body responsible for the ultimate review of capital cases and they did not recommend commutation to the then Governor, George W. Bush. Without the recommendation the Texas governor cannot under state law intervene. George Bush, in rejecting clemency said "I'm confident that the courts, both state and federal, have thoroughly reviewed all the issues raised by the defendant." His office had been inundated with calls and letters seeking mercy for Betty.

In an interview with the Dallas Morning News, Betty said she had endured abuse through seven marriages to five men, although little had been made of this at trial.

In a tearful plea to spare their mother's life, Faye Lane, another of Betty's daughters, displayed pictures of a battered and bruised woman to the state parole board, claiming she had been severely beaten by all of her husbands. "I wish to God the jury had heard the truth about my mother."

Anti-domestic violence advocates and human rights groups asked Bush to spare Betty's life because she supposedly was abused by her father and all of her husbands and received poor legal counsel at her trial.

It is not clear whether there was any real evidence of abuse by Betty's former husbands or whether this was just a last resort defense of blaming the victims when they cannot answer back. We saw the same tactic fail in the 2013 trial of Jodi Arias, who was found guilty of capital murder, despite allegedly suffering from battered women's syndrome according to two "experts".

Betty was finally executed on Thursday February 24, 2000. She made no final statement as she lay strapped to the gurney, nor did she make eye contact with the victim's family, but smiled at her attorney and her spiritual adviser whom she had asked to be her witnesses.

She reportedly coughed twice, gasped and sputtered as the first of the three drugs, sodium thiopental took effect. She was pronounced dead at 6:18 pm. Death came less than an hour after Governor George W. Bush's office announced his rejection of a one time, 30-day stay of execution. A crowd of about 100 stood vigil outside the Walls Unit in Huntsville Texas, where the death chamber is situated. Most were death penalty opponents but there were also a few in favor of the execution. "Exterminate the Black Widow," read one sign carried outside the prison.

Doyle Barker's son, Rodney Barker, witnessed her execution and told reporters that "I felt a lot of burden off of me. It's just like a lot of weight off me."



44) Christina Marie Riggs received a lethal injection May 3, 2000 for the murder of her two small children on in Arkansas. She fought strenuously to be executed. Hers was the only the second female execution ever in Arkansas. The first was that of Lavinia Burnett in 1845. A detailed account of Christina's case can be found [here](#).



45) During 2001 Oklahoma, in an unprecedented move, emptied its female death row, executing all three women on it.

41 year old Wanda Jean Allen became the first black woman to be executed since 1954 and the first in Oklahoma since statehood, when she was given a lethal injection on January 11, 2001, for the murder of her lesbian lover, 29 year old Gloria Jean Leathers.

Wanda was sentenced to death for shooting Gloria Leathers in the stomach on December 1, 1988, in front of a police station in Oklahoma City. Gloria died four days later.

Earlier in the day the two women had argued over a welfare check at a grocery store to which police were called, court documents stated. Officers were at the couple's home as Gloria packed her belongings and left. Wanda and Gloria fought over some of the property Gloria was taking with her.

Gloria's mother drove her to the police station to file a complaint that Wanda had refused to allow her to take some of her stuff. Wanda followed them to the police station and, after asking Gloria to

return home, pulled a gun and shot her once. Gloria's mother, Ruby Wilson, was an eye witness to the shooting and described it thus: "After exchanging words Gloria was leaning into the car to pick up her purse when Wanda stuck it to my baby's ribs, she stuck it to her stomach and shot her. It sounded like a cap gun."

Robert Carpenter, Wanda's defense attorney said one of the most damaging pieces of evidence against Wanda was a threatening card that she had sent to Gloria. The card had a gorilla on it. The printed message said, "Patience my ass" and Wanda had written on it that she was "going to kill something" and that if Gloria tried to "leave ... you will understand this card more. Dig. For real, no joke."

Carpenter also told APB News.com that Wanda having killed before, and not necessarily her homosexuality, probably did more to persuade the jury to come back with a death sentence. "Her past record, that's what got her."

Wanda had been previously convicted of shooting Detra Pettus to death on June 29, 1981, following an argument with the woman's boyfriend at a local motel. She served four years in prison for manslaughter. Wanda claimed that she had accidentally shot Detra.

On December 15, 2000, The Oklahoma Board of Pardons and Parole rejected Wanda's clemency request by a vote of 3-1. Her attorney said the decision virtually ensured that she would be executed on January 11, despite arguments from her supporters that she was mentally retarded and received poor legal representation in her trial. "There are no traditional routes of appeal left," said attorney Steve Presson, who represented Wanda on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). "We're looking at our options, but we don't want to give anybody false expectations."

At 7:30 p.m. on Thursday January 11, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to intervene in the case. A few hours earlier, the her appeal was rejected by the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver. "Ms. Allen has failed to substantiate her allegation of a due process violation," the Denver judges concluded 3-0, rejecting her claim that an assistant attorney general had used false evidence against her at her unsuccessful December 15 clemency hearing. 45 minutes after the 10th Circuit's decision, Governor Keating denied a stay of execution. He said the courts had pondered the case for 12 years, and that Allen had lodged 11 different appeals since her conviction. "This is not easy because I am dealing with a fellow human being ... with a fellow Oklahoman," "I have debated and discussed this, and now have resolved to deny the extension of 30 days. I care very deeply for the victims of crime. I have no use for killers, but I have a deep and abiding faith in the rule of law. I have to think about the woman she murdered in cold blood. I grieve for the families; I grieve for the dead. If a person takes another's life premeditated, they take their own."

Every card had been played for Wanda by her supporters and anti death penalty pressure groups. To use the terminology of the pro-capital punishment lobby, they had tried the "race card" the "tard card" claiming that she was mentally retarded, even though her last IQ test revealed a score of 80, 10 points above the limit, and finally the "gay card".

Wanda was put to death by lethal injection on Thursday, January 11, 2001 at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary in McAlester. Twenty four relatives of Gloria Leathers and Detra Pettus traveled to McAlester to witness the execution. Lying on the gurney, Wanda said, "Father, forgive them. They know not what they do." She also stuck her tongue out and smiled at her appeal lawyer, Steve Presson, who had become her friend. He says she was "dancing on the mattress, while they tried to kill her." She was pronounced dead at 9:21 p.m.



46) Marilyn Kay Plantz (white, age 40) was the next Oklahoman to die, on May 1, 2001, for organizing the murder of her husband, James Earl Plantz, 33, to obtain his life insurance payout of \$319,000 and to clear the way for her relationship for her boyfriend, 18 year old William Clifford Bryson.

The then 28 year old Marilyn hatched a plot with Bryson and Clinton Eugene McKimble to beat 33 year old James to death in the Midwest City family home with his children's base ball bats, when he returned from work in the early hours of Friday, August 26, 1988. Having severely beaten him, the two men loaded James into his pickup truck and drove to a remote spot where they doused the truck and James in gasoline and set fire to them. James was burned to death. His charred remains were discovered the same day. Marilyn's two children were asleep in the house while the crime was taking place.

Marilyn was arrested on Monday August 28, and charged with murder. William Bryson and Clinton McKimble were arrested the next day and McKimble soon decided to testify against the other two to avoid the death penalty. On October 20, 1988, prosecutors agreed to this plea deal and he was later sentenced to life in prison.

At a preliminary hearing Roderick Eugene Farris, who had been present when the murder was committed, testified that Marilyn said the murder would "have to look like an accident." He also stated that a few days earlier Bryson had said his girlfriend, Marilyn, had called and was crying because her husband had beaten her.

In videotaped testimony, Bryson told police how he and McKimble beat James Plantz. Bryson said, "I didn't have no specific reason why I killed him. All I was thinking while I was beating him was all the times she came up to me with a black eye and crying. I didn't like that."

Bryson also admitted that he loved Marilyn and said that Marilyn had told him that her husband had threatened to kill himself and her if she divorced him.

Marilyn denied any role in the killing of her husband and told police they had a good marriage.

At the trial in March 1989, jurors took less than three hours to find Marilyn and Bryson guilty of murder, of conspiracy to murder, of recruiting others to help and of arson. Neither Marilyn nor Bryson testified during the trial.

The next day jurors deliberated for five hours before voting in favor of death sentences for both of them. They were each also sentenced to 100 years for recruiting others to help in the murder, 10 years for conspiracy to murder, and a 15 year sentence for burning the pickup truck. William Clifford Bryson was executed on June 15, 2000 at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary at McAlester.

His last words were "I want to say to the family, I want them to know how sorry I am. Let them know how sorry I am." "OK, let's go."

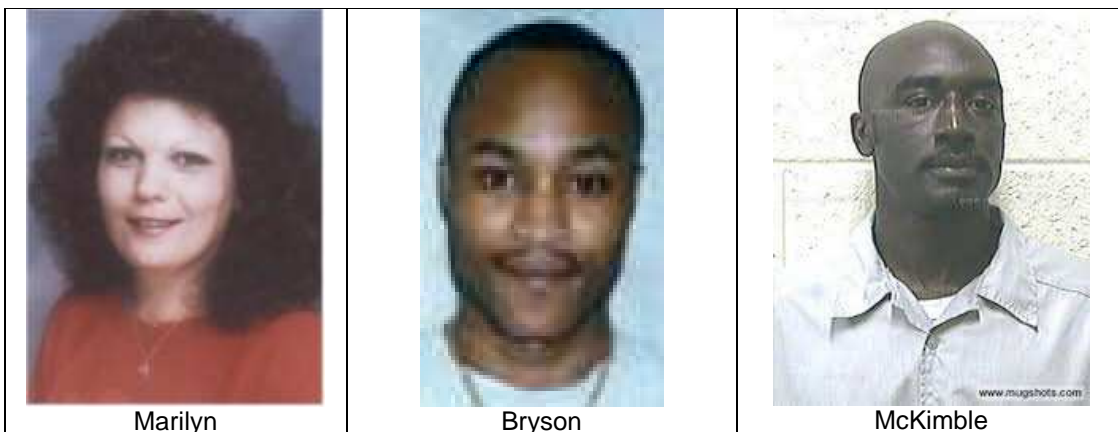
Marilyn had almost 13 years of appeals in what is now the norm in U.S. capital cases.

On April 18, 2001 the Oklahoma Pardon & Parole Board heard submissions from Trina Plantz Wells, 21, the daughter of Marilyn and Jim, pleading for the board for clemency. She reportedly cried throughout the hearing. In a videotaped statement, Trina said "My father's gone and we need a mom, whether or not she is in prison. We need to have a relationship with her. I really don't want my mom to die -- that is my hope. I've had 13 years to think about it. "I love my father. He was my hero. But it is not fair to me to have to go to another funeral and devastating death like this." In a barely audible voice, Marilyn apologized to the families, mentioning each by name. "It's hard to think about living the rest of my life in prison. But now I have a reason to live. I want to live for my daughter and, hopefully, for my son."

Karen Lowery, the sister of Jim Plantz, urged the board to go forward with the execution due to the lack of any remorse. The Board voted unanimously for execution.

Governor Frank Keating refused to stop the execution saying "There was no question about her guilt or innocence," he said. "This lady admitted she did it."

At 9pm on Tuesday, May 1, 2001 Marilyn received her lethal injection and was pronounced dead at 9.11 pm. Her final words were "I have overcome the world." "Nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us from the love of God. "If you all want to see me again, you must be born again." Sharon Cotton Jim's sister told reporters afterwards "I expected an apology I did not get." The witnesses saw Marilyn covered with a sheet up to her chest. Her arms were strapped to side boards. After the Warden gave the order to begin the executions, Marilyn's chest stopped moving within five seconds and she lay motionless. Three minutes later her skin turned an almost purple color.



47) Oklahoma's third and to date last, female execution, was that of 61 year old Lois Nadean Smith, who was put to death on December 4, 2001 at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary for the July 4, 1982 murder of 21 year old Cynthia Lucille Baillee, known as Cindy, in Sequoyah County.

Lois was the daughter of a minister, and was raised in a Christian home. She was known for her temper and tendency toward violence earning the nickname "Mean Nadean" in high school.



Lois feared that Cindy had hired someone to kill her son, Greg Smith. Cindy was Greg's former girlfriend. Lois, her son and a third accomplice picked up Baillie at a Tahlequah motel July 4, 1982, then drove her to Gans. During the trip, Lois accused Cindy of plotting to kill her son, which Cindy denied. She then choked Cindy and stabbed her in the neck. When the group arrived in Gans, Cindy was taken to Lois' ex- husband's home where Lois forced Cindy to sit in a chair, taunting her with a pistol, before firing several shots. Cindy fell to the floor, and while her son reloaded the pistol, Smith laughed and stomped on Cindy's neck. She then fired four shots into her chest and two to the back of her head. An autopsy revealed nine gunshot wounds to Cindy's body.

Lois and Greg were charged in the District Court of Sequoyah County, Oklahoma with the murder. Pursuant to defense counsel's motion, the two cases were ordered to be tried separately. Lois went to trial on December 6, 1982, the jury found her guilty of murder in the first degree. In the sentencing phase, the jury found the existence of two aggravating factors: the murder was especially heinous, atrocious or cruel and Lois knowingly created a great risk of death to more than one person. They unanimously voted for the death penalty and she was formally sentenced by the state district court on December 29, 1982. Greg Smith was sentenced to life in prison for his role in the murder.

In her defense, Lois tried to put the blame on Greg as the manipulator and instigator of the crime. She claimed that her attorneys excluded evidence that pointed to Greg's culpability and consistently mishandled other significant evidence.

The usual round of appeals followed. Her case was dismissed by the US Supreme Court on November 1, 2001 and Oklahoma's Attorney General Drew Edmondson then requested an execution date.

In letters to the Pardon and Parole Board, Cindy's daughter, Brandy Fields wrote "Lois Nadean Smith has had the privilege of breathing for 20 years too long." "It's about time that Lois Nadean Smith is brought to justice for the crime she has done to me and my family." Brandy was just four years old when her mother was murdered. The Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board denied clemency for Lois in early November by a 3 to 2 vote. Her attorneys had claimed that she suffered from a head injury, was trying to protect her son and was under the influence of alcohol and drugs during the crime.

Lois was transferred from the Mabel Basset Correctional Center in Oklahoma City to the Oklahoma State Penitentiary for execution. She received a lethal injection on December 4, 2001. In her final statement she thanked her attorneys and asked for forgiveness. "To the families, I want to say I'm sorry for the pain and loss I've caused you, I ask that you forgive me. You must forgive to be forgiven." She was pronounced dead at 9.13 pm.

48) Florida native, Lynda Lyon Block (white, age 54 at execution) and her common law husband, George Sibley were executed for the shooting murder of police Sergeant Roger Lamar Motley in Opelika, Lee County, Alabama on October 4, 1993. The couple regarded themselves as "sovereign citizens" (anti-government extremists) who did not believe that they were subject to Federal Law.

The pair had been charged with aggravated battery on a person older than 65 (Lynda's husband, Karl Block, 80). They did not show up for their court date in Florida but instead took off to Alabama with Lynda's son Gordon aged 9.

The killing occurred in a Wal-Mart parking lot. Lynda had gone to use a pay phone and a woman passing by their Ford Mustang saw Gordon mouth the words "Help me" to her. She spotted a police vehicle and went over to Sergeant Roger Motley and told him what she had seen. Motley walked towards the Mustang and asked Sibley for his drivers license. Sibley informed Motley that he had "no contracts with the state". When Motley touched his holstered gun, Sibley took out his own weapon and fired at the policeman. Since Motley had not expected a gunfight he

tried to run back towards his car and radio for assistance. Lynda saw what was happening and dropped the phone, running towards Motley, who was unaware of her approach. When she reached him, she pulled out her Glock pistol and shot at him several times, hitting him in the chest as he turned around to face her. The couple fled as the fatally wounded Motley crawled into his police cruiser and radioed for help. 39 year old Motley died later that day from the chest wounds. Lynda and Sibley were arrested the same day after a four hour standoff with police at a road block. They let Gordon go before finally surrendering and were later charged with the murder.

At trial both Lynda and Sibley refused to co-operate with their defense team. The evidence against them was overwhelming and they were sentenced to death by electrocution on Dec 21, 1994. As Lynda believed the government was illegitimate and the State of Alabama did not exist, she refused to file appeals to courts that she contended were biased and had no jurisdiction. She sought help from Congress and clemency from Governor Don Siegelman, but the governor denied her handwritten request on May 6, 2002. "There was nothing in her petition nor anything else that would indicate that she wasn't guilty of the crime with which she was charged," Siegelman told news reporters.

She was moved from the Julia Tutwiler Correctional Facility in Wetumpka to Holman Correctional Facility in Atmore for execution, which was carried out just after midnight on Friday May 10, 2002. "She seemed to be somber, somewhat stoic," said Alabama Prison Commissioner Mike Haley. "She never displayed any emotion throughout the very end. Her stare was a very blank stare, an emotionless stare."

Lynda had spent Thursday evening in a holding cell near the death chamber with her spiritual adviser. Three friends visited her for several hours. Lynda refused a final meal. She was allowed two witnesses but chose only her spiritual adviser.

Lynda wore a white prison dress for her execution and her shaved head was covered by a black hood. She wore light makeup, with mascara and a light shade of pink lipstick. She appeared to pray with her eyes closed about 11:52 pm., making no final statement. The execution began with a 2,050 volt shock of 20 seconds duration, causing Lynda to clench her fists, her body to tense and steam to come from the sponge on her head and the electrode on her left leg. She then received 250 volts for 100 seconds. She was pronounced dead at 12:10 am. Although present, Juanita Motley, Roger Motley's widow, chose not to watch Lynda's death.

Lynda had written in her will "I ask that my body not be desecrated by autopsy, for it is against my religious beliefs to desecrate a body." However Alabama state law required an autopsy.

Lynda's made known her own thoughts on electrocution: "Execution by electric chair is gruesome. They shave your head so they can attach the electrodes to bare skin. They shove up cotton in your rectum and put an adult diaper on you because the charge of electricity through your body causes your bladder and intestines to evacuate. They put a hood over your face because the jolt of 2,000 volts causes your face to contort and your eyeballs to explode".

At the time of Lynda's execution, bills to adopt lethal injection as the form of execution in Alabama were pending in the legislature. The bills could not take affect until June 2002 at the earliest. Thus Lynda probably will be the last woman to die in the electric chair.

George Sibley was executed by lethal injection on August 4, 2005.



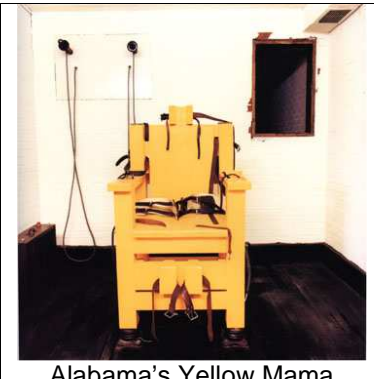
Lynda



George Sibley



Officer Mottley



Alabama's Yellow Mama

49) Aileen "Lee" Carol Wuornos was born on February 29, 1956, in Rochester, Michigan and had a very unhappy and troubled childhood. Her father was in prison for child molestation, and later committed suicide, her mother abandoned her at the age of four, leaving her and her older brother to be brought up by her grandparents. By age 14, Aileen was pregnant and the grandparents could no longer tolerate her behavior. The baby was adopted at birth and Aileen left the grandparent's home. She roamed free and by the early 1980's was in Florida where she earned a living principally by prostitution. She had quite a rap sheet, including armed robbery and assault.

In 1986 Aileen met Tyria Moore at a bar in Daytona Beach, Florida, and they began a lesbian relationship that lasted until 1991. Aileen supported Tyria with her earnings from crime and prostitution.

Aileen's killing spree, which would ultimately claim seven victims, started on December 1, 1989, when she shot 51 year old Richard Mallory who was a client. She would claim that the shooting was in self defense when he tried to rape her and rob her of her money. In 1992 it was found that Mallory had served ten years in prison for rape. Aileen stole Mallory's car and valuables and left his partially clothed body under a piece of carpeting.

David Spears, age 43, was next, his naked body being discovered in Citrus County with six .22 bullet wounds to the chest.

Just five days later police found the body of Charles Carskaddon, age 40 in Pasco County. He had been shot nine times in the chest and stomach, also with a .22 pistol.

Peter Siems would be the next victim. His car was found in Orange Springs on July 4, 1990 and had Aileen's finger prints on it. His body was never found. Aileen took Peter's car and later that day, with Tyria, was involved in an accident. The couple declined help from passing motorists and left the scene. When police examined the car they found items of Peter's property and fingerprints that matched those taken from the cars of other victims. Witnesses were also able to give them descriptions of the two women. Aileen's fingerprints were already on file from previous crimes in Florida.

On August 4, 1990 the body of 50 year old Troy Burress was discovered in Marion County with two bullet wounds to the chest.

The next grim discovery came on September 12, 1990, also in Marion County. It was the body of Charles "Dick" Humphreys, a retired Air Force major, who had multiple gunshots to the head and torso.



The body of Walter Antonio, age 62, was found on November 19, 1990, in Dixie County. He too had been shot multiple times in the chest with a small caliber gun. His car was found in Brevard County.

It became apparent to authorities that they were dealing with a serial killer or killers. Police efforts were co-ordinated by Sgt. Bruce Munster of Ocala. He had his own theory on the killer, believing that it was a significant that the victims were shot primarily in the body, as opposed to the head. He believed male killers went for the head shots, and that women aimed lower.

The police released a composite sketch based on the descriptions given by eyewitnesses to the July 4 crash. "We don't normally go to the press," Munster explained. "But we felt we had a responsibility to warn the public of the danger in picking up female hitchhikers or females posing as women in distress."

On January 9, 1991, Tyria, alarmed by the sketch which was a good likeness to both she and Aileen, announced that she was leaving Aileen and returning to her family in Pennsylvania. She gave Aileen back the engagement ring that Aileen had bought her, who later pawned it for \$20. Aileen was absolutely devastated and when her money ran out, she slept on an abandoned car seat outside The Last Resort, a run down Daytona Beach bar where she tried to drown her sorrows. When two men offered her a \$20 motel room she was eager to accept it. The motel owner recognized Aileen from the composite sketch and informed the police who sent a squad of officers to arrest her.

Aileen came to trial in Volusia County before Judge Uriel Blount on January 13, 1992, charged just with the murder of Richard Mallory, to which she pleaded not guilty arguing the killing was in self defense. Although she had given a videotaped confession to detectives and had been properly advised of her Miranda rights before hand she claimed that she had been coerced into confessing and that the confession violated her rights.

On the fourth day of the trial Tyria Moore testified against Aileen. Tyria described how Aileen had returned to their motel room on the evening of December 1, and told her that she had shot a man. The two watched television and Aileen continued to describe what she had done without any mention of a confrontation or self defense to prevent being raped.

The prosecution were allowed to mention the other killings which Aileen had been charged with under the Williams Rule. They also played tapes of 11 phone conversations between Tyria and Aileen when the latter was in jail, awaiting trial. Aileen took the stand, on the last day of the trial and put forward another version of how and why she shot Mallory. On Jan. 27, 1992, the jury deliberated for 90 minutes before finding her guilty, just before 6 p.m. The penalty phase began the next day. The jury heard from various experts for the prosecution and from a psychologist for the defense who argued that her traumatic childhood mitigated Aileen's actions. Dr. Bernard, the State's psychologist, who had examined Aileen in jail, testified that she suffered from both borderline personality disorder and an antisocial personality disorder. The jury found five aggravating factors proven and voted for death by 12 to 0. On January 31, 1992, Aileen was formally sentenced to death in the electric chair.

On March 31, 1992 Aileen pleaded no contest to the murders of Dick Humphreys, Troy Burrese, and David Spears, saying she wanted to "get right with God." In each case the jury hearing the punishment phase voted for death by a 10-2 majority on May 7, 1992, after five hours of deliberation. Less than a week later, Circuit Judge Thomas D. Sawaya sentenced her to death on each count. Aileen response was "Thank you," "I'll be up in heaven while you all rot in hell."

On February 5, 1993, Aileen was given a further death sentence for the murder of Charles Carskaddon, having been condemned the previous day for killing Walter Jenio Antonio. She was not tried for the murder of Peter Siems, who's body could still not be found. The usual mandatory appeals followed and Aileen would spend the next nine years on death row. Fortunately for Aileen, Florida changed its method of execution during this time which meant that she could be put to death by lethal injection. Whether it was just this that made her stop fighting her death sentences is not known but in the end she did just that. According to State Attorney John Tanner "She expressed in her last psychiatric examination relief that the electric chair had been abolished in the state of Florida."

On July 19, 2001 Aileen went to court to be allowed to fire her attorneys and be executed. She told Circuit Judge Michael Hutcheson "there's no sense in keeping me alive, I am a serial killer. I would kill again." She also apologized to her victims' families and said there was no point in spending more taxpayers' money on her defense. On August 4, 2002 the court ruled that Aileen was competent to drop her appeals. In a letter to the Florida Supreme Court Aileen wrote "There are six cases which had all been unanimously decided for in death, and of which I firmly agreed in with their final decision, since I'm one who seriously hates human life and would kill again."

Governor. Jeb Bush signed Aileen's death warrant on September 5, 2002 but later granted a stay to allow a further mental examination to see whether she was competent to be executed. The stay was lifted on October 2, 2002 and the execution scheduled for October 9. Dawn Botkins, a long time friend spent three hours with Aileen on the eve of her execution and later told reporters "She was extremely happy, ready to go. She has made her peace."

She declined a last meal and just had a cup of coffee, before washing herself.

The execution took place at the Florida State Prison on Wednesday October 9, 2002 in the presence of 32 witnesses and passed without incident. Her final words were "I'd just like to say I'm sailing with the rock, and I'll be back like Independence Day, with Jesus June 6. Like the movie, big mother ship and all, I'll be back." She was pronounced dead at 9:47 a.m. 6 minutes after the first drug was injected.

In 2003 the film "Monster" was released starring Charlize Theron as Aileen.



Aileen



Aileen



Florida's guerny

50) Frances Elaine Newton (black, age 40) was executed at the Walls Unit in Huntsville Texas for the shooting murders of her husband, Adrian, (23), her son, Alton (7) and daughter, Farah, just 21 months, at their home, an apartment complex at 6126 West Mount, Houston on April 7, 1987. Adrian had been shot in the head and the two children in the chest with a 25 caliber pistol.



Also living with the Newton's at the time of the killings was Adrian's brother, Sterling. He came back to the apartment between 5 30 and 6 00 pm and Frances asked him to go out for a while so that she and Adrian could discuss their marital problems. Sterling did as requested. Both Frances and Adrian were dating other people at the time. A little later Adrian's girlfriend, Ramona Bell, phoned him and he told her that he was tired and was going to get some sleep if and when Frances went out, as he said he didn't trust her.

Frances visited her cousin Sondra Nelms at around 7 pm and invited him over to the apartment. Before leaving Frances placed a blue back pack belonging to Alton in the abandoned house next door. The pair then drove to Newton's apartment where they discovered the bodies and Frances called 911. This call was responded to at 8:27 pm by Harris County sheriff's deputy R. W. Ricks who interviewed Frances and Nelms on the scene. Frances claimed that her family had been shot by a drug dealer named Charlie, to whom Adrian, also a drug dealer, owed money. Ricks noted that there was no sign of forced entry or struggle in the apartment.



Interviewed by detectives later that evening, Nelms told them about the blue bag that had been taken into the house next door. He accompanied then to the house and the bag was recovered and found to contain a 25 caliber pistol which ballistic tests would later prove was the murder weapon. It was owned by Jeffrey Frelow, Frances' boyfriend, who kept it in a chest of drawers that Frances had access to.

On March 18, 1987, Frances had taken out life insurance policies on Adrian and Farah to the value of \$50,000 each, with herself as beneficiary. On April 21 Frances filed her claims for this money. The following day she was arrested and charged with the murders. She was indicted for capital murder by a Grand Jury on July 17, 1987.

At her trial in October 1988 Frances pleaded not guilty and when asked about the gun in the back pack said she removed it from the apartment for the safety of the children. The ballistics expert who had tested the gun testified that it was the murder weapon and also that the dress Frances was wearing on the evening of the killings had nitrate residue on it, consistent with having a gun fired close to it. Cross examined by the defense he conceded that the residue could also have come from contact with fertilizer. Her attorney, Ron Mock, interviewed later, said that the case had been an uphill struggle because he had nothing other than Frances' consistent denials to work with. Frances was found guilty and on October 25, 1988 sentenced to death by lethal injection. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals affirmed her conviction and sentence on June 17, 1992.

All the usual appeals followed and were dismissed. The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles recommended that Governor Rick Perry grant Newton a 120-day stay of execution for re-testing of the skirt and the pistol. The pistol was again confirmed to be the murder weapon. The skirt had

become contaminated after the original test and so could not be re-tested. As a result of this the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles refused to recommend commutation to Rick Perry, which is required under Texas law. Texas does not give the Governor the power to commute sentences without this recommendation.

In an interview prior to her execution Frances told a reporter "I know I did not murder my kids and my family." "It's frustrating ... nobody's had to answer for that."

On Tuesday, September 13, 2005, Frances was transferred from the women's death row at Gatesville to the Goree Unit in Huntsville and later that afternoon, to a holding cell in the Walls Unit, adjacent to the execution chamber.

The execution was carried out at 6 pm on Wednesday September 14, 2005. The warden asked Frances if she had any final statement to which she simply replied "No." The injections began at 6.09 pm and she was declared dead at 6.17 pm.

As is increasingly the case, executions have become polarizing events. Outside the Walls Unit protesters chanted "Frances! Frances! Frances!" for several minutes prior to the execution. They claimed that she was "lynched" because she was poor and black, which rather seems to fly in the face of all the known evidence.

51) Murder and conspiracy to murder by women to obtain insurance payouts seems to be a recurring theme in this article. Our next case is that of Teresa Wilson Bean Lewis who became only the second woman executed by Virginia, when she was put to death in 2010, at the age of 41.

Teresa had first met Julian, a widower, in the Spring of 2000 at the Dan River Inc. fabric factory where they both worked. By June of that year they were married and Teresa moved into Julian's trailer on five acres of land in Keeling, in rural Pittsylvania County, Virginia. Julian's son, Jason, had died in an accident in December 2001 and his father had received his life insurance payout, a sum in excess of \$200,000, which he placed in an account that was only accessible by him. In August 2002, Julian's son Charles was required to report for National Guard duty so Julian made a will and took out a \$250,000 life insurance policy on him. Both only named Teresa as the secondary beneficiary. In other words she would get nothing if Julian died and was survived by Charles.

Sometime in the Fall of 2002 Teresa met Matthew Shallenberger in Wal-Mart. She and Shallenberger soon became lovers and plotted the scheme to murder Julian, whom Teresa claimed was an abusive alcoholic.

At around 3.15 am on October 30, 2002, 51 year old Julian Lewis and his 25 year old son, Charles Lewis always known as C.J., were shot to death in Julian's trailer home. C.J. was home on leave from National Guard duty on this day. Teresa had left the door unlocked and then gone to bed with her husband. After the murders she waited for 45 minutes to call the police and removed Julian's wallet, sharing the money between Shallenberger and Fuller. When the police arrived Julian was still alive and is reported to have said "My wife knows who done this to me." Teresa told the officers that the killings had been the work of an intruder. The police noted that there was no sign of a forced entry nor any sign of grief from Teresa.

A week after the killings Teresa attempted to use a forged check to withdraw \$50,000 from Julian's account. Under questioning Teresa confessed that she had hired Matthew Shallenberger (then 22) and Rodney Fuller to carry out the murders. She denied that the \$250,000 life insurance payout on the husband and stepson was the motive. "My motive was to get rid of Julian because I was a prisoner in my own home," she said. "I didn't care about the money."

As a result of her confession Shallenberger and Fuller were soon arrested. In jail, awaiting trial, Teresa underwent a psychological examination which found her to be of low IQ (72) but competent to plead.

As the evidence against her was overwhelming her attorney advised her to plead guilty at her trial which she did in May 2003. She was formally sentenced on June 5, 2003 by Circuit Court Judge Charles Strauss. Judge Strauss said Teresa had no motive but greed for the killings and was even more culpable than the two young men she hired and described her as "the head of the serpent", hence presumably why he gave her death.

Rodney Fuller, entered into a plea bargain to get a life sentence for testifying against Matthew Shallenberger, who also got life, but committed suicide in 2006. Teresa's daughter, Christie Lynn Bean, received a five year sentence for failing to report her mother's plans to kill Julian and C.J. and was also housed in the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women in Troy, where her mother was incarcerated, as Virginia does not have a female death row.

Virginia capital cases move at rather greater speed than those of most other states. Teresa spent just seven years in prison. where she behaved well and was a model inmate. Virginia law allows the condemned inmate a straight choice between lethal injection and electrocution. Teresa, unsurprisingly chose the former.

There was a vigorous campaign to save Teresa. Partially this was based upon the fact that the actual shooters got life, partially upon her relatively low IQ and also because she was female. A petition with over 7,000 signatures was submitted to Governor Bob McDonnell. In an interview a month prior to execution Teresa said she prayed and read her Bible and had nightmares about the murders. She thought of Julian and C.J. daily. "I wish I could give Kathy Clifton (Julian's daughter) the world and take away her hurt," she said. "I can't even imagine the pain she's been through all these years." Kathy told reporters that she wanted to see Teresa die for arranging the murders of her father and brother. If she is put to death, "I will be there, I want to see it finished." "I want justice for my father and brother." Teresa also said "I don't think it's fair for the triggermen to get life, and I got the death penalty."

On September 17, 2010, Governor Bob McDonnell, despite international pressure, refused clemency, stating : "Having carefully reviewed the petition for clemency, the judicial opinions in this case, and other relevant materials, I find no compelling reason to set aside the sentence that was imposed by the Circuit Court and affirmed by all reviewing courts."

Teresa was moved from Fluvanna to the Greensville Correctional Center in Jarratt for her execution, which was carried out at 9 pm on September 23, 2010.

About 8:50 p.m., Teresa's lawyer, James E. Rocap III, and her spiritual adviser, the Rev. Julie Perry entered the witness room after visiting with her.

At 8:55 p.m., after the death warrant was read out by Chief Warden George M. Hinkle, the door to the execution chamber opened and Teresa entered wearing a light blue prison issue shirt and dark blue pants. She was supported by corrections officers holding each arm. She appeared frightened and glanced around at the witnesses before being strapped to the gurney by five execution team members, with heavy leather straps securing her ankles, legs, wrists and chest. At 8:58 pm a blue curtain was drawn, blocking the view from the witness room as catheters were inserted in each arm and connected to IV lines. At 9 09 pm, the curtain opened and she was asked whether she had a last statement. Teresa asked if Kathy was present. "I want Kathy to know that I love her and I'm very sorry." Kathy was in an adjacent witness room on the other side of a one way mirror.

As the first of the three chemicals then began flowing, Teresa's left foot moved as if she were tapping it, but the movement quickly stopped. A guard lightly tapped her on the shoulder as she slipped into death. She was pronounced dead at 9:13 p.m. and the curtains were redrawn, blocking the view.

After the execution, her attorney, James Rocap III said: "Tonight the machinery of death in Virginia extinguished the childlike and loving spirit of Teresa Lewis." He is also quoted as saying "A good and decent person is about to lose her life because of a system that is broken ... it is grossly unfair to impose the death sentence on her while Shallenberger and Fuller received life."



52) Kimberly Lagayle McCarthy was a 36 year old black woman living in Lancaster, Dallas County, Texas at the time she murdered 71 year old retired professor, Dorothy Booth on July 21, 1997. Dorothy was a neighbor of Kimberly's in Lancaster and on the morning of the fateful day Kimberly phoned her on the pretext of borrowing some sugar and was let into her home. Once inside Kimberly stabbed Dorothy five times, beat her about the head with a candelabra and cut off one of her fingers to remove a ring. She left Dorothy dying on her dining room floor and took off with Dorothy's Mercedes and some other items. The diamond ring was pawned for \$200. Her next stop was crack house where she left the car in exchange for some crack cocaine. She also used Dorothy's credit cards at a liquor store. Kimberly was arrested the following day and had Dorothy's driver's license in her possession. A 10" butcher's knife was found during a search of Kimberly's home and DNA analysis revealed Dorothy's blood under the handle. Kimberly had tried to blame the murder on two non-existent male drug dealers.

Kimberly was convicted and sentenced to death for the murder at her trial in November 1998. However this conviction was over turned in 2001 due to the police having taken a statement from

Kimberly before her lawyer arrived. A retrial was ordered and this took place in October 2002 with the same outcome. At the end of the penalty phase on November 1, 2002, the jury took just three hours to recommend death. During this phase they also heard evidence regarding two other murders for which Kimberly had been indicted on but not tried. These were the December 1988 deaths of Maggie Harding, 81, and Jettie Lucas, 85. Maggie was stabbed and bludgeoned with a metal meat tenderizer, while Jettie was beaten with a claw hammer and stabbed. Both old ladies let Kimberly into their homes as they knew her. As you can see a very similar modus operandi. In both cases the physical evidence, including DNA, tied Kimberly to the crimes.

All the usual appeals followed with motions for a mistrial on the basis of race and ineffective defense counsel being turned down. Kimberly's attorney, Maurie Levin, said her case was plagued by "shameful errors" of racial bias during jury selection by Dallas County prosecutors and ineffective assistance of counsel. Only one of the 12 jurors at her second trial was black.

Originally Kimberly was to have been executed on January 29, 2013, but this was stayed. State District Judge Larry Mitchell rescheduled the execution for April 3 so her lawyers could have more time to pursue an appeal focused on whether her predominantly white jury was improperly selected on the basis of race. This date was also stayed.

Finally the execution was scheduled for Wednesday, June 26, 2013, in what would be Texas' 500th execution since putting Charlie Brooks to death in 1982. Her last appeal to the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals was rejected on Tuesday 25, June. Kimberly was transferred a few days earlier to the Walls Unit at Huntsville where she was placed on "death watch." Prison officials recorded her activities from 12:01 a.m. Monday, noting that she was sleeping, "reading and eating a peach," "grooming herself after a shower," "packing her property" and "laying in bed doing a puzzle book."

On Wednesday she was given a new white prison jumpsuit and offered, as her last meal, the same food other prisoners ate for dinner, pepper steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, mixed vegetables and white cake with chocolate icing.

The execution was carried out just after 6 pm. and Kimberly was certified dead at 6:37 pm., 20 minutes after the injection began.

In her final statement, Kimberly said "This is not a loss. This is a win. You know where I'm going. I'm going home to be with Jesus. Keep the faith. I love you all." Her ex-husband, New Black Panther Party founder Aaron Michaels, together with her attorney and spiritual advisor were her witnesses. As the single dose of pentobarbital started to take effect, Kimberly said, "God is great," before closing her eyes. She took hard, raspy, loud breaths for several seconds before becoming quiet. Then, her chest moved up and down for another minute before she stopped breathing.

Donna Aldred, Dorothy Booth's daughter, read a statement to reporters describing her mother thus: "she was an incredible person who was taken before her time."

Outside the Walls Unit, some 40 anti-death penalty protesters had gathered, carrying signs saying "Death Penalty: Racist and Anti-Poor," "Stop All Executions Now" and "Stop Killing to Stop Killings." There was also a small group demonstrating in favor of the death penalty. A 2012 poll from the Texas Tribune and the University of Texas showed only 21 percent opposed to capital punishment.



Kimberly after arrest, age 37



Prior to execution, age 51



Dorothy Booth



Jettie Lucas



Maggie Harding

### 53) Suzanne Basso.

Suzanne Margaret "Sue" Burns was born on May 15, 1954, one of eight children and the youngest of three girls, in Schenectady, New York state, It appears that she had a miserable childhood, being brought up by two alcoholic parents who subjected her to both physical and sexual abuse. In her teens she got into sex, truancy from school and theft and spent some time at a Catholic reform school in Albany.

However she was able to complete high school and married James Peek, who was in the Marines, in the early 1970's. She had two children by Peek, a daughter and a son both of whom were sexually abused by her according to her daughter, Christianna.

In 1993 Sue began a relationship with Carmine Basso who had originated in New Jersey, and who owned a Houston security firm. Although still married to Peek, Carmine moved in with Sue and she took to using his surname, although she did not divorce James. Carmine died in 1993 and Sue visited New Jersey, ostensibly to visit his family and this was where she met 59 year old Louis 'Buddy' Musso at a church carnival and over time she was able to persuade him to move in with her in Jacinto City, just east of Houston, Texas, on the pretext of marriage. Musso had the IQ of a 7 year old but was able to care for himself. She took out life insurance on him with her the beneficiary and also took his Social Security benefits.



On August 26, 1998, Basso and her gang, comprising her son James O'Malley, Greg Ahrens, Bernice Ahrens, Hope Ahrens and Terrance Singleton, finally succeeded in killing Musso by beating him with belts and a baseball bat and repeatedly kicking him with steel-toed boots. Basso was the leader of the group and encouraged all the co-defendants to abuse Musso. The murder was committed for proceeds of the life insurance policy. Musso's body was found in a ditch by a jogger, his injuries so severe that he was unrecognizable. Musso had also been systematically tortured in the days leading up to his murder. He'd been bathed in a solution of bleach and pine cleaner and scrubbed with a wire brush. The autopsy revealed at least 17 cuts to his head, 28 cuts and cigarette burns on his back and numerous bruises all over his body. He had a skull fracture, a fractured bone in his neck, 14 broken ribs and two dislocated vertebrae. The Medical Examiner determined that Musso had died from a skull fracture caused by an unknown object which had left a large X-shaped laceration in his scalp.

Basso herself reported Musso missing and later confessed to driving his body to where it was discovered and to hitting Musso. She claimed that her son, J.D. O'Malley, Terrence Singleton, and Craig Ahrens helped her dispose of the body.

Basso was indicted for the murder by a Harris County grand jury in June 1999.

Texas District Judge Mary Lou Keel ruled that all but two of the six suspects should be tried separately. Basso's son, James O'Malley's case would be heard first, beginning on April 13, 1999. His trial would be followed by those of Craig Ahrens, also in April, his mother, Bernice Ahrens Miller, and Terence Singleton together in May, and Hope Ahrens in June. All were convicted of taking parts in the crime. Sue Basso's trial would be the last and the only one in which the death penalty was sought.

Basso weighed 350 pounds at the time of her arrest. Eleven months later when she came to trial, in July 1999, she weighed just 140. She went to court in a wheelchair and claimed that she was paralyzed and had regressed into childhood. However Judge Keel found that she was mentally competent to stand trial.

At her trial in 1999 her co-defendants testified against her and alleged that she maltreated Musso in the Ahrens' apartment and beat him herself. O'Malley also beat Musso and was the one who scrubbed him with bleach and a wire brush. O' Malley would later confess, probably to avoid the death penalty, and led the police to the dumpster where Musso's clothes had been disposed of.

On August 27, 1999 the jury found Basso guilty of capital murder for murdering Musso during the course or kidnapping or attempting to kidnap him, and for remuneration or the promise of remuneration in the form of insurance proceeds. Basso's daughter gave evidence of the abuse she and her brother had suffered as children during the sentencing phase of the trial. Basso was formally sentenced to death by Judge Keel on September 1st, 1999. She wept and slumped down in her wheelchair, protesting her innocence.

Afterwards prosecutor Colleen Barnett told reporters, "I've seen a bunch of evil in my job as a prosecutor, but she exhibits so many different demonic traits that it's hard to see her as anything but an evil-minded person."

On January 15, 2003, the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals rejected Basso's direct appeal and affirmed her conviction and sentence.

On October 6, 2003, the U.S. Supreme Court denied Basso's petition for a writ of certiorari. Basso also sought to appeal her conviction and sentence by filing an application for a state writ of habeas corpus with the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals.

On September 20, 2006, the State's high court denied Basso's application for state habeas relief.

On September 20, 2007, Basso attempted to appeal her conviction and sentence in the federal district court for the Southern District of Texas. The federal district court denied her petition for federal writ of habeas corpus on Jan. 26, 2009.

On January 5, 2010, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit denied Basso's request for a certificate to appeal on her federal writ of habeas corpus.

The U.S. Supreme Court denied Basso's petition for a writ of certiorari on October 4, 2010.

Suzanne Basso was executed by lethal injection in Huntsville, Texas Wednesday February 2nd, 2014. Her execution was carried out about an hour after the Supreme Court rejected a last minute appeal in which her attorney Winston Cochran Jr., had argued she was not mentally competent to be executed.

Lower federal courts and state courts also refused to halt the punishment, upholding the findings of a state judge in January 2014 that Basso had a history of fabricating stories about herself, seeking attention and manipulating psychological tests.

When asked if she had a final statement, 59 year old Suzanne Basso, told the warden "No, sir." She appeared to be holding back tears, then smiled at two friends watching through a window. She mouthed a brief word to them and nodded. She was pronounced dead at 6:26 p.m. 11 minutes after the lethal dose of pentobarbital was administered, becoming the 14th woman executed in the United States since the Supreme Court in 1976 allowed capital punishment to resume.

Her co-defendants received the following sentences :

James O'Malley and Terrence Singleton, life in prison, Bernice Ahrens 80 years in prison, Craig Ahrens, 60 years and Hope Ahrens, 20 years.

**TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE  
Institutional Division**



**999329**

**10/28/99 000**



**10/28/99 001**

**ID Number: 999329**

**Date: 10/28/99**

**Name: SUZANNE MARGARET BASSO**



54) Lisa Ann Coleman became the 54th woman executed in the USA when she was out to death in Huntsville Texas on Wednesday the 17th of September, 2014 for the murder of nine year old Davonte Williams. Davonte was the son of her lesbian lover, Marcella Williams.

Davontae was intentionally starved to death in their home in Arlington Texas and weighed 35.8 lbs when Emergency Medical Services were called to the house on 26th July, 2004. This would be a typical weight for a healthy three/four year old. At autopsy some 250 injuries were discovered on his body, including a disfigured ear, swollen hands, a slit in his lip, and ligature marks around his wrists and ankles where he had been repeatedly restrained. The pathologist concluded the cause of death to be malnutrition. He was dressed only in bandages and a diaper and had been dead for several hours before EMS arrived.

Child Protective Services (CPS) had taken custody of Davontae in 1999 because Coleman was abusing him. They gave custody back to his mother a year or so later on the undertaking that she would no longer have contact with Coleman, an undertaking that she flouted.

Coleman later admitted that she and Marcella had tied Davontae up on "several occasions." She also admitted to whipping Davontae with a belt, but claimed to have stopped doing so by March 2004. She confessed to causing Davontae's lip injury. According to a CPS investigator, Coleman stated that Marcella did not want to take Davontae to a doctor because she was afraid that once they saw the bruises and marks on him, that all her children would be taken away."

Williams was first investigated by Child Protective Services when she was a 14 year old mother to 2 month old Davontae. She constantly moved to keep her three children (Davontae and two younger daughters) hidden from the CPS, and by 2002, had managed to evade caseworkers completely.

Coleman was indicted by a Tarrant County Grand Jury on September 22nd 2004. She came to trial in June of 2006 and prosecutors in used the charge of kidnapping to justify asking for the death penalty. According to the Fort Worth Star-Telegram, they argued that Coleman "did not allow Davontae to have visitors, kept him from visiting others by restraining him and told people he was not at the apartment when he was there." The jury were shown horrific photos of Davontae's injuries. She was convicted on June 19th 2006, the jury taking just over an hour to reach a verdict. As is required by Texas law there followed a separate penalty phase in which the jury deliberated for just three hours before giving Coleman the death penalty two days later. Her previous criminal history was presented at the penalty phase. This included convictions for burglary, possession of a controlled substance, carrying a weapon and evading police. She was 30 years old at the time.

The conviction and death sentence were upheld by the Court of Criminal Appeals of Texas on December 9th, 2009. Two writs of habeas corpus were denied, as was a further appeal to the Fifth Circuit in May 2013. In October 2013, the US Supreme Court denied a certiorari review and on April 24th, 2014 the state court set an execution date of September 17th, which was adhered to.

Coleman's appellate attorney, John Stickels, filed a clemency application in August 2013 asking that Texas governor Rick Perry commute her sentence to life in prison, but the Texas board of Pardons and Paroles voted unanimously week not to recommend commutation. "What she's really guilty of is being a black lesbian," Stickels said. "Her sexual orientation played a role in the state choosing to seek the death penalty and in her getting the death penalty." (Notice no mention of the actual victim!)

On Monday September 15th, Coleman was transferred from women's death row at Mountain View Unit in Gatesville to the Walls Unit in Huntsville for execution. She was offered a final meal of either chicken or pork. She spent the morning talking with visitors, occasionally crying, and at other times laughing, according to prison officials. Earlier in the week, she spent some of her final days on Death Row playing word games with Darlie Routier, who was convicted of murdering her five-year-old son in 1996.

The U.S. Supreme Court denied Coleman's final appeal less than two hours before the execution was to be carried out. A previous appeal to the 5th Circuit Court was denied on Tuesday 16th September.

The execution commenced on schedule at 6 p.m. on Wednesday 17th of September. In her final statement Coleman said goodbye to several friends and "the girls on the Row." I just want to tell my family I love them, my son, I love him. The girls on the row I love them and keep their heads up. Tell Darlie, I love her, hand in hand. God Bless ya'll. I'm alright, tell them I finished strong. I love ya'll, I'm done. I love you Richie, I love you. Thank you Brad and John, all of ya'll. God is good. I love you Auntie. I'm done.

There was a slight gasp and her eyes closed. Coleman was pronounced dead at 6.24 p.m., twelve minutes after the pentobarbital sodium was injected. Her death appeared to be calm and peaceful. About a half-dozen friends and family members witnessed the execution. They cried a little and gestured "heart" shapes through the viewing window.

Marcella Williams reached a deal with the Tarrant County District Attorney's Office that saw her enter a guilty plea in exchange for a life sentence back in 2006. It's a move her own family now questions. "The Williams family is trying to move on," said Tracey Williams, Marcella's aunt. "But we feel as though she should've gotten the death penalty as well. You're the mother; you are supposed to protect your child."

Tracey Williams said the death of young Davontae devastated their family. The attention surrounding the execution of Coleman opened up old wounds, and brought back a flood of painful memories. "It feels like it just happened yesterday, like we are reliving it all over again". Tracey Williams said the way Davontae died had altered their feelings toward Marcella.

The Williams family issued the following statement:

We would like the public & the Coleman family to know that our prayers go out to them. From the beginning of this situation we have always prayed & left it in Gods hands. We have always felt that whatever God allowed to happen to Lisa & Marcella concerning Davonatae's death that we would have to be pleased with it. However, even though Marcella is our niece, we didn't understand how they could give Lisa the death penalty & not Marcella, being that she was the mother of Davontae. We feel as though she should have gotten the death penalty as well because they both tormented & abused him, but we left this situation in the hands of the justice system & God. We the Williams family believe in what's right & we don't just blame Lisa for Davontaes death, we [also] blame Marcella & CPS for the death. CPS was called 16 times concerning Davonate's abuse, but they failed to do anything about it, their excuse was that the family got lost in the system [...] I pray that Lisa made her peace with God & I hope that Marcella has done the same. As for the Williams family, we are moving forward in peace because we know that Deviant is in a much better place! This is not a win-win situation because the Coleman family has lost Lisa, & we have lost Davontae & his mother.



Lisa Ann Coleman



Marcella Williams



Davontae Williams

55) Kelly Renee Gissendaner.

47 year old (at time of execution) Kelly Renee Gissendaner was put to death by lethal injection at the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison in Jackson in the early hours of Wednesday September 30, 2015. She was the first woman to be executed in Georgia since Lena Baker was electrocuted in 1945. Gissendaner was due to be executed at 7.00 p.m. on Tuesday evening, but this was delayed due to a flurry of last minute appeals. She was taken to the death chamber just after midnight and pronounced dead at 12:21 am.

She was convicted of organizing the murder of her husband, Douglas, near Dacula on February 7, 1997. She persuaded her then her boyfriend, Gregory Owen, to abduct Douglas from their home at knife point and drive him to a secluded wooded area off Luke Edwards Road near Dacula, where he was beaten and stabbed to death. The body was found two weeks later. Owen confessed to the crime on February 24, 1997 and implicated Gissendaner, who was arrested the next day. Owen was sentenced to life in prison. He avoided the death penalty by helping prosecutors in the case against Gissendaner. He will be eligible for parole in 2022.

Georgia Attorney General Sam Olens set out the case against Kelly Renee Gissendaner as follows:

She had married Douglas Gissendaner in September of 1989. Douglas joined the Army in January 1990 and their first child was born in March 1990. Douglas was transferred to Germany in September 1990. The couple separated in December 1991 and divorced in March 1993. However they started seeing each other again in February 1995 and re-married in May 1995. This didn't work out so they separated in September 1995. Douglas filed for divorce, but he later dropped the suit, as he and Gissendaner started dating again in May 1996. The couple moved to Auburn, Georgia, in December 1996 and purchased a home together.

Gissendaner had met Gregory Owen in September of 1995 and started a relationship which lasted until April 1996. They did not see each other again until October 1996, when Gissendaner called Owen's sister, Belinda Leicht, purportedly to tell Belinda about a job. However, Gissendaner also asked for Owen's pager number. At this time, Gissendaner told one of her co-workers that she was not happy with Douglas and was still in love with Owen.

On November 8, 1996, Pamela Kogut, a friend of Gissendaner's, drove her to a hotel in Winder, Georgia, where she spent the night with Owen. In December, when Owen's sister asked Gissendaner what her intentions were with her brother, she replied that she was only staying with Douglas to use his credit and money to purchase a house and then she would get rid of him. To others she was giving the impression that the marriage was improving.

Gissendaner first suggested killing Douglas to Owen in November of 1996. Owen suggested that she divorce Douglas, but she felt that divorce would not work because Douglas would not leave her alone. The pair discussed killing Douglas on four or five occasions, all allegedly at Gissendaner's initiation, before coming up with the final plan for the murder. It was agreed that on February 7, 1997, while Gissendaner was out with friends, Owen would kill Douglas. The murder went exactly as planned. On that afternoon she picked Owen up at his home and drove him to her house at approximately 5:30 p.m. She got changed and gave Owen a night stick and a hunting knife before leaving. She spent the evening with Pamela Kogut, Kerri Otis, and Nicole Bennett, eventually going dancing at "The Shack" at 10:30 p.m. Ms. Otis had attempted to reschedule the evening, but Gissendaner insisted that they had to go out that night. The group left at 11:30 p.m. when

Gissendaner stated that she had a bad feeling and had to go home. This was done to create a rock solid alibi.

Douglas visited some friends from church, Tom and Kathy Nesbit and helped Tom work on a car until 10:00 p.m. when he went home. Douglas arrived home at approximately 11:30 p.m. where he was ambushed by Owen who walked up behind him, held the knife to his throat, and told him that they needed to go for a ride. The two got into Douglas' car, and Owen, with the knife in his lap, made Douglas drive in the direction of Luke Edwards Road in Gwinnett County. Owen made Douglas get out of the car, walk toward the woods, and get down on his knees. As Gissendaner had instructed Owen took Douglas' watch and wedding band to make it appear that it had been a robbery gone wrong. When Douglas was on his knees, Owen hit him in the back of the head with the night stick, knocking him unconscious. He then stabbed Douglas in the neck eight to ten times. Gissendaner arrived at the prearranged scene as Owen was stabbing Douglas but remained in her car. After the stabbing, Gissendaner asked if Douglas was dead. Owen replied that he thought so, but Gissendaner went to check to make sure. She got into her car and Owen got into Douglas' car. He then followed her but stopped Douglas' car and where the couple had left a can of kerosene Owen doused the car with the contents and set it on fire. He then walked to the end of the road, where Gissendaner picked him up and drove him home.

Owen put his clothes, the knife, the stick, and Douglas' jewelry into a garbage bag and disposed of them one to two nights later.

The following morning, between 7:00 a.m. and 7:30 a.m., she phoned Douglas' parents, the Nesbits, and Pamela Kogut, purportedly looking for him. They all noticed that she sounded strangely calm and unemotional. Gissendaner told people that she had come home around midnight and had mistakenly taken a sleeping pill rather than a pain pill. Douglas' family and joined police in a search for him. The Department of Natural Resources found his burned out car on Sunday morning, but could not find his body. Gissendaner acted surprised but did not seem to be distraught at the news. She showed no emotion at the scene of the burned out car. She later appealed on the television news for information on Douglas.

Owen was questioned and initially denied any involvement in the murder, but confessed on February 24, 1997, and implicated Gissendaner. Gissendaner was arrested for murder on February 25, 1997. On that day she called Pamela Kogut, saying "I did it", but claimed that Owen held a knife to her and said he would kill her and the children if she told anybody about it.

Investigator Doug Davis of the Gwinnett County Police Department interviewed Gissendaner several times during the search for Douglas. On Sunday, February 9, 1997, she told him there were no marital problems between Douglas and her. During a second interview on Tuesday, February 11, 1997, she told Davis about the previous marital difficulties, that she had arrived home about 12:15 a.m. to 12:30 a.m. on February 8, 1997, and also that there were no life insurance policies in effect for Douglas. Davis had found out about her relationship with Owen and confronted her with it. In another interview on Thursday, February 13, 1997, Gissendaner told Davis that Owen had threatened to kill her and that she had ended their relationship in December 1996, at the time when she and Douglas had reconciled. She admitted to speaking with Owen a few times since December 1996. He had called her at work to inquire as to how she and the children were and that he had paged her as recently as Friday, February 7, 1997. However, phone records indicated 65 contacts initiated by Gissendaner to Owen, the last being a phone call to his pager at 12:28 a.m. on Friday night, February 7, 1997. Gissendaner also told Davis that there were other men with whom she had had extra-marital affairs.



Douglas' body was finally located on February 20, 1996, approximately one mile from his car, 100 to 150 feet off the road, on his knees, face down. Douglas had received at least four stab wounds in the back of the head and the neck region. The cause of death was the stab wounds to the neck. However, the fatal wound could not be determined with 100 percent certainty because the right side of the victim's neck, including the skin and much of the soft tissues, had been devoured by animals.

Gissendaner was indicted in the Superior Court of Gwinnett County, on April 30, 1997. She was offered a plea deal in 1998 in which she would receive a life sentence for pleading guilty. She turned it down and a jury convicted her of capital murder on November 18, 1998. The jury recommended the death sentence the following day. Her trial lawyer, Edwin Wilson, said afterwards "I should have pushed her to take the plea, but did not because I thought we would get straight up life if she was convicted." She filed a motion for new trial, which was denied on August 27, 1999.

The usual appeals followed. The Georgia Supreme Court affirmed the conviction and sentence on July 5, 2000. By February 2015 she had concluded her direct appeals together with her state and federal habeas corpus proceedings.

Finally on February 9, 2015, the Superior Court of Gwinnett County filed an order setting a seven-day window for the execution beginning at noon, February 25, 2015, and ending seven days later at noon on March 4, 2015.

The first execution date was 25 February, 2015 but was called off because of the threat of winter weather. A second, on 2 March, was called off "out of an abundance of caution" when corrections officials found the drug to be used in her execution appeared "cloudy". Apparently it had been stored at too low a temperature.

The third and final execution date was set for Tuesday 29 September 2015. She had requested a last meal of cheese dip with chips, Texas fajita nachos and a diet frosted lemonade, which was served to her at 4 p.m. on Tuesday afternoon.

Her lawyers filed three last minute appeals to the U.S. Supreme Court for clemency. Each attempt failed. The Georgia Supreme Court had already denied a similar request. An appeal earlier in the day before the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals had also been denied shortly before 8 pm.

Gissendaner's attorneys had argued the death penalty was disproportionate to the crime since Gissendaner was not the trigger-person in her husband's death. Georgia has not executed what a "non-trigger person" since 1976. They also put forward numerous accounts from fellow prisoners testifying about Gissendaner's positive influence in their lives and in the prison system. After 45 minutes of testimony the Board started deliberations. At 2:30, the Board made the announcement clemency had been denied. All of the moves came after the Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles denied Gissendaner's application of reconsideration of clemency earlier in the afternoon. Her attorneys delivered an argument to the Board Tuesday morning. They also heard from Gissendaner's children and received a letter pleading for her, on behalf of the Pope.

"In reaching its decision, the Board thoroughly reviewed all information and documents pertaining to the case, including the latest information presented by Gissendaner's representatives", a release sent from Board chairman Terry Barnard said. No other explanation of the decision was given.

The corrections department said she turned down an optional sedative ahead of the injection of pentobarbital.

Rhonda Cook of the Atlanta Journal Constitution witnessed the execution and described it as follows:

The observation area was 20ft square and has three wooden church pews facing a large window into the 8ft by 12ft execution chamber.

The gurney on which Gissendaner was already tied down was on a slight incline, with her head above her feet. Yet she still had to strain to see the witnesses to her impending death.

A chaplain and a nurse stood at her left shoulder, and the prison warden, Bruce Chatman, was beside her left leg when she was offered the chance to make a final statement.

'I bless y'all,' Gissendaner said to the room as she started to cry.

'I love you, Susan,' she said, looking directly at her lawyer in the second row. Susan Casey mouthed back that she loved her, too, then buried her face in her hands and sobbed.

'Tell my children I went out singing Amazing Grace,' Gissendaner said. 'Tell the Gissendaner family I am so sorry such an amazing man [her murdered husband] lost his life because of me. If I could take it back, I would. I just hope they find peace and they find happiness.'

And then the process began.

A chaplain offered a prayer. And the warden read the warrant authorising her execution.

All the while, Gissendaner stared at the ceiling and appeared to be praying. The chaplain touched her shoulder, then followed the warden out of the execution chamber, leaving a nurse by her side and four correctional officers at each corner.

That's when she began to sing. Loud, and with joy.

The microphone in the room was off, yet her voice passed through the glass window separating her from the witnesses.

Gissendaner sang the first verse of Amazing Grace. Then she licked her lips, yawned and struggled to sing another.

She stopped, started, stopped and started again, before she drifted off as the powerful sedative took hold. Her lawyer cried softly, holding the hand of a woman next to her and watching her client's chest slowly rise and fall until all movement stopped.

Then, all was quiet except for the sound of reporters' pencils scribbling notes.

Two doctors came in to check on Gissendaner. First, one unbuttoned her shirt enough to place a stethoscope on her chest, while the other felt for a pulse in her neck. Then, the second doctor put on his stethoscope and listened as well.

They both stepped back and signalled to the warden that Gissendaner was gone — ten minutes after the process had started.

Her lawyer began to cry again.

"The court-ordered execution of Kelly Renee Gissendaner was carried out at 12:21am," Warden Chatman announced. Then curtains were drawn closed across the windows and the witnesses were escorted out.

After the executions Douglas' family issued the following statement :

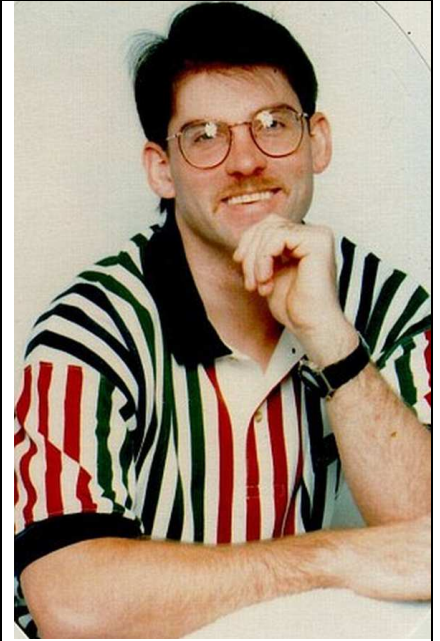
"Doug was a friendly, trusting, good-hearted soul with a smile that will never be forgotten. He was undisputedly a family man, a great friend and an even greater father who loved and sacrificed everything for the sake of his daughter and two stepsons. As the murderer, she's been given more rights and opportunity over the last 18 years than she ever afforded to Doug who, again, is the victim here. She had no mercy, gave him no rights, no choices, nor the opportunity to live his life. His life was not hers to take."



Kelly Gissendaner (younger)



Kelly Gissendaner (recent)



Douglas Gissendaner



Gregory Owen



Georgia's execution room

#### Comments.

These 55 women were executed in 20 states (including the two Federal cases). 36 of them were white and 19 were African American. Ages in some cases are approximate. Between them they had at least 73 victims, with at least a further 11 definite or probable ones, for which they were not tried or convicted. In Texas, for instance, only one case at a time moves forward and if a conviction and death sentence is forthcoming any other indictments are not proceeded with. One wonders whether the advent of lethal injection has made it easier for juries to pass the death sentence on female offenders and for state governors to sign their death warrants. Many states were unwilling to execute female offenders by electrocution, hanging or lethal gas while perfectly willing to execute males. Texas carried out 441 executions between 1930 and 1977 but not one was of a woman, the situation in Florida being similar with all 268 executions between 1900 and 1964 being of males. New York, however, carried out six of the seven female death sentences it passed in the 20th century.

From 1900-1962, there were 39 female executions, giving an average of 0.634 per year, nationwide. Of these nine were hanged, 23 electrocuted and seven gassed. No woman has ever been executed by shooting.

178 women have been sentenced to death in the period 1973 to December 2012, in 26 states and Federal jurisdiction, with just 13 executed (7.3%) in seven states and 61 (34%) remaining on death row in 17 states and Federal death row (1) as December 31, 2012, the rest having had their convictions reversed or their sentences commuted. In 2002, 2003, 2005, 2006 and 2011, five women got the death penalty each year, with six in 2000 and seven each in 1995 and 1998. There were no less than eleven death sentences in 1989. In the period 1984 to 2013 eleven women have been executed by lethal injection and two by electrocution.

It is interesting to note the difference in press coverage for these women. Mary Rogers who was a young white woman got tremendous coverage, her hanging making the front page of many papers. Pattie Purdue and Ann Knight's hangings got little media attention and Julia Moore's hanging almost none at all. Was this because they were black? Mildred Johnson and Rosa Marie Stinette likewise attracted little public interest, probably for the same reason. In several cases no photographs of these women remain.