

Overview of Capital Punishment Issues • • • •

- **What is capital punishment?**

Capital punishment is the imposition of the penalty of death by the state in response to the conviction of a certain crime.

- **What are the historical origins of capital punishment?**

Accounts vary, but we know that capital punishment was practiced in ancient times, as evidence of its existence is found in the Code of Hammurabi (c.1750 B.C.). It continued to be practiced and widely applied throughout Western Europe and only met with societal resistance beginning in the eighteenth century with the writings of Montesquieu and Voltaire.¹

- **Is capital punishment legal in the United States?**

Capital punishment has been legal throughout the existence of the United States. However, due to the manner in which it was practiced, in 1972's *Furman v. Georgia*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that capital punishment was unconstitutional because it was applied disproportionately to certain classes of defendants, most often African-Americans and the poor. This decision voided all federal and state death penalty laws at the time but allowed for future ones to be created by Congress or state legislatures. The reasoning behind the ruling was that capital punishment violated the Eighth Amendment's "cruel and unusual punishment" clause.

The 1976 *Gregg v. Georgia* case allowed the practice of capital punishment to resume in certain states. Currently, thirty-eight states and the federal government have reinstated the death penalty.² Most death penalty laws are made at the state level, although the federal government does execute people for certain crimes against the federal government.

- **For what crimes can someone receive the penalty of capital punishment?**

Most often, a person would only be eligible for capital punishment if he or she were found guilty of murder and were being charged in a federal court or in a state court located in a state with legalized capital punishment. However, according to the American Society of Criminology's Division on Critical Criminology, there have been 924 men executed for rape and 80 for attempted rape since 1800.³ This does not include a crime of both murder and rape where it is assumed that murder is the capital crime. People can receive the death penalty for murder when that crime occurs during the commission of another, such as robbery or rape. A person can also be sentenced to death for treason against the government, especially when it puts at risk the lives its citizens.

- **What are the different types of capital punishment?**

Today, there are five types of capital punishment used in the United States: electrocution, firing squad, gas chamber, hanging, and lethal injection. More explanation of each and the states where they are practiced are offered below.

Electrocution

Sometimes referred to as the "electric chair," the condemned person is led into a chamber containing the chair. The person is strapped to the chair and has electrodes fastened to his or her head and legs. Voltage courses through the condemned individual's body. It is not known how long the individual retains consciousness. It sometimes takes longer than the initial thirty second burst of electricity to kill the individual. States where electrocution is practiced: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Nebraska, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

Firing Squad

This method involves a condemned individual being strapped into a chair and hooded.

A target is placed on the prisoner's chest. Five marksmen are given bullets (one of them is given a blank), take aim, and fire. States where firing squad executions still are legal: Idaho and Utah.

Gas Chamber

In this method a condemned prisoner is strapped in a chair within a sealed chamber. There is a container directly underneath the prisoner. When the chamber door is sealed and the signal is given, the person in charge of the execution opens a valve releasing hydrochloric acid into this container. A second signal results in the release of approximately 8 ounces of potassium cyanide crystals or tablets into the acid, producing hydrocyanic gas, which destroys the ability of the blood hemoglobin to absorb oxygen. After the condemned individual inhales, it takes only a few seconds to lose consciousness. Death occurs within six to eighteen minutes. After pronouncement of death, the chamber is cleared through the use of carbon and neutralizing filters, and individuals in gas-masks decontaminate the body and chamber with a bleach solution. States which use the gas chamber: Arizona, California, Maryland, Mississippi, and North Carolina.

Hanging

The oldest form of execution, hanging involves a condemned individual stepping onto a raised platform, or the gallows. The person's neck is placed into a hoop, or noose, made at the end of a rope. The other end of the rope is secured above the gallows. On a signal the floor of the gallows gives way, and the individual is suspended by only the noose. This should break the individual's neck, although strangulation can also occur. States which administer death by hanging: Montana and Washington.

Lethal Injection

The most common of all forms of capital punishment, lethal injection has been used since 1982. In this method, the prisoner is secured to a gurney with ankle and wrist restraints. Cardiac monitor leads and a stethoscope are attached. An intravenous saline line is inserted into each arm, and the inmate is covered with a sheet. During the process, the prisoner will receive a dosage of three drugs. The saline lines are turned off and the first drug, sodium thiopental, is injected, putting the condemned into a deep sleep or causing unconsciousness. The second chemical, pancuronium bromide, is a muscle relaxant that stops respiration. Injection of the third drug, potassium chloride, stops the prisoner's heart. States which use lethal injection: Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Idaho, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming. When the death penalty is applied to a federal criminal offense, the United States government uses lethal injection. Executions occur in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Twelve states do *not* have the death penalty: Alaska, Hawaii, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, Wisconsin (also Washington D.C.).

- **May children or mentally challenged individuals ever be put to death in capital punishment cases?**

Typically, the cut-off age for possible execution is eighteen years old. Individuals also have to demonstrate various intellectual capacities to be deemed eligible for the death penalty. However, certain circumstances allow for convicted individuals below the age of eighteen or mentally challenged criminals to be put to death in a capital punishment crime. In *Thompson v. Oklahoma* (1988), the Supreme

Court ruled that the Constitution prohibits execution for crimes committed at age 15 or younger. However, in *Stanford v. Kentucky* (1989), the Court said capital punishment was permissible for crimes committed at ages 16 or older. A total of 221 juveniles have received death sentences since 1973, but only twenty-one of those have been executed.⁴ Since 1977, thirty-three persons with mental retardation have been executed in capital punishment cases.⁵ Until 2002, the federal government and the following states forbid execution of mentally challenged individuals: Arkansas, Colorado, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Tennessee, and Washington. In June 2002, the Supreme Court banned executions of the mentally retarded.

- **What are the main arguments for and against capital punishment?**

1. *Capital Punishment is a safe and painless means of executing a condemned individual.*

Argument: The various forms of capital punishment do not violate the “cruel and unusual” provision in the 8th Amendment as laid out by our forefathers. “Cruel and unusual” were never defined at our nation’s beginning, but the very fact the Supreme Court has upheld capital punishment’s legality means that it does not violate the Constitution. Also, the forefathers never had to witness the rise in violent crimes that we have in our society today. It plays a key role in the protection of public welfare and safety.

The methods of capital punishment are not barbarous, but rather are the most humane means of exterminating a condemned individual’s life. Hanging, firing squads, electrocution, gas chambers, and lethal injections all are quick and relatively pain-free ways to remove life from a person.

Capital punishment is not a case of “combating violence with violence.” There is a difference between violence and law enforcement. Law enforcement may involve punishment. It is the end result of violence. Murder is the *unlawful* killing of an individual with malice and forethought. Capital punishment is not the same as murder, since the death penalty is the law. Those who commit violence and murder act outside the law, whereas those enforcing death penalty use the law.

Response: Capital punishment *is* cruel and barbarous. This thinking goes along with the constitutional prohibition of “cruel and unusual punishment”. Proponents of this stance believe that capital punishment is a crude, ancient relic of older times, when institutions such as slavery, branding, and other corporal punishments were also widely accepted. It is designated to be unusual because the United States is the only industrialized western nation that continues to practice this punishment.

In much the same way it is seen as barbarous due to the methods by which it is administered. Numerous examples exist that point out extreme pain and suffering inflicted upon condemned individuals during the final execution of the death penalty. Hanging has resulted in slow, agonizing strangulation deaths or instances of heads being torn from the body. Electrocution often needs more than one periodic jolt of electricity, and witnesses have complained about the physical repulsion at seeing individuals jerk against their restraints and smelling burning flesh. Gas chambers often lead to violent convulsions for the condemned during the death struggle. Lethal injections, the most humane, allow no visible signs of pain or struggle due to the suppression of the central nervous system by drugs, but no factual studies have been done that prove pain is not being felt by the condemned.

2. *Capital Punishment is an economically intelligent alternative to incarcerating a condemned individual to a life in prison at the taxpayers’ expense.*

Argument: The choice people have is between executing a convicted individual or having that individual drain taxpayer resources as they rot in a cell while serving a life sentence. For many of these condemned individuals, there is no opportunity for parole, so there is no chance that they will ever be released from prison. Executing an individual costs much less than providing for that individual for the rest of his or her life.

Response: The death penalty is not, nor ever has been, a more economical alternative to life in prison. This seems like an illogical statement, but in reality, it is the truth. A murder trial normally takes much longer when the death penalty is at issue than when it is not. A majority of the costs for this litigation is borne by the taxpayer. A 1989 Maryland study revealed that a death penalty case costs “approximately 42 percent more than a case resulting in a non-death sentence.”⁶ Two Texas counties estimated that the cost of a capital trial was between \$400,000 and \$600,000.⁷ A similar non-capital murder trial costs about \$75,000, or a difference of, on average, \$425,000 to try each capital defendant. This does not take into account the appeals process mandated in death penalty cases. The same counties conservatively estimated that, due to the appeals process, only about 50 percent of all capital trials will result in an actual execution, therefore the actual cost of each execution would be \$850,000. If that same amount was invested at a 5 percent rate of return, it would yield roughly \$45,000 per year; more than enough to support someone serving a life sentence.⁸

Capital trials deal with the issue of time in relation to money. If a person were sentenced to life in prison, he or she could appeal, but that person would continue to serve his or her sentence in the meantime. But for a death sentence, serving the sentence would mean being executed, so the appeals process must take place in a shorter amount of time, which pushes back other court proceedings, resulting in increased losses of money and man-hours.

3. Capital punishment acts as a deterrent to future crimes.

Argument: The existence of the death penalty causes certain potential criminals to think twice about committing their crimes. Criminals are well-aware of the judicial system that is in place in our country. They know that being convicted of a crime, in the absence of the death penalty, means that they spend time in jail supplied with all their meals, education, and medical care while the appeals process will work to get them freed. They are aware that “life sentences” rarely, if ever, mean that they will be incarcerated for the rest of their lives. Therefore, they are fairly certain that, regardless of the outcome of their actions, they will live freely in the future.

However, if there *is* the possibility of the death penalty, criminals are faced with the ultimate decision before committing a crime. The possibility of having their lives taken may deter them from carrying out their plans. Even if the fear of capital punishment prevents one potential criminal from going through with their intended actions, then the existence of capital punishment will be justified.

Some statistics back up these claims. In 1977, Gary Gilmore faced a firing squad in Utah. There had been 55 murders in Utah during 1976. In 1977, in the wake of Gilmore’s execution, there were only 44 murders, a 20 percent decrease.⁹

It has been mentioned that there was a temporary suspension of capital punishment in the United States from 1972–1976. Because of this the number of executions in the years immediately after the suspension were well below the numbers before it. However, the number of murders increased. In 1960, there were 56 executions and 9,140 murders. In 1964, there were only 15 executions and 9,250 murders. In 1969, there were no executions but murders had increased to 14,590. By 1975, there were no executions but murders continued to rise to 20,510. And in 1980, there were only two executions, compared to the 23,040 murders. The number of annual murders was a 131 percent increase. The murder rate (homicides per 100,000 people) doubled from 5.1 to 10.2. So the murders grew as the number of executions shrank.¹⁰

From 1995–2000, executions averaged 71 per year, a 21,000 percent increase from the 1965–80 period. The murder rate dropped from 10.2 in 1980 to 5.7 in 1999, a 44 percent reduction.¹¹

Response: If capital punishment truly acted as a deterrent, then there should be statistics to support the fact that capital crimes have decreased since the death penalty was introduced. The problem is that

statistics can be implemented to show exactly the desired information that was being sought, despite the accuracy of the what the data truly reveals. Many studies reveal an increase in murders with a decrease in executions, but they do not illustrate a causal effect. Furthermore, such studies often include incomplete or inaccurate information, often citing statistics that differ from those of the FBI's Census Bureau regarding murders and executions. Often these studies do not take into account the various states that did or did not have death penalties at the time. Instead, murders are grouped into a national picture, despite what penalties faced criminals in their own state.

There are studies that reveal the exact opposite. In a 1980 study, researcher Thorsten Sellin compared homicide rates over groups of states. Each group of states was similar except in their use of capital punishment. The murder rate should have been lower in death penalty states if capital punishment was a deterrent. However, none of the groups of states showed any deterrence effect.¹² Even Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall said, in a 1989 Amnesty International study, that "the death penalty is no more effective deterrent than life imprisonment."¹³

The simple fact is that there is no irrefutable proof that the threat of capital punishment deters capital crimes. There are too many variables involved. The differences inherent in each court case result in a multitude of different sentences given by judges. The differences in state laws also contribute to an irregularity in the dispensing of justice. Since a simple causal relationship between the existence of capital punishment and occurrence of murders cannot be established, this argument is meaningless.

4. *Capital punishment offers few, if any, risks to people who are wrongfully accused.*

Argument: Due to the appeals process, those individuals who are wrongfully found guilty of a crime are allowed to have their say in court to produce evidence that will ensure their release. It is one the great things about our judicial system that individuals have the ability to appeal a ruling to a higher court if they feel they have not been justifiably tried and have information to back it up. Besides, with the way the appeals process plays out over a long period of time, it is a relative certainty that an innocent person will have a chance to be exonerated. Couple this with the fact that a very small percentage of people who are sentenced to death ever actually receive the death penalty, and it is obvious that there is almost no risk that an innocent person would ever be put to death.

Response: All it takes is one innocent person put to death to refute this entire argument. One innocent person's life is worth more than having the death penalty in existence. It might be a very unlikely possibility, but it still *is* a possibility.

To put it simply, the death penalty is *irreversible*. Unlike other penalties for crimes, it cannot be undone. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, there has been an average of four cases each year since 1900 in which an innocent person was convicted of murder.¹⁴ Many of these individuals have been sentenced to death. An example is Kirk Bloodsworth, who was sentenced by Maryland in 1985 to death for rape and murder, despite the testimony of a witness. In 1986, his conviction was reversed based on new evidence, but he was re-tried and re-convicted and sentenced to life in prison. In 1993, newly-used DNA evidence proved that Kirk was not the rapist-killer and was released.¹⁵

A more troubling example is the case of Jesse Tafero, who was convicted in Florida in 1976, along with his wife, Sonia Jacobs, for murdering a state trooper. In 1981, Jacobs' death sentence was reduced on appeal to life imprisonment, and in 1992 her conviction was vacated by a federal court. The evidence on which both Tafero and Jacobs had been convicted and sentenced was identical. However, it had consisted mainly of the perjured testimony of someone seeking a reduced sentence. Tafero was executed in 1990. Due to the arbitrary application of the death penalty and the appeals process, he died while his wife eventually was freed.¹⁶

5. *Capital punishment punishes criminals. It does not discriminate.*

Argument: There is no racial or economic discrimination in the application of the death penalty. If it has been shown that a majority of individuals who commit murders are African-American males or those individuals below a certain income, then it is a logical following that more of these individuals are on death row after being convicted of a capital crime.

However, according to 1991 Rand Corporation study by Stephen Klein, white murderers received the death penalty slightly more often (32 percent) than non-white murderers (27 percent).¹⁷ Also, the same study revealed murderers of white victims received the death penalty more often (32 percent) than non-white victims (23 percent). Therefore, there is no racial discrimination.

Response: Again, statistics reveal what an individual wants them to reveal. It makes perfect sense that the *percentages* are roughly equal, but this does not take into account the overall *numbers* of those being sentenced to death and executed. Between 1930 and 1996, 4,220 prisoners were executed in the United States; more than half (53 percent) were African-American.¹⁸

Statistics from 1995 reveal even more disturbing news regarding the victims of murders.¹⁹ All evidence points to the fact that even in today's society, the killing of white person is treated much more severely than the killing of an African-American person. Between 1977 and 1995, 313 people were executed. Thirty-six were convicted of killing an African-American person while 249 (80 percent) had murdered a white person. Of the 178 white defendants executed, only three had been found guilty of murdering an African-American person.

There is also inequality when it comes to socio-economic class. An adequate defense in capital cases depends on the competency of one's attorneys. Stated plainly, poorer individuals do not have the economic means to hire the best attorneys. Often, they are forced to accept public defenders, who do not have the experience or resources necessary to mount a strong defense.

6. *Capital punishment is morally defensible, given its inclusion in the Bible.*

Argument: Capital punishment has been around for many years and its inclusion in the Bible supports the fact that it is a morally permissible action. There are the ever present examples of God using capital punishment: Sodom and Gomorrah (Gn 18–19), the first-born sons of the Egyptians (Ex 11), and the Egyptian army in the Red Sea (Ex 14) to name a few. There are also numerous examples in the Old Testament where capital punishment was commanded by God. In Genesis 9:6, God states: "Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed." Also, Exodus 21:12, Numbers 35:31, and Numbers 35:33 all suggest the permissibility of capital punishment for murder. Moreover, it seems that God allows capital punishment for other crimes as well: rape (Dt 22:25), sodomy (Lv 18:22, 20:13), fornication (Lv 21:9), perjury (Zec 5:4), kidnapping (Ex 21:16), striking or cursing father or mother (Ex 21:15,17, Lv 20:9), disobedience to parents (Dt 21:18–21), theft (Zec 5:3,4), blasphemy (Lv 24:11–14), Sabbath desecration (Ex 35:2), propagating false doctrines (Dt 13:1–10), refusing to abide the decision of the court (Dt 17:12), and homosexuality (Lv 20:13). Surely, God intended there to be capital punishment.

Furthermore, the New Testament teaches about capital punishment. Romans 13:1–7 says that the human government is ordained by God, and that we are to obey government because government does not bear the sword in vain. Human governments are given the responsibility to punish criminals, and this includes murderers who should be sentenced to the death penalty.

Response: Much like statistics, biblical quotation, in the wrong hands, can have a very adverse effect to the intended meaning of the passage. Scripture needs to be viewed in the context of when and why it was written. The Catholic Church's position will be explained in the next section, but for now, let's try to understand the true problem of simply quoting scripture without having a fundamental

understanding of the reasons why it was spoken or written in the first place. If we look at various ideas in the Old Testament, a very harsh existence is presented. Many of the topics discussed dealt with specific instances at the time and cannot be applied in the same manner today.

There are numerous examples that illustrate this point. Leviticus 1:9 calls for burning bulls on an altar as a sacrifice. Common sense tells us that such practices are not being called for today. Selling one's offspring into slavery, as mentioned in Exodus 21:7 dealt with a specific issue that was important at the time it was written. It does not mean that parents can offer their son or daughter to the highest bidder. And just because Leviticus 11:10 says it is wrong to eat shellfish does not mean that seafood restaurants are working against the will of God. Certain passages need to be viewed in the context of the issues of the time and location in which they were written.

Church Teaching on Capital Punishment • • • •

- **What is the Catholic Church's position on capital punishment?**

The Catholic Church is, in almost all cases, opposed to capital punishment. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states that governments have the right to defend themselves and inflict punishment for crimes but the purpose of that punishment should be to protect society and to correct the guilty party (see CCC, 2266).

- **Why is that the position of the Catholic Church?**

The Church believes in the dignity and worth of every human being. Capital punishment allows the government to take the place of God deciding who will live and who will die.

- **What else does the Church teach about capital punishment?**

Pope John Paul II in his encyclical *The Gospel of Life*, states:

It is clear that, for these purposes [protection of society and rehabilitation of the offender] to be achieved, *the nature and extent of the punishment* must be carefully evaluated and decided upon, and ought not go to the extreme of executing the offender except in cases of absolute necessity: in other words, when it would not be possible otherwise to defend society. Today however, as a result of steady improvements in the organization of the penal system, such cases are very rare, if not practically non-existent (56).

- **Which Scripture passages are relevant to the capital punishment issue?**

Old Testament

As discussed earlier, it is widely thought that the Old Testament supports capital punishment. Supporters of capital punishment frequently cite Exodus 21:23–24 (“But if injury ensues, you shall give life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth....”). What is not said is that the Old Testament, in various places, calls for the death penalty for offenses such as being disrespectful toward parents, adultery, and using God’s name in vain. The law in Exodus 21 was originally meant to limit punishment to what was best for the community rather than calling for excessive punishment. In the story of Cain and Abel (Genesis 4), when Cain kills his brother, God does not order his death but rather puts a mark on Cain to keep others from harming him.

New Testament

The New Testament is filled with stories of redemption in which sinners came to know the saving love of Jesus and turned their lives around. These scriptural examples should show us that no one is beyond redemption. The parable of the Prodigal Son (Lk 15:11–32) is a shining example. The prodigal son returns to the loving arms of his father after living a life of scandal. Other relevant passages include:

Matthew 5:38

Matthew 7:1–5

Luke 6:35–37

John 8:1–11

Romans 12:14–19

- **What can I do to help stop capital punishment?**

The means of helping to stop capital punishment are numerous. They include:

1. Pray.
2. Get politically involved to help change the laws regarding capital punishment. This could mean writing and meeting your elected representatives at the local, state, and federal levels.
3. Participate in or start a Pro-life club at your school or in your church.
4. Discuss the issues with your parents and friends.
5. Learn about the way capital punishment is carried out in your state or those states around you. Take a trip to the prison on the day of an execution and protest the execution. More importantly, check out information about the existence of prayer vigils in your area or at the prison. If there isn't a prayer vigil, help to start one. Pray for the person being executed, the victims of the crimes, and those who work at the prison who are carrying out the death penalty.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT DILEMMA #1

George's world has just crashed down around him. His son and daughter were killed when a man broke into their home and shot them in the process of a robbery. The assailant was caught, and a trial was held. The suspect was easily found guilty because of the abundance of evidence left at the scene. Also, a neighbor identified the man as he left the home. There is no question that the man convicted is the killer. Sentencing will begin tomorrow. George is going to be called to the stand for the prosecution. The lawyers want to go for the death penalty, and since the judge is up for election this year, it could pass easily. George is consumed with hate at the sight of the killer. He can't even look at him. Yet tomorrow, the fate of this man will almost assuredly rest with George. The statement he makes will go a long way towards deciding whether this man will live or die. Before this happened, George was strongly against the death penalty.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How should George approach his testimony?
- 2) What responsibility does George have if he testifies and the man is sentenced to die?
- 3) What is your opinion about the death penalty in this case? in general?

We have discussed this Tough Choice.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Student Signature

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT DILEMMA #2

Jimmy was a single father of a mildly retarded girl, Gabby. He cared for her every need, helped her cope with the outside world, and supported her. Pretty soon, she became his sole reason for living. As she became a teenager, he allowed her more and more freedom. One day, he let her go to the mall pet store on her own while he went to buy the two of them sodas. In those brief seven or eight minutes, she was abducted from the store. The next day her body was found along a roadside. A convicted child molester was charged with the crime. At the pretrial hearing the man smirked at Jimmy. Jimmy was filled with rage. The next day Jimmy returned to the courthouse with a razor-sharp plastic knife. During a lull in the proceedings, he lunged at the man and stabbed him in the neck. The man died instantly. Jimmy was now charged with murder. Anita is the jury foreman. She is a prominent leader in the area and is respected by the other members of the jury. She has great influence over the other jurors on the case.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) From the information given, should Jimmy be convicted of murder?
- 2) Would you have favored the death penalty for the man who killed Jimmy's daughter? What about for Jimmy?
- 3) Is it ever excusable to strike out against another in anger? Explain.

We have discussed this Tough Choice.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Student Signature

Notes

1. "Capital Punishment," *The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*, <http://www.infoplease.com/ce6/society/A0857171.html>
2. <http://sun.soci.niu.edu/~critcrim/dp/states.using.txt> from PEACENET's Prison Information Desk: <http://www.peacenet.apc.org/prisons/issues/dp.html>
3. Capital Punishment FAQs from ASC's Critical Criminology Division, <http://sun.soci.niu.edu/~critcrim/dp/faq/rapeexec.html>
4. <http://www.law.onu.edu/faculty/streib/juvdeath.htm>
5. <http://sun.soci.niu.edu/~critcrim/dp/faq/retard.txt>, from Death Penalty Information Center
6. U.S. Government Accounting Office, *Limited Data Available in Costs of Death Sentences* (1989): 50.
7. <http://www.personal.umich.edu/~spragge/capital.html>
8. Ibid.
9. <http://www.wesleylowe.com/cp.html>
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid. Quotation from Dudley Sharp, of the criminal-justice reform group, Justice For All
12. Thorsten Sellin. *The Penalty of Death*, (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980): 139–156.
13. Amnesty International. *When the State Kills...The Death Penalty v. Human Rights* (London: Amnesty, 1989): 13.
14. Radelet, Lofquist, and Bedau, in *Thomas M. Cooley Law Review* (1997); Radelet, Bedau, and Putnam, *In Spite of Innocence* (1992); Bedau and Radelet, "Miscarriage of Justice in Potentially Capital Cases," in *Stanford Law Review* (1987).
15. http://archive.aclu.org/library/case_against_death.html
16. Ibid, and Radelet, Lofquist, and Bedau, in *Thomas M. Cooley Law Review* (1997).
17. <http://www.wesleylowe.com/cp.html>
18. Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Capital Punishment 1977" and "Death Row USA," Summer 1996.
19. "Death Row USA," Summer 1996 and *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics—1995*.