

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 37/09 (AMR 51/019/2009, 10 February 2009) – Death penalty / Legal concern

USA (Virginia) Edward Nathaniel Bell (m), Jamaican national, black, aged 44

Edward Bell was executed in Virginia on the evening of 19 February. He was sentenced to death in 2001 for the murder of a police officer, Sergeant Richard Timbrook, in 1999. Edward Bell, who was convicted on largely circumstantial evidence, maintained his innocence to the end.

According to a prison spokesperson, in his final statement before being put to death by lethal injection Edward Bell said: "To the Timbrook family, you definitely have the wrong person. The truth will come out one day. This here – killing me – there's no justice about it."

About five hours before the execution, Virginia's Governor, Timothy Kaine, denied Edward Bell clemency. In a statement, Governor Kaine said: "Having carefully reviewed the petition for clemency and judicial opinions regarding this case, I find no compelling reason to set aside the sentence that was recommended by the jury, and then imposed and affirmed by the courts. Accordingly, I decline to intervene."

Edward Bell's clemency petition had presented Governor Kaine with doubts about Edward Bell's guilt, serious questions about the quality of his legal representation at trial, and evidence that Bell may have had mental retardation.

Edward Bell becomes the 14th prisoner to be put to death in the USA this year and the 1,150th since executions resumed in the country in 1977. Virginia accounts for 103 of these executions. This was the first execution in Virginia this year.

No further action by the UA Network is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.