

PUBLIC

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Further information on EXTRA 50/98 (AMR 51/45/98, 27 July 1998) - Death penalty

USA (North Carolina) Zane HILL, aged 62

Zane Hill was executed as scheduled in North Carolina on 14 August 1998. He was sentenced to death in 1991 for killing his 29-year-old son the previous year.

The lethal injection began at 2.01am and Zane Hill died 23 minutes later. Prison officials were reported to have said that the execution took longer than usual, but offered no explanation.

The District Attorney who had prosecuted Zane Hill said that it had taken courage for Governor Hunt to deny clemency because of pressure from people opposing the execution. These included friends and relatives of Zane Hill who lobbied the Governor to commute the sentence. Many of them are supporters of the death penalty, but believed that this case did not warrant it. Local newspaper editorials supported commutation, and Governor Hunt's office was reported to have been "flooded" with appeals from around the world. Governor Hunt has not granted clemency to a single death row inmate since he came to office, the only Governor of North Carolina this century not to do so. He has allowed six executions.

Zane Hill's wife, Bonnie Hill, together with their daughter and son, visited him a few hours before he was killed. Zane Hill's lawyer said after the execution: "Tonight, I saw an old man die. It should not have happened. But the state's machinery of death prevailed. Right now, I'm not very proud to be a North Carolinian."

Zane Hill becomes the 473rd prisoner to be executed in the USA since it resumed executions in 1977.

No further appeals are necessary, although you may write letters of regret at the execution to Governor Hunt. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.