

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 51/116/98

21 December 1998

Further information on EXTRA 89/98 (AMR 51/97/98, 25 November 1998) - Death Penalty

USA (SOUTH CAROLINA) Larry GILBERT, black
J.D. GLEATON, black
Louis Joe TRUESDALE, black
Andy Lavern SMITH, black

Half-brothers Larry Gilbert and JD Gleaton were executed, as scheduled, on 4 December 1998. They had been sentenced to death in 1977 for robbing and killing Ralph Stoudemire. On the day of the execution, Ralph Stoudemire's widow, who had campaigned for the her husband's killers to be put to death, was reported as saying: "I thought when this day came that I wouldn't be sad, that I would be happy, but I am. Let's face it, we're taking two men's lives."

Before the two men were put to death, Bishop David B. Thompson, the leader of more than 116,000 Roman Catholics in South Carolina appealed to the state governor to spare the lives of all on death row: "I want the governor of my state to be the chief executive, not the chief executioner. Capital punishment feeds the cycle of violence in society by pandering to a lust for revenge," he stated. Shortly afterwards, the governor announced that he would not stop the executions.

Louis Truesdale was executed on 11 December as scheduled. He had been convicted in 1980 of killing 18-year-old Rebecca Ann Eudy. In his final statement in the execution chamber, Louis Truesdale apologised to Rebecca Eudy's family and to his own family.

Louis Truesdale's lawyer reportedly produced an affidavit from an attorney who had interviewed the only black juror at Truesdale's resentencing in 1987. This juror reportedly told an investigator that fellow jurors intimidated her into voting for the death penalty, and that two young white male jurors had made remarks such as "this nigger has to fry".

Andy Lavern Smith was executed by lethal injection as scheduled on 18 December. He had been sentenced to death for the murder of an elderly couple, Christy and Corrie Johnson, during a robbery at their home in 1983.

He became the 500th prisoner executed since the USA resumed judicial killing in 1977.

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