

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 44/04 (AMR 51/024/2004, 06 February 2004) - Death penalty

**USA (Texas) Edward Lewis Lagrone (m), black, aged 46
 Bobby Ray Hopkins (m), black, aged 36
 Cameron Todd Willingham (m), aged 36**

Edward Lagrone, Bobby Hopkins and Cameron Willingham were executed in Texas on 11, 12 and 17 February respectively.

Edward Lagrone was convicted in May 1993 of the murder, two years earlier, of 10-year-old Shakiesha Lloyd and her two great-aunts, Caroline Lloyd, aged 80, and 87-year-old Zenobia Anderson. In his final statement before being killed he said: "I just want to say I am not sad today or bitter with anybody. Like I've said from day one, I did not go in there and kill them - but I am no better than those that did." He was pronounced dead seven minutes after the lethal drugs began flowing into his veins.

Bobby Hopkins was convicted in May 1994 of the murders of Sandi Marbut, aged 18, and her 19-year-old cousin, Jennifer Weston, in July 1993. He declined to make a final statement. His execution was delayed by two hours while last-minute appeals were considered. The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals had refused to stay the execution to consider the constitutionality of the state's lethal injection process, including evidence that one of the chemicals used, pancuronium bromide, banned in pet euthanasia in Texas and other states, might be masking the prisoner's suffering during execution. One of the judges dissented: "Especially poignant is our own legislature's action in banning the chemical. Clearly, the State of Texas has acted to eliminate the cruel and inhumane euthanasia of animals by limiting the procedures and chemicals that can be used to euthanize. It stands to reason that what is cruel and inhumane for use in animals is also cruel and inhumane for use in human beings."

Cameron Willingham was convicted in August 1992 of the arson murders of his three young children, Amber Kuykendall, Karmon Willingham and Kameron Willingham, in a house fire in December 1991. The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles voted 15-0 against clemency. In his final statement before being executed, Cameron Willingham said: "The only statement I want to make is that I am an innocent man convicted of a crime I did not commit. I have been persecuted for 12 years for something I did not do." He was pronounced dead seven minutes after the lethal injection began.

There have been 14 executions in the USA this year, seven of them in Texas. This brings to 899 the number of people put to death in the USA since executions resumed there in 1977. Texas accounts for 320 of these killings.

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