

PUBLIC

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Further information on EXTRA 13/00 (AMR 51/31/00, 23 February 2000) - Death penalty

USA (California) Darrell Keith Rich, part Native American, aged 45

Darrell Keith Rich was executed by lethal injection at San Quentin State Prison, California, in the first few minutes of 15 March 2000.

Darrell Rich was convicted in 1980 of four murders committed in 1978. He was sentenced to death for the first degree murder of Annette Fay Edwards (19), Linda Diane Slovik (26) and Annette Lynn Selix (11), and to life imprisonment without parole for the second-degree murder of Patricia Ann Moore (17). He was also convicted of sexual assaults against five other women.

Governor Davis denied clemency on 10 March, repeatedly citing the brutality of the crimes for which Rich was sentenced to die. He also said that the relatives of the murder victims "are not swayed by [Rich's] plea for clemency and plead that the State's laws be carried out."

At a clemency hearing on 6 March family members of the murder victims had spoken of their pain at losing their relatives and their wish to have Darrell Rich killed without further delay.

The courts denied Darrell Rich's request to be allowed to participate in a Native American sweat lodge purification ceremony before being killed. In such a ceremony, water is poured on hot rocks to steam-heat the wooden lodge. A spiritual advisor leads the participants in prayer and song.

Several hundred people, including Native Americans, gathered outside the prison to protest the execution. One 53-year-old Chippewa Indian said "our message has always been that all life is sacred." One woman who reportedly walked 25 miles to the prison to protest the execution said: "the thing is to stop the violence. I'm a rape survivor and every time I see violence, I want to stop it."

Darrell Rich becomes the 22nd prisoner to be executed in the USA this year, and the 620th since executions resumed there in 1977. He was the eighth inmate put to death in California since executions resumed in the state in 1992.

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