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**Media Advisory
USA**

***The imminent execution of John Paul Penry*
A new Amnesty International report**

On 17 July 1990 a fax from the United States arrived at Amnesty International's London Secretariat. It read simply: "*Penry was sentenced to death again today by Texas jury*". It was a message no less shocking for its brevity. For behind those few words lay a tragic story of **mental impairment and murder** that continues to speak volumes about crime and punishment in the USA.

The latest episode is due to be played out in the Texas lethal injection chamber on 13 January 2000, when John Paul Penry -- the defendant referred to in that now yellowing fax -- is scheduled to be put to death. His execution would be another chilling milestone in **the ugly history of US judicial killing**.

In a ruling that stood in stark contrast to a United Nations resolution opposing the use of the death penalty against the mentally impaired, the Supreme Court found that executing a mentally retarded individual did not *per se* violate the USA's constitutional ban on cruel and unusual punishments.

The planned execution of John Paul Penry violates fundamental human rights and **contravenes international standards**.

The murder of Pamela Carpenter in 1979 -- for which John Paul Penry will be facing the death penalty -- was a dreadful crime, one which has caused immense suffering to her family and friends. However, justice cannot be served by executing John Paul Penry in retribution.

Amnesty International is **appealing to Governor George W. Bush**, would-be US President, to stop the execution. There can be few more compelling cases for him to demonstrate the credibility of his presidential campaigning slogan of "*compassionate conservatism*".

For a copy of the report, please contact Amnesty International's press office in London (see details below).

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For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London on +44 171 413 5566.

Website <http://www.amnesty.org>