

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AMR 51/74/94
Distr: UA/SC

EXTRA 53/94 Death Penalty

8 September 1994

USA (Texas)

George LOTT
Warren BRIDGE
Herman CLARK
Walter WILLIAMS

The above three men are scheduled to be executed in Texas within the next few weeks.

George Lott, white, was sentenced to death in February 1993 for the murders of Chris Marshall and John Edwards, in July 1992. He is scheduled to be executed on 20 September 1994. George Lott carried out his own defence at trial, and has chosen to abandon his appeals and allow the state to execute him.

Warren Bridge, white, was sentenced to death in 1980 for the murder of a white man during a robbery; he is scheduled to be executed on 21 September. According to information received by Amnesty International, Warren Bridge received poor legal representation at trial; his defense team included two attorneys who had no criminal law experience.

Herman Clark, black, sentenced to death in May 1982 for the murder of a white male, is scheduled to be executed on 27 September, and Walter Williams, also black, is scheduled to be executed on 5 October.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International is deeply concerned at the number of executions being carried out in Texas. Of the 250 executions carried out in the USA since the death penalty was resumed in the mid 1970s, 79 have been carried out in Texas.

In Texas the governor may commute a sentence of death only if she receives a favourable recommendation from the Board of Pardons and Paroles. The Board consistently refuses to hold full clemency hearings in death penalty cases, and apart from a number of commutations granted in the 1980s as the result of two key court rulings, the Board has never granted clemency at a defendant's request under present statutes.

As of 20 July 1994 there were 385 prisoners under sentence of death in Texas, the second largest death row population in the USA. (California, the largest has 386). The most recent person to be executed in Texas was Robert Drew, on 2 August 1994. The method of execution is lethal injection.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please telephone, send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing deep concern that George Lott, Warren Bridge, and Herman Clark and Walter Williams are scheduled to be executed in Texas;

- urging the Board to recommend that Governor Richards grant clemency to George Lott, Warren Bridge, Herman Clark, and Walter Williams.

APPEALS TO

Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles
Executive Clemency Unit
Texas Department of Criminal Justice
Pardons and Paroles Division
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Austin, TX 78711
USA

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Dear Board Members

The Honorable Ann Richards
Governor of Texas
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Salutation: Dear Governor

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and to diplomatic representatives of the USA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.