

PUBLIC

AI Index: AMR 51/200/99

10 December 1999

**Further information on EXTRA 167/99 (AMR 51/191/99, 26 November 1999) - Death penalty / Legal concern**

**USA (Texas) James Lee Beathard, white, aged 42**

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James Beathard was executed in Texas as scheduled on the evening of 9 December 1999, despite serious concerns surrounding his conviction. He had been sentenced to death in 1985 for the murder of Marcus Lee Hathorn.

According to reports, James Beathard made a lengthy final statement, in which he expressed his love for his family and criticized the death penalty: "*The United States has got to the point now where there is zero respect for human life. My death is just a symptom of a bigger illness.*" He maintained his innocence, and reiterated that the statements given at his trial by his co-defendant, Gene Hathorn, which played a major role in putting Beathard on death row, were false (as Gene Hathorn claimed after the trial). He also criticized the prosecutor who, at the two men's separate trials, promoted different versions of the 1984 crime.

James Beathard becomes the 33<sup>rd</sup> prisoner executed in Texas, and the 95<sup>th</sup> nationwide, in 1999. He was also one of four prisoners executed in the USA on 9 December, the eve of Human Rights Day (see News Service 231/99, AMR 51/197/99, 8 December 1999 - *USA: Four prisoners to be killed on the eve of Human Rights Day as USA heads for 100<sup>th</sup> execution in 1999*, and News Service 232/99, AMR 51/199/99, 9 December 1999 - *News Flash: USA's addiction to execution continues*).

This is the first time, since the USA resumed executions in 1977, that four prisoners have been put to death on the same day. James Beathard also becomes the 595<sup>th</sup> prisoner executed in the USA since 1977. Of these, 197 have been carried out in Texas, more than half under the governorship of George W. Bush.

**No further action by the UA Network is requested. Many thanks to all who sent appeals on behalf of James Beathard.**