

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 23/06 (AMR 51/021/2006, 30 January 2006) Death Penalty

USA (Missouri)

Vernon Evans Jr (m), black, aged 56

Vernon Evans, who was scheduled to be executed during the week beginning 6 February, has been granted a stay of execution by the Maryland Court of Appeals, in order to allow the court time to hear arguments in his case. Evans had been sentenced to death for the shooting murders of Scott Piechowicz and Susan Kennedy, both white, in 1983.

Vernon Evans's current attorneys have argued, among other things, that his trial attorney failed to properly investigate his case and to present eyewitness testimony to the sentencing jury which raised doubts that Evans was the gunman. They have also argued that information regarding Evans's troubled and abusive background was also not presented to the jury, and that racial and geographical disparities in the application of the death penalty in the state, borne out by a University of Maryland study, are evident in Evans's case.

Thanks to everyone who sent appeals. No further action is required at present.