

DEATH PENALTY INFORMATION CENTER

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 FACT SHEET

 UPCOMING EXECUTIONS

 EXECUTION DATABASE

 STATE-BY-STATE

Those Executed Who Did Not Directly Kill the Victim

Everyone who has been executed since the death penalty was reinstated in 1976 participated in a crime in which at least one victim died. In most cases, the person executed directly killed the victim. In a small minority of cases, the person executed ordered or contracted with another person to carry out the murder. In another group of cases, the person executed participated in a felony during which a victim died at the hands of another participant in the felony. The defendant in such cases was typically found guilty of "felony murder" or under the "law of parties," and in some states can receive the death penalty, despite not having killed or directed the killing of the victim. The US Supreme Court has restricted the use of the death penalty in such cases. See [Enmund v. Florida](#) and [Tison v. Arizona](#).

We list below the cases that we are aware of in which the defendant was found guilty of felony murder. We separately list the cases in which the person executed contracted to have the victim killed, though these cases do not fit under the class of felony murder and are not meant to imply less culpability. We welcome any additions or corrections to these lists.

See also DPIC's page [Kennedy v. Louisiana](#) regarding the Supreme Court decision striking down statutes that allowed the death penalty for non-homicide crimes against individuals.

Felony Murders

	Name	State	Race of Defendant	Execution Date	Description of Crime
1.	Doyle Skillern	TX	White	1/16/1985	Accomplice in the murder of an undercover narcotics agent. He was waiting in a car nearby when the murder happened. The shooter is serving a life sentence, but eligible for parole. ("Killers' Fates Diverged; Accomplice Is Executed; Triggerman Faces Parole," <i>Washington Post</i> , January 16, 1985).
2.	Beauford White	FL	Black	8/18/1987	Stood guard while two men went into a house looking for drugs and then killed six of the house's occupants. The two shooters were

					executed as well. ("Florida Prisoner Executed after 10-year Fight for Life," <i>St. Petersburg Times</i> , August 29, 1987).
3.	G.W. Green	TX	White	11/12/1991	Participated in a robbery, where one of his accomplices shot the probation officer who owned the home. The shooter was executed on 9/10/87 and another accomplice is serving a life sentence. (" 15 Years After Crime, Texas Inmate Is Executed ," <i>New York Times</i> , November 13, 1991)
4.	William Andrews	UT	Black	7/30/1992	Participated in a robbery and torture, but his accomplice murdered the victims after he left. The shooter was executed as well. (" Utah Execution Hinges on Issue of Racial Bias ," <i>New York Times</i> , July 19, 1992)
5.	Carlos Santana	TX	Latino	4/23/1993	Participated in a robbery. During the robbery his accomplice murdered a security guard. His accomplice was executed on December 8, 1998. (Texas Department of Criminal Justice)
6.	Jessie Gutierrez	TX	Latino	9/17/1994	Participated in a robbery with his brother, Jose Gutierrez, who killed the victim. Jessie was apparently present during the murder and even brandished a gun while continuing with the robbery. Jose was also executed (in 1999). (Texas Attorney General press release, Nov. 17, 1999).
7.	Gregory Resnover	IN	Black	12/8/1994	A police officer was killed when trying to arrest Resnover and Tommie J. Smith. Smith and Resnover both fired shots at the police, but Smith was convicted as the one who fired the fatal shot. Smith was executed on 7/18/1996. ("Capital Punishment in Indiana," <i>Indy Star</i> , June 15, 2007).
8.	Steven Hatch	OK	White	8/9/1996	Steven Hatch with his co-defendant Glenn Ake participated in a home invasion. After abusing the family for several hours, Hatch went out to the car while Ake killed the parents. Ake is serving a life sentence. ("Oklahoma Justice: Should Crime Partner Get Death Penalty," <i>Christian Science Monitor</i> , August 7, 1996).
9.	Dennis Skillicorn	MO	White	5/20/2009	Skillicorn and co-defendants Allen Nicklasson and Tim DeGraffenreid kidnapped Richard Drummond, who had stopped to help the three with their broken down car. While Skillicorn and Graffenreid waited in the car, Nicklasson led Drummond a 1/4 mile away and shot the victim. ("Missouri is about to execute Dennis Skillicorn. The state's death penalty may not outlive him very long.," <i>Kansas City Pitch</i> , May 12, 2009).
10.	Robert Thompson	TX	Black	11/19/2009	Thompson and co-defendant Sammy Butler entered a Seven Evenings convenience store in Houston with intent to rob. Thompson shot one clerk who survived the attack. On the way out, another clerk came out firing shots at the vehicle. Butler shot and killed that clerk. Butler was given a life sentence. The Texas Board of Pardon and Paroles recommended clemency for Thompson, which Texas Governor Rick Perry rejected. ("Killer executed after Perry rejects panel's advice," <i>Houston Chronicle</i> , November 20, 2009).

Contract Killings

	Name	State	Race of Defendant	Execution Date	Description of Crime
1.	Anthony Antone	FL	White	1/26/1984	Planned the Murder of a former Police Detective. The shooter committed suicide while in jail. ("Contract Murderer Dies in Florida," <i>New York Times</i> , January 27, 1984).
2.	Mark Hopkinson	WY	White	1/22/1992	Convicted of ordering the bombing deaths of a family. The bomber died before he could be questioned. Hopkinson was executed proclaiming his innocence. ("Executed in Wyoming," <i>The Washington Times</i> , January 23, 1992).
3.	Larry Heath	AL	White	3/20/1992	Contracted for the murder of his wife. The shooter was given a life sentence. (HEATH v. ALABAMA, 474 U.S. 82 (1985))
4.	Robert Black Jr.	TX	White	5/22/1992	John Wayne Hearn placed an ad in <i>Soldier of Fortune</i> magazine offering his skills as a mercenary. Black contacted him and paid him to murder his wife. Hearn is serving a life sentence in Florida. ("Killer Tells of Requests for His Help in Crimes," <i>New York Times</i> , February 21, 1988).
5.	Markham Duff-Smith	TX	White	6/29/1993	Contracted for the murder of his adoptive mother. Of the co-defendants, one was given a 30-year sentence and another was paroled after serving three years in prison. The shooter was executed on 7/24/2003. (" Murderers Are Put to Death in Texas and Georgia ," <i>New York Times</i> , June 30, 1993).
6.	David Fisher	VA	White	3/23/1999	Contracted for murder to collect a life insurance policy. The shooter received a life sentence. ("Virginia Executes Man Who Arranged Murder for Hire." <i>The Washington Post</i> , March 23, 1999).
7.	Marilyn Plantz	OK	White	5/1/2001	Conspired with two men to have her husband killed, allegedly to collect insurance money that they would share in. One of the killers (her lover), William Bryson, was also executed. ("Oklahoma Executes Second Female Prisoner," <i>Washington Post</i> , May 2, 2001).
8.	Clarence Ray Allen	CA	Native American	1/19/2006	While in prison, Allen contracted Billy Ray Hamilton to murder witnesses who had testified against him. Hamilton also received a death sentence, but died of cancer while on death row. ("Death Row Inmate, 58, Dies of Cancer," <i>The Los Angeles Times</i> , October 26, 2007).
9.	Gregory Lynn Summers	TX	White	10/25/2006	Contracted for the murder of three family members. The shooter was given a death sentence as well. (Texas Department of Corrections: Texas Offender Information).
10.	Teresa Lewis	VA	White	9/23/2010	Contracted for the murder of husband and adult stepson. The two shooters received life without parole sentences. ("Virginia executes Teresa Lewis for role in slayings of husband, stepson in 2002," <i>Washington Post</i> , Sept. 23, 2010).
11.	Kelly Gissendaner	GA	White	9/30/2015	Arranged to have her boyfriend kill her husband. The boyfriend received a life sentence after a plea bargain. ("Georgia Executes Woman on Death Row Despite Clemency Bid and Pope's Plea," <i>N.Y. Times</i> , Sept. 30, 2015).

Source: Pre-2000 cases were identified in "[Death Row USA](#)," Further research on these and subsequent cases is from DPIC.

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