

Texas executes Garcia Glen White despite claims of mental deficiencies

Kate Randall
1 October 2024

Garcia Glen White died by lethal injection at the Texas state prison in Huntsville on Tuesday. He was pronounced dead at 6:56 p.m., according to a spokeswoman for the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

White, 61, was convicted and sentenced to death for the 1989 murders in Houston of 16-year-old twin sisters Annette and Bernette Edwards. White was the nation's sixth execution in a 10-day period.

White was linked to the murders of five people over a six-year span: the Edwards twins; their mother, Bonita Edwards; and Greta Williams in 1989; and Hai Pham in 1995. White's life story mirrors that of many of the more than 2,200 men and women still on death row in America, as well as those of the 1,600 individuals who have already been sent to their deaths since the US Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976.

White's attorneys argued that his mental deficiencies, combined with prolonged drug use, created the conditions for his violent behavior. Court records indicate he grew up in a loving home as one of seven siblings. As a young man he was a poor student but an outstanding football player.

He earned a football scholarship to Lubbock Christian College, but a knee injury sidelined him in his first year there, and when his girlfriend became pregnant, he dropped out. He found various jobs—as a fry cook, house painter and sandblaster—to support his girlfriend and kids, but a workplace injury forced him to stop working.

White's friend Howard Gordon described watching him spiral out of control and turn to drugs, mostly crack cocaine. “He didn't have any structure in his life,” Gordon said. “I could see him changing, and when I saw the guys he was hanging out with, I knew that no good would come of it.”

When Gordon heard about White's crimes, he said he couldn't believe it, according to court records obtained by *USA Today*. “Until he got hooked on the drugs, there was nothing in him that would have ever done this,” he said.

White's younger sister Monica Garrett wrote, “Glen was quick to cry,” while his older brother, Alfred White Jr., said, “He was the biggest wimp you'd ever find.” Other friends described him as “a gentle giant.”

Testimony showed that White went to the Edwards' apartment in Houston one day in autumn 1989, reportedly to smoke crack cocaine. An argument ensued and White stabbed the twin girls and their mother. Several days later, Bonita Edwards' friend had the apartment supervisor enter the apartment and found the three with multiple stab wounds to the neck and chest and blood everywhere.

The three murders went unsolved for almost six years, until during an investigation into an unrelated murder, White's close friend told police that White admitted to killing the Edwardses.

White gave a videotaped statement implicating himself and Terrence Moore in the murders, but police subsequently found that Moore had been killed four months before the murders. White then gave another statement in which he admitted that he had fabricated the involvement of Moore and confessed to killing the twins and their mother. Serology and DNA testing found that semen recovered at the scene was consistent with White's DNA, and blood was consistent with either Annette's or Bernette's DNA.

White later confessed to the beating death of 27-year-old Greta Williams in Houston a few months before the Edwards murders. Williams was killed just a few months after she had moved from Chicago to Houston.

In 1995, White beat to death Hai Pham, a

convenience store worker and father of seven who had just moved his family to the US from Vietnam nine months earlier.

Prosecutors only charged White with the murders of Annette and Bernette Edwards.

Prior to his execution Tuesday, White had been scheduled to die on January 28, 2015, but the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals issued a stay of execution following arguments from White's attorneys that new scientific evidence more clearly showed the effects on the brain of crack cocaine. They argued that scientific evidence would show that White was "likely suffering from a cocaine-induced psychotic break during his actions."

White's attorney continued to argue that police took advantage of their client's mental deficiencies to obtain a confession without an attorney present.

They also argued that the prosecution worked to eliminate African American jurors in an effort to obtain a guilty verdict. White was also African American.

In 2002, the US Supreme Court ruled that execution of the intellectually disabled is unconstitutional, but US states have great leeway in determining inmates' intellectual disabilities.

The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles on Friday denied White's request to commute his death sentence to a lesser penalty or to grant him a 30-day reprieve. White's defense team petitioned the US Supreme Court in a last-minute bid to stop his execution. The high court denied the petition on Tuesday without comment.

White's execution capped a grim 11-day execution spree in the US:

- September 19, 2024: Freddie Eugene Owens, 46, died by lethal injection in South Carolina, the first execution in the state in 13 years. Authorities ignored a sworn statement from another man convicted for the same murder, who said Owens was not at the scene of the crime.

- September 24, 2024: Marcellus "Khaliifah" Williams, 55, was executed by lethal injection in Missouri despite 1 million signatures on a petition demanding his life be spared due to overwhelming evidence that he was innocent.

- September 24, 2024: Travis Mullis, 38, died by lethal injection in Texas for the sexual assault and murder of his three-month-old son. Mullis's execution ended a life plagued by poverty and abuse, which led to

psychological problems, including suicidal and homicidal behavior.

- September 26, 2024: Emmanuel Littlejohn, 52, was executed by lethal injection in Oklahoma. Prosecutors did not prove that Littlejohn was the person who had pulled the trigger in the murder he was accused of committing.

- September 26, 2024: Alan Eugene Miller, 59, was executed in Alabama by nitrogen hypoxia. Miller had survived a previous execution attempt by lethal injection when the executioners were unable to find a vein to inject the deadly chemicals before his death warrant expired.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact