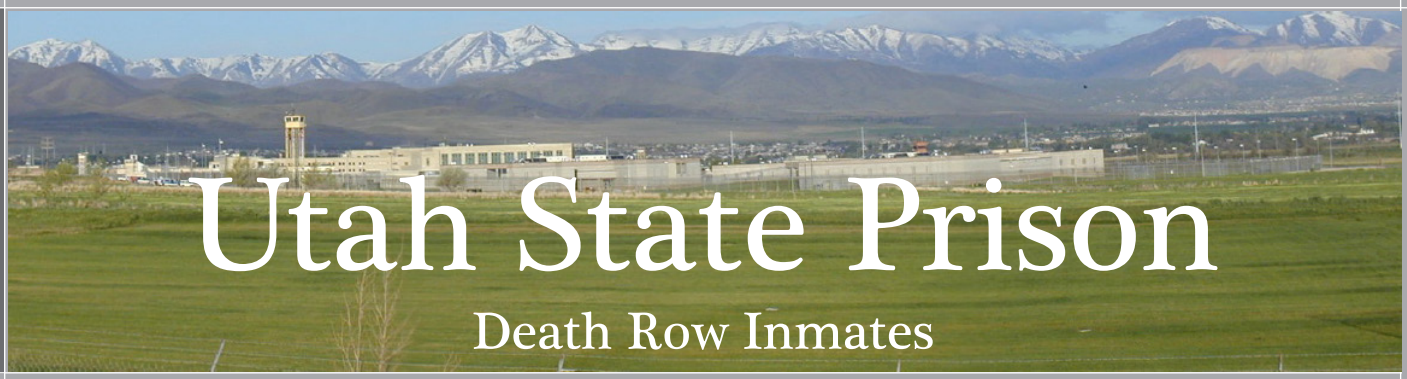


Utah State Prison

Death Row Inmates

UTAH DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

HONOR • INTEGRITY • ACCOUNTABILITY

Prepared June 2011

Utah State Prison Death Row Inmates

The following summary details each remaining Utah State Prison inmate who has been sentenced by the courts to die. Each of the remaining offenders on Utah's death row is at a different stage of his legal challenge, and each will ultimately spend a different amount of time on death row based on the legal proceedings and whether the inmate carries out the full extent of his appeals or decides to drop the litigation at any particular point in time. The Utah State Legislature in 2004 eliminated the firing squad as an available method of execution, citing in part its tendency to draw attention to the condemned and re-victimize the affected families.

*Those sentenced to death prior to the 2004 change still have the option to die by firing squad and could be given the option to switch.

List arranged in alphabetical order

Archuleta,

Michael Anthony

#100260

- **Date of Birth:** 03/26/1962
- **Offenses:** Distribution/Arrange to distribute controlled substance (F3), DUI (Class B), 4 counts Intoxication (Class C), Alcohol & Drug/other (Class B), Alcohol & Drug/other (Class C), Reckless driving (Class B), Possession/Purchase of dangerous weapon by restricted person (F2), 2 counts Driving/other (Class B), Driving on a revoked license (Class A), Aggravated murder (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 12/21/1989 (4th District Court case #1140)
- **Method selected at sentencing:** Lethal Injection (Assigned after he did not elect one)
- **Capital crime:** Archuleta was convicted of torturing, raping, and murdering a Southern Utah University theater student. On Nov. 21, 1988, Archuleta met the victim at a convenience store. After a sexual encounter, he and an accomplice broke the man's arm, cut his throat, bound him with tire chains and a bungee cord and drove through Cedar City. They later tortured him using jumper cables and a tire iron then left him on a hillside covered with branches and dirt.

Carter,

Douglas Stewart

#35443

- **Date of Birth:** 09/15/1955
- **Offenses:** Aggravated murder (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 12/27/1985 (4th District Court case #85149797 (1)
- **Method selected at sentencing:** Lethal Injection (Assigned after he did not elect one)
- **Capital crime:** Carter was convicted of stabbing and shooting an elderly Provo woman in 1985 during a botched burglary. He stabbed the woman 10 times - eight in the back, one in the abdomen, and one in the neck. He then shot her in the back of the head at point-blank range through a pillow. The woman's hands were tied behind her back with a telephone cord. Carter was arrested less than two months later in Nashville, Tenn., and extradited back to Utah.
- Carter's first death sentence was overturned in 1989. The Utah Supreme Court ruled the jury was improperly instructed. He was resentenced on Jan. 27, 1992.

Honie,

Taberon Dave

#134877

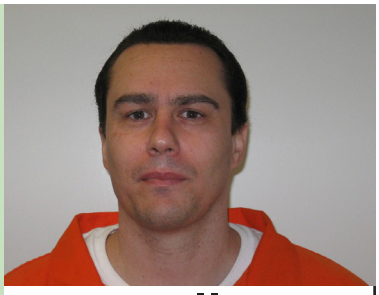
- **Date of Birth:** 10/29/1975
- **Offenses:** Aggravated murder (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 05/20/1999 (5th District Court case #981500662)
- **Method selected at sentencing:** Not Specified
- **Capital crime:** Honie was convicted of killing and sexually assaulting his ex-girlfriend's mother in Cedar City. He broke in to their home through a sliding glass door. The woman attempted to protect herself and her grandchildren with a butcher knife. Honie turned the knife on her, cut her throat down to the spine, then sexually assaulted her body and slashed her repeatedly in the genital area. He beat her severely about the face and head. His ex-girlfriend's three children were present at the time and witnessed the brutal killing. Honie also proceeded to sexually abuse one of the children, causing injury and bleeding to her genitals.

Utah State Prison Death Row Inmates (cont.)

The following summary details each remaining Utah State Prison inmate who has been sentenced by the courts to die. Each of the remaining offenders on Utah's death row is at a different stage of his legal challenge, and each will ultimately spend a different amount of time on death row based on the legal proceedings and whether the inmate carries out the full extent of his appeals or decides to drop the litigation at any particular point in time. The Utah State Legislature in 2004 eliminated the firing squad as an available method of execution, citing in part its tendency to draw attention to the condemned and re-victimize the affected families.

*Those sentenced to death prior to the 2004 change still have the option to die by firing squad and could be given the option to switch.

- **Date of Birth:** 06/13/1968
- **Offenses:** Robbery (Compact offense), Murder (Compact offense), Aggravated murder (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 08/08/96 (6th District Court case #941600213)
- **Method selected at sentencing:** Firing Squad*
- **Capital crime:** Kell was convicted in Nevada of murder and robbery. He came to Utah through an interstate trade. On July 6, 1994, Kell was being escorted with three other inmates to the medical clinic at Central Utah Correctional Facility in Gunnison, UT. Another inmate passed Kell a handcuff key. Kell removed his cuffs and attacked Inmate Lonnie Blackmon using a "shank" knife. He pushed Blackmon to the showers where fellow inmates held him down. Kell stabbed Blackmon in the back, chest and head. Kell got up, paused, noticed the body was twitching and resumed stabbing at the head. Blackmon died from at least 67 stab wounds.



Kell,

Troy Michael

#72819

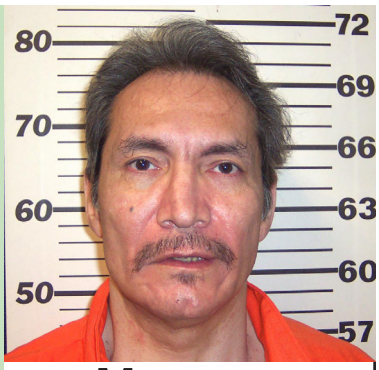
- **Date of Birth:** 11/04/1941
- **Offenses:** 2 Aggravated burglary (F1), 2 Aggravated murder (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 05/07/85 **Resentence:** 04/23/96 (4th District Court case #9309)
- **Method selected at sentencing:** Firing Squad*
- **Capital crime:** Lafferty was convicted by a jury of two counts of capital murder. With his brother Dan, Ron killed a third brother's ex-wife, Brenda, and her 19-month-old child. Ron said he received a prophecy telling him to kill the two, along with two of Brenda's friends to keep them from "obstructing God's work." Ron, Dan, and two hitchhikers held Bible meetings and planned the murders. On July 24, 1984, Ron and Dan went in to Brenda's home and slit both her and her baby's throats from ear to ear. The four then went to Brenda's friend's house, but no one was home so they burglarized the house. They intended to stop at the home of another of Branda's friends but got lost. Ron and Dan were apprehended by the FBI in Reno. Dan is serving a sentence of Natural Life in prison.

Lafferty,

Ronald Watson

#32282

- **Date of Birth:** 11/11/1956
- **Offenses:** Attempted possession/purchase of a dangerous weapon by a restricted person (Class A), Habitual criminal (F1), Theft (Class B), Burglary (F2), Theft (F3), Theft by receiving stolen property (F2), Burglary (F3), Aggravated burglary (F1), Aggravated murder (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 02/01/2008 (3rd District Court case #041906594)
- **Method selected at sentencing:** Lethal Injection (only method available in 2008)
- **Capital crime:** Maestas was convicted of killing a 75-year-old woman at her Salt Lake City home. Donna Bott's body was found three days after she was killed. She had been stabbed in the face, strangled, beaten, and stomped. Two men with him during the robbery struck plea deals and testified against him. Maestas is the first, and so far only, member of death row who did not have the option of firing squad as a method of execution. The state law changed in 2004, specifying any future death-row inmate would not be offered the option of dying by firing squad and must instead die by lethal injection.



Maestas

Floyd Eugene

#113474

Utah State Prison Death Row Inmates

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Menzies,

Ralph Leroy

#113858

- **Date of Birth:** 04/21/1958
- **Offenses:** 2 Aggravated robbery (F1), Escape from official custody (F2), Attempted theft (Class A), Aggravated kidnapping (F1), Aggravated murder (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 03/23/1988 (3rd District Court case #CR86887)
- **Method selected at sentencing:** Firing Squad*
- **Capital crime:** Menzies was convicted of kidnapping and killing a female gas station attendant, strangling her, slitting her throat, and leaving her in the canyon. Maureen Hunsaker was reported missing from the service station in Salt Lake County on Feb. 23, 1986. Two days later, her body was found in the Storm Mountain picnic area of Big Cottonwood Canyon. An autopsy revealed she had been handcuffed and held hostage before she was killed. Several students said she and Menzies had been together in the area. Menzies was booked into jail a short time later on an unrelated matter. Hunsaker's wallet and several other belongings were found in his possession. Several other items were found in Menzies' apartment.

Taylor,

Von Lester

#52348

- **Date of Birth:** 03/26/1965
- **Offenses:** Aggravated burglary (F2), Aggravated murder (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 05/24/1991 (3rd District Court case #1300)
- **Method selected at sentencing:** Lethal Injection
- **Capital crime:** Taylor was convicted of killing two women, kidnapping two others and attempting to kill a man. Taylor and an accomplice broke into a vacant cabin in Weber Canyon and waited about three hours for the owners to get home. When three members of the family arrived, Taylor shot and killed one woman. Then, along with his accomplice, shot and killed a second. They bound and gagged a third person. About one hour later, two more people arrived. Taylor and the accomplice robbed the father, shot him in the face, doused him in gasoline and lit the cabin. The man survived the gunshot and escaped with severe burns. The pair robbed two remaining women and took them hostage. Taylor pointed a gun at his accomplice and ordered him to kill the remaining victims, but police interceded and captured the men.

Modern executions (post-1972)

Use of the death penalty was suspended in 1972 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled on the case of *Furman v. Georgia*. According to the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC), the Court ruled that the penalty was "cruel and unusual" if it was too severe for the crime, was arbitrary, offended society's sense of justice, or was not more effective than a less severe penalty. In addition to suspending the death penalty, DPIC says the move voided 40 death penalty statutes, thereby commuting the sentences of 629 death-row inmates around the nation. States began rewriting their death penalty statutes and on Jan. 17, 1977, the execution of Gary Gilmore by firing squad ended the moratorium. Information within this section is compiled from Utah State Prison archives.

June 18, 2010

Firing squad

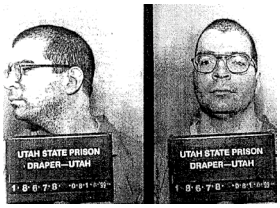
Gardner, Ronnie Lee

• Gardner was pronounced dead at 12:17 a.m. the morning of June 18. He had his last meal of steak, lobster tail, apple pie, vanilla ice cream and Sprite two days prior to the execution and wished to spend his final 48 hours fasting, aside from an occasional soda. He spent his final day watching the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy as well as visiting with counsel and clergy. When asked if he had any last words, Gardner said, "I do not. No."

• Gardner was convicted of shooting and killing Defense Attorney Michael Burdell during an April 2, 1985 attempted courthouse escape. He also wounded Bailiff "Nick" Kirk. Gardner previously had been charged with killing Melvyn Otterstrom during a bar robbery. Otterstrom had been tending the bar as a second job.

Oct. 15, 1999

Lethal injection



Parsons, Joseph Mitchell

• Parsons refused to choose a method of execution and was assigned lethal intravenous injection. He visited with his brother extensively prior to execution. He never apologized to his victim's family. His last words were directed to death-row inmate Douglas Lovell. He said, "Tell Woody the Rainbow Warrior rules."

• Parsons was convicted by a jury of stabbing and killing a man who had picked him up while he was hitchhiking in Barstow, Calif. After killing the man, Parsons pushed the body out of the car. After using the victim's credit cards, he was arrested by Utah Highway Patrol on Aug. 31, 1987, while resting in the victim's car at Red Creek rest area.

Jan. 26, 1996

Firing squad

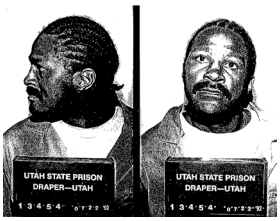
Taylor, John Albert

• Taylor was pronounced dead at 12:07 a.m. the morning of Jan. 26. He had terminated all avenues of appeal and was executed shortly thereafter. Taylor was allowed to smoke a partial cigarette outside on his way over to the building where he would be executed. He visited with his uncle and sister on his last day. He ate pizza and drank soda. His last words were, "Remember me, but let me go." He never admitted guilt.

• Taylor was convicted of repeatedly raping and then killing Sharla Nichole King one day before her 12th birthday, on June 23, 1989. The two were living in the same apartment complex. The girl was discovered five hours later in her mother's bed. A telephone cord had been tied around her throat.

July 30, 1992

Lethal injection



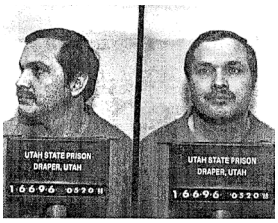
Andrews, William

• Andrews was pronounced dead at 1:46 a.m. the morning of July 30. At the time of his execution, he had been on death row longer than any person in the United States. His last meal included a banana split.

• Andrews was convicted of murdering one man and two women - all of whom were tortured. Drain cleaner was poured down their throats, and their mouths were taped closed. One woman was raped. A man had a pen kicked deep into his ear. All victims were shot in the head. Two survived the torture, three died. The crime occurred over a period of about four to five hours. Two accomplices also were convicted - one received the death penalty as well. Andrews did not take responsibility.

June 10, 1988

Lethal injection



Bishop, Gary Arthur

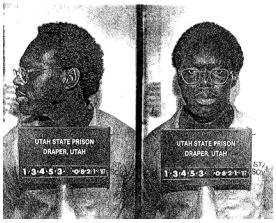
• Bishop was pronounced dead at 12:16 a.m. the morning of June 10. On the day prior to his execution, he visited for several hours with his parents. His last words were, "Give my apologies to the families of my victims." Bishop declined his last meal because he had started a fast after breakfast the previous day. After four years, he stopped the appeal process and was executed.

• Bishop was convicted of murdering five boys. All were sexually molested - four of them after being killed. Two of the boys were 4 years old, one was 6, one was 11 and one was 13. Bishop had been molesting boys and using them for child pornography for several years before killing his first victim in 1978. Bishop was arrested in 1983 and led police to the bodies.

Modern executions (post-1972) continued

Aug. 28, 1987

Lethal injection



Selby, Pierre Dale

• Selby's used his final words to bequeath his accomplice, William Andrews, his money. When he was asked if he had anything else to say, he replied, "I'm just going to say my prayers."

• Selby was convicted of killing three people in an Ogden Hi-fi store during a robbery along with two accomplices. The victims were made to drink drain cleaner, a female was raped, and all the victims were shot in the head. Two survived, three died. The killers kicked a pencil deep into the ear of one of the survivors. Though Andrews and Selby were executed for their parts in the crime, the third accomplice had less involvement and paroled years later after years of good behavior. He later moved to Oklahoma. Following Andrews' execution, the third accomplice was found dead in a car from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Jan. 17, 1977

Firing squad

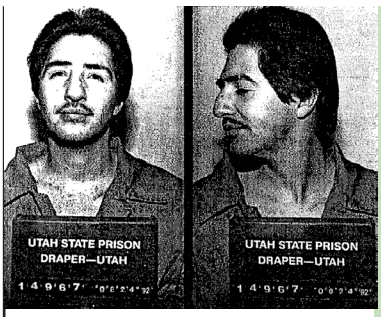
Gilmore, Gary

• Gilmore's last words before his 8:07 a.m. execution were, "Let's do it." He was the first person executed since the 1972 U.S. Supreme Court ruled the capital punishment laws of several states were unconstitutional. Gilmore refused to file appeals. Gilmore's execution drew worldwide press and attention.

• Gilmore was convicted of execution-style murders of a motel clerk and a gas-station attendant in separate robberies.

Other death-row inmates (special cases)

Died of natural causes while incarcerated.



Arguelles, Roberto V.

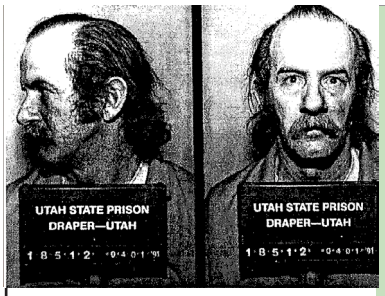
- **Date of Birth:** 02/14/1962
- **Offenses:** Attempted criminal homicide (F1), Aggravated sexual assault (F1), 2 Aggravated sexual abuse of a child (F1), 3 Aggravated murder (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 06/20/1997 (3rd District Court case #971900532
- **Capital crime:** Arguelles was convicted of sexually assaulting and killing three teenage girls and one woman. He buried the three girls' bodies on a family-owned pig farm and left the body of the woman in the desert. Two girls and the woman were killed by strangulation, and the other girl was stabbed to death with a wood chisel. Arguelles turned himself in to a Corrections investigator for the murders. Arguelles died of natural causes on Nov. 15, 2003.

Death sentence overturned.

Tillman, Elroy

- **Date of Birth:** 02/22/1934
- **Offenses:** Criminal homicide (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 02/07/1983 (3rd District Court case #CR821081)
- **Capital crime:** Tillman was convicted of breaking in to the home of his ex-girlfriend's boyfriend, where he lay in wait for two or more hours to ensure the man was in a deep sleep. He then bludgeoned him with the handle of an axe and set him on fire - possibly while the man was still alive. Tillman's death sentence was eventually overturned in 2005, and in December of that year he was sentenced to 5 years to life. The Board of Pardons and Parole held a hearing on Feb. 24, 2009, and decided 8 months later that Tillman would serve natural life in prison. He moved out of the Uintas Maximum Security facility on March 20, 2008, and into general population in the Oquirrh 1 facility.

Inmate moved to Idaho.



Holland, James

- **Date of Birth:** 02/22/1940
- **Offenses:** Aggravated murder (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 10/01/1987 (3rd District Court case #871311671)
- **Capital crime:** Holland was convicted of shooting and killing a man who had picked him up while hitchhiking in Summit County. Holland rode with the man, and eventually took over the wheel while the man slept. When the man woke up, it was raining and he decided to turn back and check into a motel. He told Holland to get out of the car, but Holland wanted to go back to town to find shelter. The man denied to take him back, an argument ensued, and Holland pulled out a gun. Holland claimed the man attempted to grab the gun, the two struggled, then he shot the man. Holland pulled the man from the car, drove to Phoenix and caught a bus.

Inmate withdrew plea, retrial pending.

Lovell, Douglas

- **Date of Birth:** 01/13/1958
- **Offenses:** Tampering with records (F3), Attempted theft (F3), Aggravated robbery (F1), Theft (F3), Aggravated kidnapping (F1), Aggravated sexual assault (F1), Aggravated murder (Capital)
- **Death sentencing date:** 08/05/1993 (2nd District Court case #921900407)
- **Method selected at sentencing:** Lethal Injection
- **Capital crime:** Lovell was convicted of murderking a woman to prevent her from testifying against him on charges that he had raped her on a previous occasion. In 1985, Lovell was charged in the abduction and rape of a woman. While out on bond pending trial, he tried to hire two different people to kill her. When that failed, he did it himself by abducting and strangling her.

Life on Death Row

DETAILS:

-14x7 feet cell with stainless steel toilet, sink, mirror, hard bunk, futon mattress

-10x12 concrete rec yard contained with open air roof (chain-link)

-Out of cell three hours each day (21 hours each week)

-Escorted by SWAT each time they leave the section (average once a month)

-Always cuffed and shackled if interacting with officers (two officers per inmate)

-Allowed up to three electrical appliances (e.g. fan, radio, television)

-Telephone access in the section

-Visiting privileges (Saturday and Sunday separated by barrier only)

-Access to commissary, reading material

-Ability to work in section for 40 cents per hour

AVERAGE DAY:

6-6:30 a.m. Breakfast

7-10 a.m. Out of cell time (three at once to exercise, make calls, etc.)

11 a.m. Lunch

11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Out of cell time

2:30 - 3:45 p.m. Out of cell time

4:30 p.m. Dinner

5-7 p.m. Out of cell time

7 p.m. Rack in

10 p.m. Lights out

Utah Execution Law

Utah State Code 77-18-5.5. Judgment of death - Method is lethal injection - Exceptions for use of firing squad.

(1) When a defendant is convicted of a capital felony and the judgment of death has been imposed, lethal intravenous injection is the method of execution.

(2) Subsection (1) applies to any defendant sentenced to death on or after May 3, 2004.

(3) If a court holds that a defendant has a right to be executed by a firing squad, the method of execution for that defendant shall be a firing squad. This Subsection (3) applies to any defendant whose right to be executed by a firing squad is preserved by that judgment.

(4) (a) If a court holds that execution by lethal injection is unconstitutional on its face, the method of execution shall be a firing squad.

(b) If a court holds that execution by lethal injection is unconstitutional as applied, the method of execution for that defendant shall be a firing squad.

Amended by Chapter 51, 2004 General Utah State Legislative Session

Overview of Statute

-Lethal injection is the only method of execution for those sentenced to death after May 3, 2004

-If the court has held the defendant has a right to be executed by firing squad, that right is preserved. This would apply to defendants sentenced to death prior to May 3, 2004.

-If lethal injection is found unconstitutional on its face or as applied, the method of execution would become the firing squad.

Report current as of date produced: June 2, 2011

By UDC Public Information Officer Steve Gehrke.

Narratives of crimes compiled from Court filings and UDC Records Bureau with the assistance of Capt. MaryAnn Reding.