

# A Stark Look at the Death Penalty

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[criminaljusticedegreehub.com](http://criminaljusticedegreehub.com)

Region: [USA](#)

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href="http://www.criminaljusticedegreehub.com/">CriminalJusticeDegreeHub.com</a>Timeline

18th Century, BC: the Code of King Hammurabi of Babylon codified the death penalty for 25 different crimes.

FACT: Murder was not one of them.

16th Century, B.C.: first death sentence historically recorded in Egypt.

The 7th Century BC: Draconian Code of Athens made death the penalty for every crime committed. Since then, draconian has come to refer to similarly unforgiving rules or laws.

399 BC: Greek philosopher Socrates was found guilty of "refusing to recognize the gods recognized by the state" and "corrupting the youth." and was sentenced to drink poison.

29 A.D. Jesus was crucified outside of Jerusalem.

FACT: [You think Texas is tough?] Under Henry VIII of England, as many as 72,000 people were executed, mostly by hanging, the standard method of execution at the time.

#1: The first recorded execution in America took place in 1608, and was that of Captain George Kendall in the Jamestown colony of Virginia, who was convicted of treason.

1930s: The Depression era in the U.S. saw a peak in executions (an average of 160 per year), was followed by a dramatic decrease in the 1950s and 1960s. No executions occurred in the US between 1967 and 1976.

1972: the Supreme Court effectively nullified the death penalty, and converted the death sentences of hundreds of death row inmates to life in prison.

1976: another Supreme Court ruling found capital punishment to be Constitutional.

U.S. Statistics

DEATH PENALTY STATES (32)

Alabama

Arizona

Arkansas

California  
Colorado  
Delaware  
Florida  
Georgia  
  
Idaho  
Indiana  
Kansas  
Kentucky  
Louisiana  
Mississippi  
Missouri  
Montana  
Nebraska  
Nevada  
New Hampshire  
North Carolina  
Ohio  
Oklahoma  
Oregon  
Pennsylvania  
South Carolina  
South Dakota  
Tennessee  
Texas  
Utah  
Virginia

Washington

Wyoming

U.S. Gov't: the Military

13 women have been executed in the U.S. since 1976.

Executions since 1976 by Method Used

Lethal Injection - 1177

Electrocution - 158

Gas Chamber - 11

Hanging - 3

Firing Squad - 3

Costs:

Cost of the death penalty in California has totaled over \$4 billion since 1978:

\$1.94 billion-Pre-Trial and Trial Costs

\$925 million-Automatic Appeals and State Habeas Corpus Petitions

\$775 million-Federal Habeas Corpus Appeals

\$1 billion-Costs of Incarceration

\$186 million: Estimation of the extra costs to taxpayers in the state of Maryland alone, for death penalty cases prosecuted between 1978 and 1999. Based on the 5 executions carried out in the state, this translates to a cost of \$37 million per execution.

California was spending \$137 million per year on the death penalty, whereas they were reported to only spend \$90 million annually in 1988. It was estimated that a system that sentenced the same inmates to a punishment of life without parole would cost only \$11.5 million per year.

\$90,000: annual cost of confining an inmate to death row in California. With 700 inmates currently on death row in California, that comes to \$63 million a year.

WOW: Since the number of executions in California has averaged less than one every two years since the death penalty was reinstated in 1977, the cost for each execution is over \$250 million.

In 1988, it was estimated that the costs of the death penalty in Florida were \$3.2 million per execution. Based on the 44 executions carried out in Florida from 1976 to 2000, that comes to \$24 million per execution.

Sometimes the innocent are set free:

130: Since 1973, the number of people that have been released from death rows throughout the country due to evidence of their wrongful convictions.

Factors leading to wrongful convictions include:

- Inadequate legal representation
- Police and prosecutorial misconduct
- Perjured testimony and mistaken eyewitness testimony
- Racial prejudice
- Jailhouse “snitch” testimony
- Suppression and/or misinterpretation of mitigating evidence
- Community/political pressure to solve a case

What is the purpose of a death penalty (thoughts to ponder)

Is the purpose of the death penalty to remove from society someone who would cause more harm?

Is the purpose to remove from society someone who is incapable of rehabilitation?

Is the purpose of the death penalty to deter others from committing murder?

Is the purpose of the death penalty to punish the criminal?

Is the purpose of the death penalty to take retribution on behalf of the victim?

### 10 Best Death Penalty Movies

“Paths of Glory” (1957)

“The Thin Blue Line” (1988)

“The Green Mile” (1999)

“Pierrepont: The Last Hangman” (2005)

“Capote” (2005)

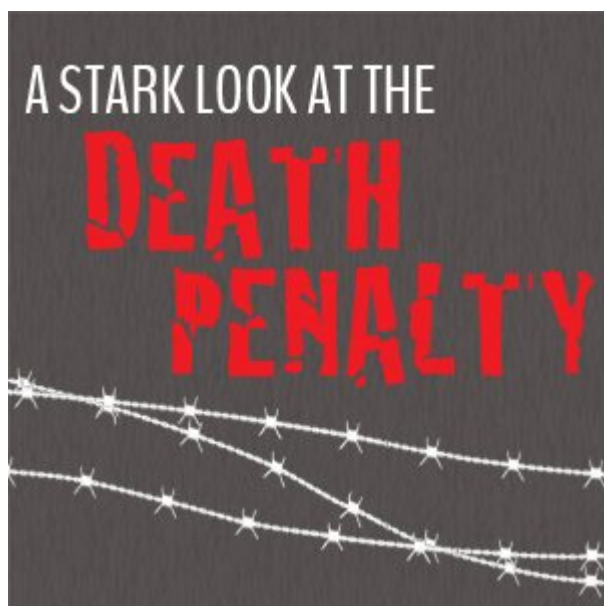
“Dead Man Walking” (1995)

“The Star Chamber” (1983)

“Shocker” (1989)

“True Crime” (1999)

“The Life of David Gale” (2003)



Sources:

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