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Convicted Missouri killer executed

Mick Forgey | Feb. 26, 2014 NCR Today

In the early morning hours of Wednesday, Feb. 26, the state of Missouri executed Michael A. Taylor via lethal injection. Taylor was previously convicted of the abduction, rape and killing of Ann Harrison, 15, in 1989. He pled guilty and was sentenced to death.

From the Associated Press: [1]

?Michael Taylor, 47, was pronounced dead at 12:10 a.m. at the state prison in Bonne Terre. Federal courts and the governor had refused last-minute appeals from his attorneys, who argued that the execution drug purchased from a compounding pharmacy could have caused Taylor inhuman pain and suffering.

Taylor offered no final statement, although he mouthed silent words to his parents, clergymen and other relatives who witnessed his death. As the process began, he took two deep breaths before closing his eyes for the last time. There were no obvious signs of distress.

His victim, 15-year-old Ann Harrison, was in her driveway, carrying her school books, flute and purse, when Taylor and Roderick Nunley abducted her. The men pulled her into their stolen car and drove her to a home, where they raped and fatally stabbed her as she pleaded for her life. Nunley was also sentenced to death.

Ann's father and two of her uncles witnessed Taylor's execution. They declined to make a public statement.

In their appeals, Taylor's attorneys questioned Missouri's use of an unnamed compounding pharmacy to provide the execution drug, pentobarbital. They also cited concerns about the state executing inmates before appeals were complete and argued that Taylor's original trial attorney was so overworked that she encouraged him to plead guilty.?

From The Kansas City Star [2]:

?Wednesday?s execution was the fourth carried out in Missouri since late November, when it adopted the use of the sedative pentobarbital to execute prisoners. It came after a day of intense and multifaceted legal challenges to Taylor?s execution in state and federal courts that ended when the U.S. Supreme Court denied Taylor?s last request for a stay.?

The *National Catholic Reporter* covered the recent developments regarding the execution in an earlier post [3].

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