Executions continue in Texas and Florida: Electoral conspirators George W. and Jeb Bush champion state killings

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The psychopathic personality. *A person characterized by emotional instability, lack of sound judgment, perverse and impulsive (often criminal) behavior, inability to learn from experience, amoral and asocial feelings, and other serious personality defects*—Webster's New Universal Unabridged Dictionary

A serial killer *will continuously kill and not stop unless he/she is made to stop.... For the serial killer, the motivation is not one of money, or the outcome of an event. The serial killer is simply motivated to kill; as you or I need water, the serial killer needs to kill.... Currently, the thought seems to be that the need for control, power, and dominance is the major driving force behind the killings*—The Serial Killer Info Site

Five death row inmates were executed this week, all by lethal injection: Garry Miller, December 5, Texas; Daniel Hittle, December 6, Texas; Christopher Goins, December 6, Virginia; Edward Castro, December 7, Florida; and Claude Jones, December 7, Texas.

The execution of another death row inmate, Robert Glock II, who had also been scheduled to be put to death in Florida this past week, was postponed by the Florida Supreme Court until January 10 to give the court time to review his last-minute appeal. The court issued the postponement just minutes before hearing arguments in the presidential election case.

The crimes these men committed were in many cases heinous and brutal. But the above-quoted definitions of the so-called criminal mind are not intended to refer to them. They more accurately describe the men who are responsible in the final analysis for carrying through their death sentences—in particular Governor George W. Bush of Texas and his brother Jeb Bush, governor of Florida, who between them have presided over 46 state killings this year alone.

Is it coincidental that these two men—one whose campaign has sought at all costs to stop the counting of votes and ride roughshod over democratic rights in his bid for the presidency; and the other, the Republican governor of the state that has provided the machinery to disenfranchise voters and defraud the electoral process—are also the chief executives of states leading the execution march?

Texas put to death 40 people this year, an all-time record for any state since the US Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty. George W. Bush, the Republican presidential candidate and Texas governor, has presided over more executions—152—than any governor. Florida has executed 50 people in this same period, third only to Texas with 239 and Virginia with 81.

Jeb Bush, elected Florida governor in November 1998, has presided over seven executions. Only one death row prisoner, Allen Lee “Tiny” Davis, was put to death in 1999. His death in Florida's infamous electric chair—“Old Sparky”—provoked controversy when flames shot from the condemned man's head and blood ran down his face during his execution.

Executions were stalled in Florida while the state legislature—the same Republican Party-dominated body which is now threatening to proclaim its own slate of presidential electors—debated whether to allow death row prisoners the “choice” between the electric chair and lethal injection. Their decision to allow condemned inmates to choose their method of death cleared the way for six executions to take place this year, the most since 1984 when eight were put to death.

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Since last January when Illinois Governor George Ryan, a Republican, announced a temporary halt to executions in that state after a number of wrongful convictions were overturned, much debate has circulated in the media and among politicians over whether or not to call a moratorium on executions. Numerous studies on the death penalty—the majority concentrating on Texas—have revealed that capital punishment in the US is disproportionately meted out against the poor and minorities; that capital defendants are routinely represented by incompetent and corrupt counsel.

But the debate over a moratorium on executions generally avoids the central issue—the barbarity of capital punishment itself, a practice abandoned and condemned by much of the Western world. George W. and Jeb Bush have presided over the executions of the mentally ill, juvenile offenders, foreign nationals and women. They have proceeded with executions in the face of protests from international human rights organizations, foreign governments and the Pope.

Those walked to the death chamber have invariably faced lives of poverty and hardship, and in many cases physical, mental or sexual abuse. Some were driven to commit the crimes for which they stand accused, while others are the victims of police and judicial frame-ups. The misery and ultimate tragedy of their lives should be contrasted to that of George W. and Jeb Bush, the sons of a United States president, who grew up surrounded by privilege and wealth. Their support for capital punishment has much to do with defending that way of life.

An indication of the vengeful mindset that drives these death penalty advocates was demonstrated in February 1998 when George W. Bush mocked the impending execution of Karla Faye Tucker, the first woman executed in Texas since the Civil War, imitating her in a high-pitched voice—"Don't kill me! Don't kill me!"

The media for the most part comments on the carrying out of a death sentence as a routine and accepted practice. But it is precisely because these reports of executions have become commonplace in America that it is worthwhile considering what exactly transpires when a prisoner is put to death. A *St. Petersburg Times* account of Florida death row inmate Edward Castro's December 7 lethal injection provides a graphic description of this gruesome practice:

"The prison guard snapped back the curtain in the death chamber Thursday, revealing a prostrate Edward Castro with arms outstretched and needles planted in each. Castro turned his head to the right, as if he could see through the one-way window of the witness gallery. He smiled, like he recognized someone, then winked....

"At 6:02 p.m. the deadly potassium chloride mixture rushed into Castro's veins. A minute later, Castro's eyes jerked open and fluttered. His mouth twitched, and his head rose several inches off the gurney's small blue pillow. Then his body relaxed, his eyes shut again, and he appeared not to breathe. The medical doctor declared him dead at 6:15 p.m."

George W. Bush, the man who would be president, has authorized 152 such executions in his five years as Texas governor, and has signed the death warrants of many more. Executions of death row inmates in the state have become such a regular occurrence that the time of death has been moved up to 6 p.m, to make it "easier" on prison staff.

Is it not fitting that the Bush brothers—currently conspiring in the attempt to hijack the presidency—should be the champions in this barbaric and inhumane practice?

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