



LOS ANGELES COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE MEDIA RELATIONS DIVISION

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DA asks court to order the execution of two Death Row inmates

LOS ANGELES – District Attorney Steve Cooley asked the Los Angeles Superior Court today to order the execution of two long-time Death Row inmates with a court-approved single-drug protocol currently used in other parts of the country.

In motions filed by Deputy District Attorney Michele Hanisee of the Major Crimes Division, the court was asked to order the executions of Mitchell Carleton Sims, 52, and Tiequon Aundray Cox, 46, each of whom have been on San Quentin's Death Row for a quarter of a century.

"Mitchell Sims and Tiequon Cox were tried and convicted of first-degree murder by juries. The jurors in each case also found the special circumstances alleged against each defendant to be true. The same juries recommended that each die for their crimes. Judges reviewed the jury recommendations and agreed, formally sentencing each man to death. Each killer appealed the conviction and sentence. Every appellate court turned them down," the District Attorney said in a written statement.

"It is time Sims and Cox pay for their crimes," he added. "I am joining with the California District Attorneys Association and other District Attorneys throughout California in asking the Superior Courts throughout the state to hold these killers responsible for the innocent lives they took so many years ago."

Ventura County District Attorney and President of the California District Attorneys Association Greg Totten applauded District Attorney Cooley for the dedicated work it took to prepare and file these petitions.

"These cases are the most serious and dangerous murderers whose executions have been delayed far too long after juries and courts have imposed the death penalty," Totten said.

In the motions filed with the court, Hanisee asked that the executions be ordered using a single-drug method or that the warden at San Quentin show cause why the death penalty by lethal injection should not be imposed.

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Executions in California have been on hold for years. The most recent stay was granted by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals after the Riverside County District Attorney obtained an execution date for condemned inmate Albert Greenwood Brown. The stay was based on allegations that a three-drug protocol that California used for executions put the condemned at risk of pain and suffering.

Meanwhile, the states of Ohio, Washington and Arizona began using a one-drug protocol, eliminating two of the drugs that allegedly put the condemned at risk.

Since adopting the one-drug protocol in 2009, Ohio has carried out 15 successful executions, according to the briefs filed by Hanisee.

During legal challenges to its three-drug protocol, Washington adopted the single-drug protocol in March 2010. Cal Coburn Brown was executed using the single-drug method in Washington on Sept. 10, 2010.

Sims was sentenced to death on May 7, 1986, after being convicted of murdering a pizza deliveryman in Glendale on Dec. 8, 1985. Sims, a disgruntled pizza delivery driver, had fled the restaurant where he worked in Hanahan, S.C., after murdering two co-workers. He fled to California with his girlfriend, who also was convicted and is serving a life sentence.

Besides the California death sentence, Sims faces a death sentence in South Carolina.

Cox, a Rollin 60s gang member, slaughtered a grandmother, her daughter and two grandchildren – one 8 and the other 13 – on Aug. 31, 1984. Armed with a .30 caliber military rifle, Cox shot the grandmother three times in the head and went on to execute her grandsons as they slept in their beds. The 24-year-old mother of the two boys woke up and screamed before Cox shot her dead. A 14-year-old male cousin hid in a closet, which saved his life.

Hanisee noted in her motions filed today with Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Patricia Schnegg that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has acknowledged at various court hearings – one as recent as Feb. 14 of this year – that it is fully capable of performing a single-drug execution.

In a letter to Attorney General Kamala Harris in March of this year, the District Attorney urged that she, as well as the Governor and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, take “all necessary steps to reinstitute executions of condemned inmates in California” and review its execution protocol.

“The death penalty was voted into law by the citizens of this state and continues to be supported by a majority of the citizens,” Cooley said. He noted that it has been six years since the last California execution.

“It is time to enforce the law of the state and carry out the death sentences that have been returned by juries, imposed by trial judges and affirmed by our appellate court system,” he said.