

Texas sets date for execution of Canadian Stanley Faulder

By Kate Randall
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The state of Texas has set June 17 as the date of execution for Canadian death-row inmate Stanley Faulder. If executed, the 61-year-old native of Jasper, Alberta would be the first Canadian citizen executed in the United States since 1952.

The Supreme Court had issued a last-minute stay of execution in the case last December while it considered Faulder's claims that his rights had been violated under international law. US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had intervened, urging Texas officials to give "serious consideration" to the granting of a 30-day reprieve and a full clemency review of Faulder's case. But in January the high court rejected Faulder's appeal, clearing the way for Texas to set the date of execution.

Faulder's pending execution has provoked international protest because Texas authorities failed at the time of his arrest to inform him of his right to contact the Canadian consulate for assistance. Faulder had been in prison for 15 years before the Canadian government was informed of his arrest and conviction. This is a direct violation of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, a treaty signed by the United States.

Faulder still has an appeal pending before the US 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans, which challenges the constitutionality of the Texas clemency process. His lawyers have argued that the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles should allow death-row inmates a public hearing before the full board when they request clemency. Under current state procedures, the board members receive clemency petitions by fax, and respond by fax or phone within three hours of the scheduled execution. In the past 10 years the board has convened only one clemency hearing. The voting process is not part of the public record and no minutes are kept.

Faulder was sentenced to death in 1977 for the 1975 murder of an elderly woman in Gladewater, Texas during a burglary. The victim's wealthy family hired private prosecutors in the case, and their trial strategy revolved around the testimony of an alleged accomplice in the crime, who was granted immunity from prosecution and was offered a large cash payment by the family in exchange for testifying against Faulder.

Faulder's court-appointed attorney carried out no pre-trial investigation and called no witnesses. The prosecution hired "expert" witnesses to testify to Faulder's supposed sociopathic tendencies. The jury never heard that Faulder had suffered a massive head injury at the age of three, causing permanent brain damage and mental impairment.

If executed, Faulder will be the eighth person put to death in the state of Texas this year alone. He would be killed by an intravenous administration of \$86.08 worth of a lethal chemical mixture, which causes death in about two minutes. Texas put to death 20 people last year, and there are currently 452 on the state's death row. Since Texas reinstated the death penalty in 1982, 171 have been executed, including 3 foreign nationals.

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