

Texas executes inmate on death row since 1974

By Jerry White
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A 61-year-old man who spent nearly a quarter of a century on death row was executed Tuesday at a prison in Huntsville, Texas prison. Robert Excell White was put to death by lethal injection for the 1974 killing of a country storeowner during a robbery that netted \$66.

Shortly before the deadly mix of chemicals was injected into his arm White told prison officials, "Well, you finally got me." The oldest person put to death since Texas resumed capital punishment in 1982, White had been on death row longer than any of the 452 condemned men and women in the state. Of the 3,600 prisoners awaiting execution in the US, only three other men--two in Georgia and one in Florida--have been on death row longer.

Twelve years after his trial White's conviction was thrown out because he had not been warned that information he had given state psychiatrists could be used against him. White was convicted and sentenced to death again, in 1987. White avoided execution until his appeals ran out.

Summing up the state's remorseless and relentless pursuit of White's execution, Tom O'Connell, the prosecutor who won the capital-murder conviction and death sentence, said of White's death, "It has been a long time." White was the ninth person put to death in Texas this year and the one hundred seventy-third since the 1982 resumption of executions after the US Supreme Court lifted a national ban in 1976.

Over the next two months at least 18 inmates throughout the US face probable execution, having exhausted their legal appeals. Alvaro Calambro, 25, is scheduled to die on Saturday at 9 p.m. in Nevada's death chamber. Calambro, who has not appealed his death sentence, is mentally disabled with an IQ of 71.

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