

2015 EXECUTIONS

A **BROKEN** CAPITAL PUNISHMENT SYSTEM

The Eighth Amendment prohibits the death penalty for juveniles and the intellectually disabled. The broader principle, though, is that executing people with crippling mental impairments crosses a moral line.

CRIPPLING DISABILITIES AND UNCERTAIN GUILT DEFINE EXECUTIONS IN 2015

In 2015, America had the lowest number of executions in 25 years. Of the 28 people executed, **75% were mentally impaired or disabled, experienced extreme childhood trauma and abuse, or were of questionable guilt.** An examination of the 2015 cases that resulted in execution reveal a disturbing pattern: It's frequently not just one impairment, such as a low IQ score, that defines these cases, but rather multiple forms of disability and impairment.

"To impose the harshest of punishments on an intellectually disabled person violates his or her inherent dignity as a human being."

—JUSTICE ANTHONY KENNEDY



SEVEN PEOPLE HAD AN INTELLECTUAL IMPAIRMENT OR BRAIN INJURY

Georgia executed Warren Hill, a man with a **70 IQ score**, even though three state-employed physicians found that he was intellectually disabled.

Texas executed Juan Garcia, who had a **75 IQ score** and was just 18 when he was sentenced to die.

Missouri executed Cecil Clayton, who had a **71 IQ score and lost 20% of his prefrontal cortex**—the part of the brain responsible for decision-making—in a sawmill accident. Three doctors declared Clayton incompetent to be executed.

Texas executed Robert Charles Ladd, who had a **67 IQ score, which put him in the lowest 4 percent of Americans.** A state-employed psychiatrist said Ladd was "rather obviously retarded."



FIVE PEOPLE ENDURED EXTREME CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

One clinical forensic psychologist diagnosed Walter Storey, executed in Missouri, with post-traumatic stress disorder following a childhood rife with severe abuse.

Walter Storey's stepfather beat him with belts, switches, tree limbs, electrical cords and his fists. He once placed him in a nest of fire ants. He also taped the child's hands to his crib and taped his mouth shut. He also forced Walter and his brother to box each other until they were both bleeding and crying.



TWO PEOPLE WERE POTENTIALLY INNOCENT

Lester Bowers, executed in Texas, steadfastly maintained his innocence. Prosecutors failed to disclose a tip that the murders were connected to drug dealing in the area. After Bowers' conviction, a witness came forward to reveal that her boyfriend had admitted to killing the men in a drug deal gone wrong.

Georgia executed Brian Keith Terrell by lethal injection that took over an hour to administer as he winced in pain. His case was rife with doubt. Terrell's cousin was given a plea deal in exchange for testifying against him. He later said he was pressured to do so by police. Another witness said that she did not see Terrell at the crime scene even though prosecutors presented this information at trial. Terrell's final words: "didn't do it."

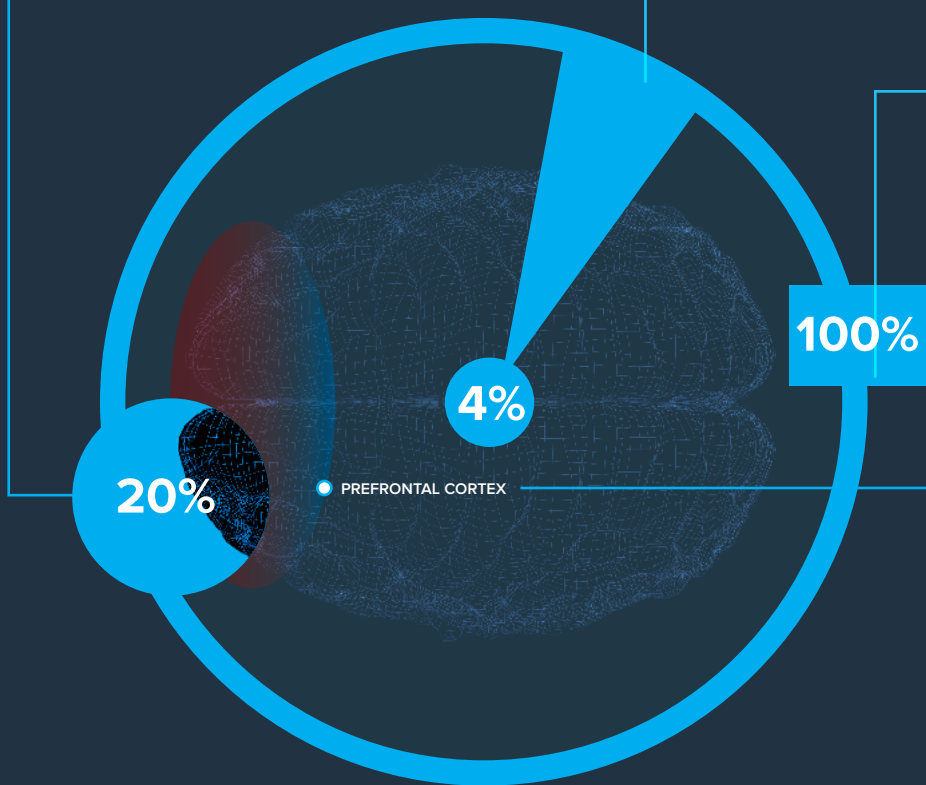


SEVEN PEOPLE SUFFERED FROM SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESSES

Georgia executed Andrew Brannan, a decorated Vietnam combat veteran, diagnosed with both post-traumatic stress disorder and bipolar disorder. The Department of Veteran Affairs categorized him as **100% disabled.**

Kent Sprouse had been diagnosed with schizophrenia by a court-appointed psychiatrist who said he was "**psychotic, paranoid, believed people were persecuting him, and did not understand the wrongfulness of his conduct.**"

Texas executed Raphael Holiday, who was diagnosed with **depression with psychotic features.** A physician testified that his mental health background suggested psychotic decompensation, which meant that he had "some loss of contact with reality."



A DISTURBING PATTERN OF EXECUTING THE SEVERELY INTELLECTUALLY IMPAIRED AND MENTALLY DISABLED

