

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

WOMAN LOSES MERCY PLEA

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) – The state's highest criminal court rejected convicted killer Karla Faye Tucker's bid for clemency, to keep from becoming the first woman executed in Texas since the US Civil War. The Court of Criminal Appeals on Wednesday turned aside her argument that the state's clemency process is unconstitutional.

§2 Ms Tucker, who is scheduled to die Tuesday by lethal injection, has asked the board of Pardons and Paroles to commute her sentence to life in prison. The board can deny her request or forward a recommendation to Gov. George W. Bush.

§3 Ms Tucker, 38, was condemned for murdering a man and woman with a pickax during a 1983 break-in. She has since insisted she found God behind bars and would be content spending the rest of her life in prison

doing his work for the rehabilitation of young criminals.

§4 In interviews organized by her prison minister-husband, Dana Brown, she insists she's a new person, content to spend her life in prison doing God's work and setting an example for young people. "We all have the ability, after we've done something horrible, to make a change for the good," Ms Tucker, 38, said earnestly on CBS television. "I'm so far removed from the person I used to be out there. For me, what's weird is thinking back on some of the things I used to do, and thinking, 'I did that?'"

§5 A spokeswoman for Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson said Wednesday his *700 Club* television program will broadcast the last prison interview with Ms Tucker on the day she's scheduled to be executed. Robertson, who supports

the death penalty, has said Ms Tucker should be spared to continue preaching the word of the Lord to fellow convicts. The interview was conducted on Tuesday.

§6 "She feels very strongly about what the Lord has done to change her life," said Robertson's spokeswoman, Patty Silverman. "She wanted to be sure that the message of what God did in her life got out."

§7 Texas last executed a woman in 1863, when Chipita Rodriguez was hanged for the murder of a horse trader. The only woman executed in the United States since the Supreme Court allowed capital punishment to resume in 1976 was Velma Barfield. She died by injection in North Carolina in 1984 for poisoning her boyfriend.

(taken from Athens News, Jan 30th, 1998)

A. Find a word or expression in the text which has a similar meaning to the following.

- 1 to refuse to accept a request (v) (§1)
- 2 willingness not to punish someone too severely (n) (§1)
- 3 to plan that something will happen at a particular time (v) (§2)
- 4 to change a punishment to a less severe one (v) (§2)
- 5 helping someone to live a useful life again after they have been in prison (n) (§3)
- 6 very seriously (adv) (§4)
- 7 someone who starts a business, organization, school, etc. (n) (§5)
- 8 someone who has been proved to be guilty of a crime and sent to prison (n) (§5)
- 9 to kill someone, especially legally as a punishment for a serious crime (v) (§5,7)
- 10 to start doing something again after a pause or interruption (v) (§7)

B. Read the article and answer the following questions.

1. What crime did Karla Tucker commit?
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2. What sentence did she get?
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3. Does she claim to be innocent?
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4. What has she asked the Board of Pardons and Paroles?
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5. How does she say she is going to spend her life if her request is granted?

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6. Is she married?

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7. When will her last interview be broadcast(ed) on TV?

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8. How is she going to be executed?

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9. How was Chipita Rodriguez put to death?

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10. When was capital punishment resumed in the United States?

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C. List all the words in the text that are related to crime and justice.

NOUNS

NOUN PHRASES

VERBS

ADJECTIVES

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D. Roleplay

A reporter is interviewing Karla Tucker a week before her scheduled execution. Work with your partner to prepare and act out the interview.

E. Discussion Questions

1. Do you believe Karla Tucker is a new person now, different from the person she used to be?
2. Do you think she deserves to be executed?
3. What is another name for capital punishment?
4. Do you support capital punishment?
5. Do you agree that capital punishment is an act of revenge?
6. Do you believe that capital punishment deters (prevents) people from committing a crime?
7. Would you agree that it is better to spare a criminal than to kill an innocent man?
8. Do you agree that the death penalty should be replaced by life in prison?
9. Does the death penalty exist in your country?
10. Who was the last person to be executed in your country? What crime did he commit and how did he die?

THE END