

To kill or not to kill; that is the question

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Contributing Writer

After examination of the newly discovered FBI documents, the world will have to wait for the execution of Timothy McVeigh. It has been rescheduled for June 11. Hopefully, it will bring to a close the death and destruction that he brought to Oklahoma City when he detonated an explosion that could be heard around the world. Hopefully, his death will open a new chapter in federal executions and make states realize that the death penalty needs to be used if it's in effect.

McVeigh will be the first federal execution since 1963. According to *USA Today*, 38 states have the death penalty and in 2000 there were 85 state executions, a drop from 1999's 95 executions. Victor Feguer, who was hanged, was the last federal execution. Society has now opted for more humane ways to carry out the death sentence, and yet I find myself wondering why. When criminals hurt people, I don't think they thought, "now what would be a more humane way to do this." Instead, they chose torture, terror and pain. Why are we giving them the benefit of lethal injection? They first get a barbiturate to render them unconscious to prevent suffering and are then administered two other drugs to end their life, which takes approximately four minutes. It seems society is trying harder to ease the pain of the offender and less of the victim(s).

There are 19 inmates on federal death row waiting to die in Terre Haute, Indiana. We as taxpayers are paying for them to live there. In an interview done by *USA Today*, McVeigh said he

couldn't ask for more—he didn't have to pay electricity or rent. I think the reason criminals sit in prison is because the government is afraid of getting flack about the possibility of executing an innocent person. Didn't a jury of their peers find them guilty? I know there are faults in the system, but it seems criminals are taken out of society so they won't be a burden to society, yet we are burdened by the costs to keep them alive by entertaining them and feeding them.

The people that protest the death penalty need to stand up and take notice. I wonder if they'd have the same mindset if someone they loved and cared about was killed by violence. Would they be so quick to say yes to the life of the criminal?

What's ironic is people are saying "what would Jesus do?" In the Bible it says, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Enough said. We need to start living by that.

During the McVeigh case, *USA Today/CNN* surveyed death penalty protesters and 38% agreed that McVeigh was an exception and he deserved to die. An innocent life is an innocent life, whether it's one or 168. We need to cherish the innocent. If an innocent life is taken by an act of violence, we need to show the offender we will not stand idly by and let their act go unpunished—we will trade a life for a life.

All 50 states need to enact and use the death penalty. Maybe less crimes will be committed knowing we mean it when we say, "A life for a life."

A life for a life OR



life in prison for a life?

FRANK JORDAN
Sports Editor

It was announced last week that Timothy McVeigh's execution would be postponed until June 11 while his lawyers pour over documents that were withheld by the FBI during the course of his original trial. While it may not challenge the nature of his verdict, it may prove worthwhile to throw out his execution order and sentence him to life in prison.

Government-sponsored murder has been around for a long time, and while it may be a cost-expedient way to get rid of the trash, it is turning out to be the wrong way to dispose of society's refuse. If this were a perfect world, and God knows that it is far from it, then a death sentence would be carried out expeditiously. Unfortunately, a death sentence automatically tacks on anywhere from 10-15 years (on average) to someone's life, while the automatic appeals process runs its course.

Many states are putting holds on imposed death sentences because DNA testing is starting to prove time and time again that some death row convicts may not have been the people that committed the heinous acts they were accused of. Although double jeopardy (being tried for the same crime twice, even though acquitted the first time) may come into play in some of these cases, at least we are not shaming the system and ourselves by executing the WRONG PERSON.

Is it really wise to invoke the old adage "An eye for an eye" in this debate? First, it doesn't make a whole lot of sense in today's civilized society.

And second, we try to teach our kids that killing and murder is wrong and that no one (not even governments) should sanction this.

Why not commute McVeigh's death sentence into a life sentence without the possibility of parole? The best reason that I can think of is it will give Corporal McVeigh the chance to think long and hard about what he has done. Sure, he is unremorseful now, but the man is 33 years old. He has a good chance of living 30-40 more years. Isn't that an awfully long time to sit by yourself in a prison cell thinking about the freedom that you don't have and what it is that got you there for all those years. Maybe McVeigh can come to some sort of resolution about his situation and try to atone for his sins against mankind.

By putting him to death, we would not give him the chance to go through this mental torture. Right now, he is putting up a very tough front. Give him a few years; he might change his attitude.

Does Timothy McVeigh deserve to die? If he truly wants to, then I don't believe that the government should stop him from carrying out his wishes. But if he decides to fight this, then all efforts must be made to grant his wish. There may come a time that he is executed for his crime. But with our current system of appeals, this may take a very long time—especially for a federal crime.

To quote from Red, the convicted murderer played by Morgan Freeman in the movie "The Shawshank Redemption," "When they sentence you to life, that is exactly what they take, or at least the part that counts."

Student Poll; tell us what you think!



Darin Beaulieu

"It Doesn't bother me a bit as long as I'm not getting killed. If they're killing people, they deserve to get killed."



Jessica Ellis

"I think if someone kills somebody, they should die. I think if they do something, they should have the same thing done to them."



Seth Wilson

"I'm not against it and I'm not for it. I'm more for it than against it if I had to choose."

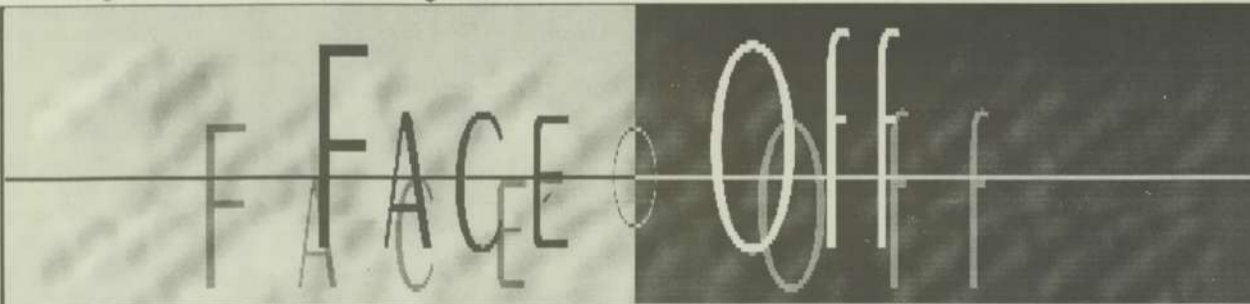


John Greer

"I think there are certain things that require that type of punishment. I think a life for a life."

What are your views on the death penalty?

Photos by Mike Pollock. Quotes compiled by Liesl Muggli.



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