

WILLIAM PRYOR ON CRIME

Highlights:

- William Pryor held draconian views on crime.
 - Pryor defended handcuffing prisoners to a fence post in the hot sun for hours without water, protection, or bathroom breaks.
 - Pryor said he did not believe that the U.S. had executed any innocent people.
 - Pryor pushed to execute a man with a mental illness.

Pryor Had Extreme Views On Criminal Justice

PRYOR DEFENDED HANDCUFFING PRISONERS TO A FENCE POST IN THE HOT SUN FOR HOURS WITHOUT WATER, PROTECTION, OR BATHROOM BREAKS

In Hope v. Pelzer, Pryor Defended Alabama's Use Of Hitching Prisoners To Posts, Leaving Them Without Water Or Bathroom Breaks For Hours On End. According to People For The American Way, "In Hope v. Pelzer, 536 U.S. 730 (2002), Pryor vigorously defended Alabama's practice of handcuffing prison inmates to hitching posts in the hot sun if they refused to work on chain gangs or otherwise disrupted them. In 1995, Alabama was the only state in the country that still used chain gangs and the only one that used the hitching post. 536 U.S. at 733. The post was a horizontal bar to which inmates were handcuffed 'in a standing position and remain[ed] standing the entire time they [were] placed on the post.' 536 U.S. at 734. The plaintiff in this case, Larry Hope, charged that he had been handcuffed to a hitching post twice, one time for seven hours, during which he was shirtless 'while the sun burned his skin. . . During this 7-hour period, he was given water only once or twice and was given no bathroom breaks. At one point, a guard taunted Hope about his thirst. According to Hope's affidavit: '[The guard] first gave water to some dogs, then brought the water cooler closer to me, removed its lid, and kicked the cooler over, spilling the water onto the ground.'" 536 U.S. at 734-35." [People For The American Way, [6/10/03](#)]

2003: PRYOR DID NOT BELIEVE THERE WERE ANY INNOCENT PEOPLE WHO HAD BEEN EXECUTED

2003: Pryor Said He Believed The Judicial System Had "Extraordinary" Safeguard To Prevent Execution Of The Innocent And That He Was Not Aware Of "Any Case" Where "An Innocent Person Has Been Executed." While appearing at Committee On The Judiciary, U.S. Senate, "Mr. Pryor. My judgment is that the system of capital punishment has extraordinary safeguards, many safeguards to ensure that we review every death sentence to ensure that, number one, we're executing only the guilty; number two, that it's free from discrimination; and, number three, that it's in cases of extreme and heinous crimes. There's no question that that system catches errors. That's what the system is supposed to do. Senator Leahy. Do you think that there have been--do you think there have never been people executed who were innocent? Mr. Pryor. I'm not aware of any case, since the death penalty was reinstated after the Furman decision by the Supreme Court of the United States in the late 1970's, where an innocent person has been executed. If someone has a case that they would like to present to me, I would certainly review it objectively. But I'm not aware of one. My own experience tells me, though, with the--I think it's now 14 executions that we have had in Alabama in my administration, that all of those were cases of extreme crimes and evidence of overwhelming guilt." [Committee On The Judiciary, U.S. Senate, [6/11/03](#)]

PRYOR PUSHED TO EXECUTE A MAN WITH MENTAL ILLNESS

As Attorney General, Bill Pryor Pushed To Execute Glenn William Holladay. According to the Gadsden Times, "The state Supreme Court on Monday set a May 29 execution date for Glenn William Holladay of Etowah County whose previous date with death was temporarily suspended by the U.S. Supreme Court. Holladay was sentenced to die in June 2001 but questions were raised about his mental capacity and the execution was halted on the day he was to die. Attorney General Bill Pryor argued that Holladay was not mentally retarded and the execution should proceed. Holladay, 53, was convicted in

Etowah County of murdering ex-wife Rebecca Ledbetter Holladay; Larry Thomas Jr., a 16-year-old neighbor friend of her son; and her boyfriend, David Robinson, on Aug. 24-25, 1986.” [Gadsden Times, 3/25/03]

Holladay Was Ruled To Be Mentally Ill With An Average IQ Score Of 64 Because Propst Said That Case Law Suggested That An IQ Score Of 70 Was The Threshold. According to the Associated Press, “A federal judge has ruled that Glenn Holladay, who has been on death row 17 years for a triple murder in Etowah County, cannot be executed because of his level of mental retardation. The state attorney general’s office plans to appeal, putting the ruling on hold in one of Etowah County’s most notorious cases. Holladay, an escapee from the Cherokee County Jail at the time, killed his ex-wife, her boyfriend and a 16-year-old neighbor at a rural trailer home in 1986 and, during more than a month on the run, is believed to have killed the uncle of his ex-wife and raped a woman in Florida. The ruling issued Monday by U.S. District Judge Robert Propst requires that Holladay be resentenced in Etowah County without the possibility of the death penalty[...]. Propst said Alabama case law suggests that the IQ for someone who is mentally retarded is 70 or below. The report shows that Holladay has an average IQ score of 64, taken from 10 tests. Propst’s ruling came after an August finding by U.S. Magistrate Judge Harwell Davis that Holladay wasn’t mentally retarded. Propst disagreed with the rationale for Davis’s findings, saying in part that more weight should have been given to the lower IQ scores of 49 and 56. Holladay’s execution has been delayed at least twice to consider whether he is mentally retarded and should not be executed under federal court rulings.” [Associated Press, [11/4/06](#)]