



American Friends Service Committee

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Chairperson

Mary Ellen McNish
General Secretary

Mr. Cary Pirrong, General Counsel
Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board
4040 N. Lincoln Boulevard, Suite 219
Oklahoma City, OK 73105
Fax: 405/427-6648

Dear Mr. Pirrong:

We are writing on behalf of Scott Allen Hain, who was 17-years-old at the time of his offense, and we urge the Pardon and Parole Board to recommend commutation of his death sentence. The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC), in following the Quaker belief that every person has value in the eyes of God, rejects all cases of capital punishment but we are especially appalled by the use of the death penalty against those who were juveniles at the time of their crimes.

Given Scott's youth, his execution would be contrary to American standards of justice, fairness and decency. Adolescence is a transitional period of life when cognitive abilities, emotions, judgment, impulse control, and identity are still developing. Recent discoveries in neuroscience reveal that the brain continues to develop into the early twenties, with these aforementioned executive functions developing last. Indeed, immaturity is the reason we do not allow those under eighteen to assume the basic responsibilities and privileges of adulthood, such as voting, entering into contracts, serving on juries, or making medical decisions.

Scott was even further disadvantaged by a childhood marred by trauma, abuse, and neglect. Both of Scott's parents were severe alcoholics. In fact, nearly every mention of his parents in his juvenile records refers to them as alcoholics in need of treatment. Scott's sister testified that every day their mother would come home from work and drink until she passed out, leaving her two children to take care of themselves.

Not only were Scott's parents neglectful, but they were also abusive, physically and mentally. Scott's father would beat him with a wooden paddle. When Scott was in third grade, he was sexually abused by a 16-year-old babysitter. After having personally witnessed the sexually abusive act, Scott's father would openly discuss sexual matters in front of Scott and even chide him to "be a man." Further, when Scott was approximately 9-years-old, his father introduced him to marijuana, which Scott began to smoke on a regular basis a few years later. In 1987, after Scott walked away from a treatment facility, his father took advantage of him by finding him work in a warehouse and devising a plan where Scott would steal items from the warehouse, which his father would take to sell in a neighborhood bar.

Scott had no history of violence until meeting his co-defendant in this crime, Robert Lambert. Given that Mr. Lambert was four years older than Scott, he had a

profound influence over Scott's behavior. While Scott is facing imminent execution for this crime, Mr. Lambert is expected to be spared the death penalty, as a result of recent legal developments.

It is bad enough that the murders of Laura Sanders and Michael Houghton were committed in the first place, and our sympathies lie most strongly with the victims and their families and friends. But the death penalty restores no victim to life and only compounds the wrong committed in the first place. The AFSC affirms that there is no justification for taking the life of any man or woman for any reason. For the aforementioned reasons, we urge you to recommend commutation of Scott Hain's sentence. While Scott's crime is inexcusable, we believe that justice can be served, the public protected, and the basic precepts of American fairness and democracy preserved without the state taking his life.

Sincerely,

Mary Ellen McNish
General Secretary
American Friends Service Committee