
US Death-Sentence Census, 1972–2025
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Codebook and Dataset Description

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This document provides background and explains the content of a new database on all US death sentences from June 29, 1972 through December 31, 2025.

History and background

With several co-authors, I published a book in 2018 based on a study of all US executions since 1976, with extensive comparison to FBI homicides statistics (*Deadly Justice: A Statistical Portrait of the Death Penalty*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018). The execution database on which the book relied was developed beginning in 2010 with information from the Death Penalty Information Center (executions database) supplemented (particularly for victim race and gender) with information from these sources:

- “The Espy File” – a list of all US executions from colonial times to present. This computer-readable file has information on dates, age, and jurisdiction of the execution. It however was not complete in its coverage of all modern files; in any case its coverage stops in 2002. Citation: Espy, M. Watt, and John Ortiz Smykla. *Executions In The United States, 1608-2002: The Espy File* [Computer file]. 4th ICPSR ed. Compiled by M. Watt Espy and John Ortiz Smykla, University of Alabama. Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research [producer and distributor], 2004.
- The Clark County, Indiana Prosecutor’s web site with details of the crimes, news reports, and considerable information:
<http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/death/usexecute.htm>.
- Other state corrections department web sites were also consulted, especially for information about the location (county) of the crime.
 - Arizona:
http://www.azcorrections.gov/inmate_datasearch/Minh_search_type2.aspx?SearchDesc=Executed&SearchDescLabel=Executed%20Since%201992
 - California: http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/Inmates_Executed.html
 - Connecticut: <http://www.ct.gov/doc/lib/doc/pdf/CapitalPunishmentAdvisory.pdf>
 - North Carolina: <http://www.doc.state.nc.us/DOP/deathpenalty/executed.htm>
 - Georgia: <http://www.dcor.state.ga.us/pdf/TheDeathPenaltyinGeorgia.pdf>
 - Indiana: <http://www.in.gov/apps/indcorrection/ofs/ofs>
 - Missouri:
<http://websolutions.learfield.com/deathrow/gestalt/go.cfm?objectid=40F167F6-5135-4E74-83D244F46CD84A6C>
 - Ohio: <http://www.drc.ohio.gov/web/Executed/executed25.htm>
 - Delaware: http://doc.delaware.gov/information/deathrow_executions.shtml
 - Virginia: <http://www.prodeathpenalty.com/virginia/tables2.html>

- Nebraska: <http://www.corrections.state.ne.us/policies/files/DeathRowHistory2-3-07.pdf>

Shortly after the publication of that book, I began the project of expanding the database to include all death sentences, not only executions. This is a much more extensive project as over 9,000 death sentences have been imposed, going back to *Furman v. Georgia* (June 1972) and information about many of them is harder to find than in the smaller number of execution cases.

I began in 2019 by collecting all existing compilations I could find, including from colleagues around the country: Lee Kovarsky, Jeffrey Fagan, John Blume, Scott Phillips, Michael Radelet and others who graciously shared their data. In many cases these focused on a single state, but some were more general. In 2022 I was made aware of this database consisting of a list of all such cases: <https://github.com/theintercept/the-condemned-data/blob/master/README.md>. This database had less information about each case than I was looking for, but did have extensive coverage (over 7,000 cases).

I also worked directly with the Death Penalty Information center which convened a meeting including many of the scholars actively collecting such data as well as those at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and from the US Department of Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics who had regularly produced bi-annual (NAACP) or annual compilations of the numbers currently on death row. In some states, attorneys or advocacy groups had compiled exhaustive lists of state-specific death sentencing information. Some of these were available on public facing website and others were provided to me graciously by their owners. In many states, state Department of Corrections websites had similar information, particularly for those currently on death row. See Table 2 at the end of this document for a list of various state-specific sources used.

Beginning in 2021, DPI published its own death sentence census, and I was able to match and merge my version of the census with the DPI version, which were developed in parallel and independently. This allowed a comparison and reliability-check. Working in close cooperation with the staff at DPI, we verified that we had compiled essentially the same list. Since then, I have continued to expand the set of variables included in the list, and I have worked with DPI for information about updates: new death sentences imposed and updates to the status of existing death sentences.

In 2026 DPI will release my version of the census including new information (including victim names, race, and gender) not previously made available. Going forward, I will continue to work to gather additional variables and work in concert with DPI to update and maintain the accuracy of the database.

Data collection procedures

I regularly teach a large (360 student) class at UNC about the death penalty and use these data in my lectures. Over the years since I first started teaching the class (2010), thousands of students have taken it. Many of these students have expressed interest in working on the project and I have hired or recruited as volunteers scores of students to help me. These students have then worked to fill out additional variables and to verify information about each case. They have used internet-based searches for the most part but occasionally made direct contact with various

sources to resolve missing data issues (e.g., a particular person's birth date, crime date, or current disposition) or to get copies of a database not available on-line.

Generally, of course, when a sentence of death is handed down, that is a newsworthy event and also will later be followed by a state supreme court review of the case on direct review. These are easily found on the internet with searches with such terms as the name of the offender and the phrase "death sentence". In other cases, more extensive searches are needed, as well as additional resources such as Newspapers.com or Ancestry.com. We used all available resources and often went through the UNC library web site in order to have access to materials generally behind paywalls. In some cases, attorneys and legal teams have provided data we could not find, such as victim race and gender in a small number of cases.

I personally maintain the master copy of the spreadsheet / database and make assignments to students to gather new information or to check for errors in existing sections of the database. Students then meet with me, discuss complicated cases and difficulties, and provide new data in the form of spreadsheets. I review these and, after verification, merge the updated information into the master copy of the data file.

Data quality

The database has been subjected to extensive tests for consistency and is highly accurate. For example, I have consistently and extensively run tests on such things as whether the dates associated with the case are accurate; this involves looking for typos or errors such as crime dates that are before the birth date (or at ages such as 3), death-sentence dates that are before or almost immediately after the crime date (some of these are verified when a case is very rapidly disposed, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s), and so on. With multiple checks for consistency, and years of data collection work, the resulting database is highly accurate.

Inevitably in a database of this size, some errors may have occurred though every effort has been made to minimize these. Please alert me of any such issues at Frankb@unc.edu and after verification I will correct them for the next public release of this database.

Variables included

The project began with a focus on information about the inmate (age, race, gender), location (county and state) of prosecution, final outcome of the death sentence (e.g., whether it was later reversed, or if the sentence were carried out), and the dates associated with the case (birth, crime, death sentence, eventual outcome of the death sentence).

Later, we undertook the task of adding information about the victim in the crime: Name, race, gender, and whether or not they were a police or corrections officer.

Currently (2026), we are gathering information about the relations between the offender and victim, as well as information on the type of weapon used and the presence of a number of aggravating circumstances (rape, torture, kidnapping, robbery, drug-related killings, prison killings). These variables are not yet ready for release but will be released when the work is complete and verified.

Citation format

Users of this database should cite it using the following citation format, or the equivalent in a different citation style:

Baumgartner, Frank R. 2026. *US Death-Sentence Census, 1972–2025*. Washington, DC: Death Penalty Information Center. [http://\[list url here\]](#)

Codebook description

The following table gives a detailed description of each column in the spreadsheet. Variable Names are verbatim copies of the column headers in the spreadsheet. The database includes 9,155 records, one for each death sentence imposed after *Furman* (June 29, 1972) and December 31, 2025.

Table 1. Variable Descriptions.

Variable Name	Description																								
PersonID	Unique numeric identifier for each person. 1, 2, 3... 9,018. (has gaps)																								
CrimeID	Unique numeric identifier for each separate death sentences for the same person. A person with 2 or more CrimeID's was sentenced to death not just for additional victims, but in a separate proceeding. Generally, these are separate events sometimes in different states. Two cases involve a second death sentence coming from a different jurisdiction but derived from the same underlying facts. These are Timothy Hennis (PersonID 4985), sentenced in Cumberland County NC in 1986 and exonerated there in 1989, but resented by the US Military in 2010 and currently on military death row. The second is Richard Jackson (PersonID 5145), sentenced in Buncombe County NC in 1995 but resented to a lesser punishment in 1998, and later sentenced to death in US Federal Court in 2001, with this sentence commuted by President Biden in 2024. In all other cases, the subsequent death sentences derive from separate crimes adjudicated separately. The table below shows the frequency of these multiple death sentences to the same person.																								
	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>CrimeID</th> <th>Freq.</th> <th>Percent</th> <th>Cum.</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>9,012</td> <td>98.44</td> <td>98.44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>130</td> <td>1.42</td> <td>99.86</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>11</td> <td>0.12</td> <td>99.98</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>2</td> <td>0.02</td> <td>100.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>9,155</td> <td>100.00</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	CrimeID	Freq.	Percent	Cum.	1	9,012	98.44	98.44	2	130	1.42	99.86	3	11	0.12	99.98	4	2	0.02	100.00	Total	9,155	100.00	
CrimeID	Freq.	Percent	Cum.																						
1	9,012	98.44	98.44																						
2	130	1.42	99.86																						
3	11	0.12	99.98																						
4	2	0.02	100.00																						
Total	9,155	100.00																							
CodefCase	Unique numeric identifier for cases with codefendants. 1, 2, 3 ... 8,564 (has gaps) Allows the identification of all cases with more than one person sentenced to death from the same incident.																								

CodefSeq	Numeric counter (1, 2, 3...) variable identifying the separate codefendants in the same case. If the case is not one with codefendants, the value is 1. Approximately 89 percent of all observations have just one defendant, 11 percent have two or more, up to six codefendants
CodefNum	Total number of codefendants sentenced to death from the same case.
Name	Full name of the offender
NameAKA	Also Known As: any variants on the name such as aliases, new names adopted while incarcerated, other spellings, or other variants of the name that may appear in any documents
NameDPIC	Version of the name previously appearing in any Death Penalty Information Center databases.
State	Postal code of the state of the death sentence (AL = Alabama, etc.; MIL = US military; FE = federal government)
County	Name of the county of prosecution. (Actual county name listed. For military cases, Army, Air Force, or Marine Corps; for federal cases, "Federal Government".)
VenueChange	Includes the name of the county where the trial occurred, if different from the trial of prosecution. Generally, the county recorded is the same as the county of prosecution. This is used only in those cases where there was a venue change.
fips	The 5-digit FIPS code for the state and county of prosecution. For military cases, 87999; for federal cases, 88999.
Race	A = Asian or Asian American B = Black or African American H = Hispanic or Latine NA = Native American O = Other U = Unknown W = White
Sex	F = Female M = Male
Disposition	1 = executed 2 = suicide 3 = natural death 4 = resentenced: Life. Includes life with and life without parole. 5 = resentenced: less than life. Note: the distinction between Life (disposition 4) and a term of years may not always be clear; use with caution. 6 = exonerated 7 = commuted 8 = removed, unspecified reason 9 = new trial ordered, removed from death row, outcome of new trial unknown 10 = on death row (May include people currently serving two death sentences in the same state.)

11 = executed for a different crime

12 = serving a death sentence in another state

Note: Many death sentences are reversed and then reinstated. This variable relates to the final or current disposition for the initial death sentence. So, if a sentence were reversed, then reinstated, then the Disposition would be listed as 10. The database does not record these intermediate steps, only the first death sentence and the final disposition of it.

DOB

Date of Birth (format: dd/mm/yyyy)

DOBEst

1 if the DOB variable is estimated; blank otherwise. Estimated dates use the midpoint of the estimated range. For example, if the date is known to be in a particular year, but no date is available beyond the year, then the date is listed as July 1 (the midpoint), and this indicator flags the case as an estimate. If a month and year are known, but no date, the 15th of the month is the estimated date (or the 14th if February). If a source indicates something like “earlier this week” or “earlier this year” then the midpoint of the time from the publication of the article and the beginning of the period indicated is used. If an age is given in full years, and no other information (e.g., John Doe, 28, was sentenced to death today”) then the birth date is estimated to be the number of years indicated plus six months (the mid-point of the possible birthdates in that year) before the date indicated.

DOC

Date of Crime. If several crimes are consolidated for a single trial, the earliest date is listed.

DOCEst

1 if the DOC is estimated (see above)

DODS

Date of Death Sentence. Note that only the first death sentence is recorded. Many death sentences are later overturned and some of those are reinstated. This is the date of the first death sentence. Generally, it is the date that the judgement is formally rendered, though in some cases if this is not available then the date of the jury recommendation is used. Because of this, it is not uncommon for various sources to have slightly different dates of death sentence. We have not corrected discrepancies if they are less than 30 days apart, unless these span different years.

DODSEst

1 if the DODS is estimated

DOE

Date of Exit from death row. (Blank for those with Disposition 10, still on death row.) Exit from death row may be by execution, death, reversal, commutation, and so on; see the Disposition variable above. No matter what the outcome of the death sentence, the DOE indicates the date when the individual was removed from death row. Occasionally, small discrepancies are apparent in these dates in different sources as one may refer to the date of a judicial order and another to a record from the department of

	corrections, sometimes indicating the following day for example.
DOEEst	1 if the DOE is estimated.
DOExon	Date of Exoneration. For those cases with Disposition 6 (exoneration), this records the date of exoneration. Often, this is the same as the DOE but not always. That would indicate a case where the death sentence was reversed, and full exoneration came at a later date.
DOExonEst	1 if the DOExon is estimated.
VictimsNames	Names of all victims for whom a sentence of death was rendered.
VictimsText	Summary of demographics of the victims, by race and sex, using these abbreviations: W (White) B (Black) H (Hispanic) NA (Native American) A (Asian) O (Other race) U (Unknown race); M (Male) F (Female). So WF refers to a single White Female victim; 2WM HF UF refers to 2 White Male, one Hispanic Female, and one Female victim of unknown race.
VicsT	Total number of victims (number, 1 to 168, with gaps). Note that victim information refers only to the victims whose deaths led to a death sentence. Some offenders also have additional victims not recorded here.
VicsW	Total number of White victims
VicsB	Total number of Black victims
VicsH	Total number of Hispanic victims
VicsO	Total number of Other race victims
VicsRaceMissing	Total number of victims of unknown race. Note: Race variables should sum to the total number of victims.
VicsWM	Total number of White Male victims
VicsBM	Total number of Black Male victims
VicsHM	Total number of Hispanic Male victims
VicsOM	Total number of Other race Male victims
VicsWF	Total number of White Female victims
VicsBF	Total number of Black Female victims
VicsHF	Total number of Hispanic Female victims
VicsOF	Total number of Other race Female victims
VicsRGMissing	Total number of victims whose race or gender is missing. Note: Race / Gender variables should sum to the total number of victims.
VicsM	Total number of Male victims
VicsF	Total number of Female victims
VicsSexMissing	Total number of victims of unknown gender. Note: Gender variables should sum to the total number of victims
VictimPoliceOfficer	0 = no police officer killed; 1 = one or more police officers are among the victims; 2 = one or more corrections officers are among the victims.
DPICNumber	For execution cases only, DPIC execution number

IntellectualCapacity	For execution cases only, DPIC indicator for intellectual capacity (0 = no; 1 = yes)
Volunteer	For execution cases only, DPIC indicator for volunteer (0 = no; 1 = yes)
Method	For execution cases only, DPIC indicator for execution method: 1 = Electrocutation; 2 = Firing Squad; 3 = Gas Chamber; 4 = Hanging; 5 = Lethal Injection; 6 = Nitrogen Gas
MethodText	For execution cases only, DPIC indicator for execution method, spelled out (same categories as above)
Foreign	For execution cases only, DPIC indicator for whether the person was a foreign national (0 = no; 1 = yes)
OffenderNumber	For cases where it is available, the Department of Corrections offender number (can be useful to locate the record of the person using state DOC websites)
Notes	Notes (free text). Any complications, clarifications, or explanations are included here.
Sources	Sources. Generally, these are URLs that can be cut and pasted and which could potentially require a subscription to Ancestry.com, newspapers.com, or another service. Typically, sources are open, such as legal websites linking to state supreme court decisions. A wide variety of sources are used and documented here. If blank, then the information came from a large compilation such as a state department of corrections website or another database from which this database was originally constructed. Many sources are listed in most cases; these are separated with commas and semi-colons.

Table 2. Additional Sources Used.

State	Contact or Website	Source Information
California	DOC; 2009 Ruling by Judge Cairney including extensive Appendix	https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/capital-punishment/condemned-inmate-list-secure-request/ https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/capital-punishment/condemned-inmates-who-have-died-since-1978/ https://www.cdcr.ca.gov/capital-punishment/inmates-executed-1978-to-present/ https://cases.justia.com/federal/district-courts/california/cacdce/2:2009cv02158/440454/110/1.pdf
Colorado	Professor Michael Radelet, Colorado Law	michael.radelet@colorado.edu
Connecticut	Office of Legislative Research Reports	https://www.cga.ct.gov/2012/rpt/2012-R-0020.htm
	Andrius Banevicius of DOC	Andrius.Banevicius@ct.gov
Delaware	Jon Offredo of Public Defender's Office	jon.offredo@state.de.us
Florida	Florida DOC -- executions	http://www.dc.state.fl.us/oth/deathrow/execlist.html
	Florida DOC -- current DR population	http://www.dc.state.fl.us/OffenderSearch/deathrowroster.aspx
	Roger Sockman of DOC -- removals	Patrick.Manderfield@fdc.myflorida.com ; Roger.Sockman@fdc.myflorida.com
Idaho	Sean Falconer of Idaho DOC	sfalcone@idoc.idaho.gov
Illinois	Northwestern Law Website	http://www.law.northwestern.edu/legalclinic/wrongfulconvictions/exonerations/deathpenalty/
	John Clegg and Sharon Shapinski of DOC	JOHN.CLEGG@doc.illinois.gov ; SHARON.SHIPINSKI@doc.illinois.gov
Indiana	DOC website	DOC website: current DR population; DOC website, removals
Kansas	Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty	https://www.doc.ks.gov/newsroom/capital

Kentucky	Michael J. Zydney of Northern Kentucky University	mannheimem1@nku.edu
	Kentucky Department of Corrections	https://corrections.ky.gov/depts/AI/Pages/DeathRowInmates.aspx
Mississippi	Grace Fisher of MSDOC	Gfisher@doc.state.ms.us
	DOC Website -- Current DR Population	http://www.mdoc.ms.gov/Death-Row/Pages/Death-Row-Inmates.aspx
New Jersey	Susan Green of New Jersey Public Defender's Office	Susan.Green@opd.nj.gov
North Carolina	North Carolina Department of Public Safety	https://www.ncdps.gov/our-organization/adult-correction/prisons/death-penalty/list-removed-death-row
		https://www.ncdps.gov/Adult-Corrections/Prisons/Death-Penalty/Death-Row-Roster
Oklahoma	Madhuri Gewal of the Constitution Project	mgewal@constitutionproject.org
	Oklahoma DOC -- Current DR Population	http://doc.ok.gov/death-row
	Executions	http://doc.ok.gov/death-row
Oregon	Nickie Basinger of Oregon DOC	Nickie.Basinger@doc.state.or.us
Pennsylvania	US Courts Litigation Listing	http://www2.ca3.uscourts.gov/Export/litigant_list.htm
Texas	Texas Department of Criminal Justice	https://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/death_row/dr_executed_offenders.html
		https://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/death_row/dr_offenders_on_dr.html
		http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/death_row/dr_offenders_no_longer_on_dr.html
Virginia	Virginia Capital Case Clearinghouse	http://www.vc3.org/resources/page.asp?pageid=561
Wyoming	Mark Horan of DOC	mark.horan@wyo.gov