

Beat: News

Missouri executes man who ordered son to kill in 1993 cattle theft

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USPA News - A Missouri man sentenced to death for his part in a 1993 cattle-stealing plot, during which he ordered his teenage son to kill a woman, was executed by lethal injection on Wednesday, state officials said. It raised the number of people executed in the United States so far this year to 14. William Rousan, 57, received a lethal injection just after midnight local time at the Eastern Reception, Diagnostic and Correctional Center in Bonne Terre, a city in St. Francois County.

He was pronounced deceased at 12:10 a.m., said Mike O'Connell, a spokesman for the Missouri Department of Public Safety (DPS). Rousan masterminded and participated in the murders of 62-year-old Grace Lewis and her 67-year-old husband Charles in September 1993 in order to steal cattle from the Lewis farm. Charles was gunned down as he was mowing his lawn and Grace was killed at their home after Rousan ordered his son to do so. "My trials and transgressions have been many. But thanks be to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I have a new home in his heavenly kingdom," Rousan said in a statement that he wrote just before his execution, adding: "May forgiveness and peace be found for all in our Lord Jesus Christ." Michael Lewis, the son of the murdered couple, welcomed Wednesday's execution but said it could not heal "the broken hearts and lives" of his or Rousan's own family. "I draw no real satisfaction from Mr. Rousan's incarceration or execution, for neither can replace or restore the moments lost with my parents or give my sons back the grandparents they never got to know," he said at a press briefing. Michael Lewis said the execution had been delayed "too long," as it comes nearly two decades after Rousan's conviction and subsequent death sentence. The son of the victims added that he doesn't view the death penalty as either revenge or a big deterrent to would-be criminals, but explained he still believes it to be a "humane and permanent prevention" of further criminal activities by convicts. "I hope that Mr. Rousan made peace with Jesus, for that is what Charles and Grace Lewis would want, for sure," Michael Lewis added. Missouri Attorney General Chris Koster said his thoughts and prayers were with the family and friends of the victims after Rousan's execution. "William Rousan displayed an appalling indifference to human life in the murders of Charles and Grace Lewis," he said. "He showed his true character by ordering his 16-year-old son to kill Mrs. Lewis, all so they could steal two cows, soda, a VCR, and some jewelry." Rousan's son Brent, who killed Grace Lewis by shooting her in the head, was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole after pleading guilty to two counts of first-degree murder. The executed man's brother, Robert Rousan, who also participated in the cattle-stealing plot, cooperated with prosecutors and was sentenced to only seven years in prison. He was released in 2001.

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