

Baumgartner, POLI 203 Fall 2014

Catching up and review

Readings: Botched execution
materials

Nov 24, 2014

Botched Executions

- Ron Andrews cases
 - Even when not “botched” they are hard to experience.
- Readings: Jesse Tafero case, 2 page newspaper article, how he was burned alive, suit from the next person in line seeking to avoid the same thing...

Being “Westinghoused”

- First electrocution article, 1890
 - “we live in a higher civilization today”
- Thomas Edison and George Westinghouse battled over whose system (AC: Edison, or DC: Westinghouse) was safer.
- Edison helped use the Westinghouse system.
- Westinghouse donated to the defense of the inmate...

The never-ending search

- Another paradox:
 - Attention to the crime: more support for execution
 - Attention to the inmate: less support
 - Attention to execution methods, details of how it goes.
 - Many in the public might well be comfortable with battery acid, terrible suffering, or at least they say so.
 - But the constitution prohibits unnecessary suffering.
 - Hard to execute without any suffering
 - Plus, those who do it generally have very little practice, so errors are not uncommon

How opponents have framed the debate

- Race
- Innocence
- Cost
- Errors
- Geographic arbitrariness
- Lack of deterrence (but this is debated)
- Gruesome spectacles

- The Big Puzzle: Why have the opponents been so successful in this framing process? Will it continue?

A frustration for death penalty advocates

Rather than a “clean” debate on the merits and the abstract principles of the death penalty and whether it is merited or has a place, we have these “messy” debates about details.

Framing matters.

OK, what you really want to know

- Test structure:
- Similar to the quizzes, but longer.
- Also some identifications.
 - One phrase: define or identify the term
 - One phrase: explain its importance or meaning
 - Half credit for each part of the answer.

How to study?

- Class next Monday: Quick review of the reading, then review and questions.
- Class next Wednesday: Review and questions.
- Exam: wide range of topics, not that much depth on each topic. Do not over-study one topic to the exclusion of the others.