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Alabama Death Row inmate Max Payne executed in 1992 slaying

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ATMORE - Convicted murderer Max Landon Payne on Thursday evening became the sixth Alabama prison inmate to be executed this year.

Payne, who had been on Death Row for 15 years, died by lethal injection in Holman Correctional Facility's execution chamber at 6:25 p.m.

He was sentenced to death in 1994 for the 1992 robbing, kidnapping and killing of Cullman County store owner Braxton Brown. Brown was killed by two shotgun blasts to the face.

Payne, 38, did not make any last attempts to stop his execution.

Asked for any last words as he faced the lethal injections, Payne said to tell his family "I love'em," and signed that message to the people he chose to witness his execution.

Donald Blocker of Kairos Prison Ministry knelt beside Payne's two sisters and two friends in the execution viewing room before the curtains were opened. He told them Payne wouldn't suffer and was ready for what was to come.

No witnesses were present on behalf of the victim.

Douglas Price, one of Payne's friends who witnessed his death, said in a statement afterward that Payne paid the ultimate price for his crime. He said Payne had wanted to be an organ donor but that was not allowed. Corrections spokesman Brian Corbett said the denial was based on a medical issue.

Payne spent part of the time leading to his death visiting with relatives and friends.

Corbett said Payne had a last meal consisting of a turkey sandwich, potato salad and cake. He also divided his personal possessions among a sister, Wilma Easterling; a friend, Claudia Wheatley; and two fellow Death Row inmates, Richard Flowers and Calvin Stallworth.

Among his final visitors were Blocker and a priest, the Rev. Johnnie Savoie.

No other inmates are scheduled for execution now, but the attorney general's office has asked the Alabama Supreme Court to set execution dates for convicted murderers Thomas Arthur and Robert Bryant Melson.

Arthur, 67, of Jefferson County has been on Death Row since 1983. He has been scheduled for execution more than once, and his most recent date was postponed so a judge could conduct a hearing on his claim that another inmate killed Troy Wicker Jr. in 1982. After the hearing, Jefferson County Circuit Judge Teresa Pulliam rejected Arthur's claim, saying he and the inmate were trying to defraud the court.

Melson, 38, has been on Death Row since May 17, 1996. He was convicted of killing three people during an April 1994 robbery at a Popeye's Chicken & Biscuits restaurant in Gadsden.

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