

Updated: Alabama executes Jimmy Lee Dill for 1989 slaying of Leon Shaw of Birmingham

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SpecialThe state of Alabama executed Jimmy Lee Dill tonight. He was the third state inmate to be executed this year. ATMORE -- Alabama Death Row inmate Jimmy Lee Dill died at 6:16 p.m. today by lethal injection at Holman Correctional Facility.

Dill, 49, was the third Alabama inmate to die by lethal injection this year and the 194th executed by the state since 1927.

His final words were: "I just hope God's will be done and everybody finds the peace they need. I'm good."

Dill had been on Death Row at Holman since Aug. 15, 1989. He was convicted in May of that year of shooting Leon Shaw in the back of the head and robbing him of cocaine and money in Birmingham on Feb. 8, 1988.

Shaw, a 33-year-old drug dealer who at the time was on federal work release, died about nine months later.

Shaw's wife Junatha Shaw and their son Leon Shaw Jr., both of Birmingham, were among those who witnessed tonight's execution. Also watching were two of Dill's nieces, Kimberly Allums and Linda Dill.

A few moments before losing consciousness, Dill turned to his victim's family and apologized. He also mouthed words of comfort to his two nieces who were holding hands as one of them sobbed.

Afterward, Leon Shaw Jr. said: "I told him I forgave him. I see him a victim, a victim of his raising, a victim of the circumstances. I see my dad as a victim, too, and it's continuing."

Jeanette Carr, the victim's advocate for Alabama Attorney General Troy King was with the Shaws and said Dill's expression of remorse was what victims' really want to hear. "It's not very often that they get that," she said.

Department of Corrections spokesman Brian Corbett said Dill spent the day in a holding cell near the execution chamber. He had 19 visitors, mostly family members, and received communion from his spiritual advisor Donald Blocker.

Dill ate a last meal of fried chicken, fried okra, a biscuit and a root beer. He gave his 13-inch TV set to fellow Death Row inmate Randy Lewis and assorted clothing and toiletries to another inmate, William Bush. In addition, Dill left a check for \$1.26 to sister-in-law Carolyn Dill.

Dill's attorneys had asked the Alabama Supreme Court to stay his execution. They argued, among other things that he did not have effective legal representation during his murder trial. In an 8-0 vote, the high court denied that petition this morning.

The U.S. Supreme Court followed suit this afternoon.

Alabama has 203 Death Row inmates, most of them in Holman, which is near Atmore in southwest Alabama. Two Alabama inmates already have been executed by lethal injection this year. The most recent was Danny Joe Bradley, who on Feb. 12 was put to death for the murder of his stepdaughter. Rhonda Hardin, who was 12, was sexually assaulted and strangled in Piedmont on the night of Jan. 24, 1983.

The next scheduled execution is May 14. The inmate to be executed is Willie McNair, for the robbery and murder of Ella Foy Riley of Henry County in 1990. McNair has been on Death Row 18 years.