



## Interview with Jeff, who is an advocate of the death penalty

The questions were asked by Ines Aubert, September 2016

**Jeff, in July we had an interesting e-mail exchange after you wrote me a message. We didn't know each other at that time, but it was obvious from the start that we are on different sides: you are an American proponent of the death penalty, and I am a European woman who is strongly against it.**

**In your first message you wrote, "So, I understand that you have tender feelings about your friend on death row and are full of compassion for him. Where is your compassion for the victim and his family? Always the same pattern with you Euro women, who adopt these killers and ignore the innocents whom your dear pals have executed."**

**From there, we wrote back and forth, and to me it was an enriching and fruitful exchange. I got to know you as someone who listens and who can express himself well. So, I want to make use of the opportunity and delve even deeper into some topics that are of concern to both of us. What did you think about the talk we had in July?**

The talk we had in July was worthwhile to me, as I found you to be reasonable and not quite what I had expected.

I expected your views would be as I believe many opponents of capital punishment have, that states like Texas are the very definition of evil and most of the condemned are innocent good people who were railroaded and the state is intending to "murder" them. One particular website that is now closed was full of fairy tale nonsense that vilified Texas and celebrated all the fine boys on the row.

Gullible people who are duped by the slanted images the killers construct of themselves and their crimes in hopes of avoiding final justice. Most have no real remorse and only regret being caught and held accountable, and cling to their lies in the hopes of gaining a benefit like a reversal for a new trial, or a commutation to a reduced sentence such as life imprisonment. They become like celebrities, and women (many from Europe) come here and marry them for twisted reasons. The M. brothers in California doing life who gunned down their parents (because they could not wait for their eventual inheritances) have always had lots of women to romance, they line up to write and keep their commissary accounts stocked with money. One of them married a former playboy playmate while in prison. She divorced him when she found out he was romancing other women while married to her.

You do understand that there are real victims, whereas most death row groupies don't show any acknowledgement of that fact. So I don't actually place you in the groupie category. I find you more balanced and reasonable than those types.

The organization in which I am very active arranges pen pal-ships with death row inmates. However, we don't set up any ads for inmates, but match them on a first come first served basis. So, neither side can choose to whom to write. We consider it an interaction between two human beings and not a partnership arrangement. Additionally, we inform potential future members very carefully before they are given an address. We tell them that most inmates on death row are guilty.

You and I have already found out that we agree on a lot, but not on capital punishment. Do you have some understanding why someone would be against the death penalty?

Yes, I have heard the arguments....

Some people think it is cruel. I disagree. Cruel is what the inmates did to their victims. The victims were not murderers who deserved to have their lives taken.

Some people think it is too expensive. I am not convinced it is more expensive than keeping someone incarcerated for the rest of their life. And if it is more expensive to execute them, some things are just worth the extra cost.

Some people think the state should not be in the business of "murder." I agree. But the state is not in the business of murder. The state is (mostly) in the business of justice, and execution for deserving individuals is justice.

Some people think the death penalty is not a deterrent. I agree that many offenders don't think about the penalty before committing their crimes, but execution DOES deter future murders and other serious crimes. Offenders who are executed will never kill anyone else again. They won't ever get to kill a prison employee (which has happened). Or another inmate (which has happened). Or be released to kill again (this has happened when capital punishment was stopped in the U.S., some inmates were then commuted to life imprisonment, and with time served received parole and killed again when back on the outside).

Some people think execution does not give the offender's victim's family "closure" or justice. I disagree. It may not give it completely, but it gives them something as close to it as possible.

Some people think capital punishment should be abolished because an innocent person can be executed. I tend to agree now. Since there are rare instances where prosecutors willfully violate the law and manufacture false evidence (as in the Randall Adams case), it is probably time to move past capital punishment and impose life with no possibility of release ever for the worst of killers. I believe it is very rare when an innocent person is executed, and when deserving offenders are executed it is a very good thing for the victim's family and society. But since the risk is too great of it happening to an innocent person and can never be corrected, I agree that it should be abolished. This is the ONLY reason I would support abolishment.

**As far as I know, it's the attorneys that death row inmates are appointed that raise the costs and not the execution.**

**The state does indeed consider an execution murder because they write "homicide" as reason of death on the death certificate.**

**I think that if people are executed to prevent them from committing murder in the future, as you suggest, you enter a slippery slope. It would be very difficult to define who is such a person.**

Your understanding of homicide is not accurate. Homicide simply means causing the death of another. The law specifies different ways this happens, and in some very narrow circumstances homicide is legal. A policeman who acts legally to stop a terrorist or criminal who is engaged in life-threatening behavior (using deadly force unlawfully) and is killed by the policeman is a homicide. But this is not murder because it was done with legal justification. Execution is a homicide, but not murder, because it is the legal taking of a life, with legal justification. Big difference between homicide and murder.

I am not suggesting that offenders should be executed just to stop them from murder in the future. The purpose of execution is punishment for their crime. I am saying that it completely prevents that offender from ever murdering again. It is a side benefit to society and in particular any future victim who will not be murdered. Opponents will believe this is not a risk (future murders). It has already happened, as I have pointed out.

**To the topic "closure", I would like to say that in my eyes the best way is to forgive. This doesn't mean that you condone the crime or disrespect the person who was murdered. It means to go through a process that finally sets us free from the bonds of hatred and revenge and allows us to go on with our lives whether the inmate – or any other person who did us wrong – has received their punishment or not. There are murder victim's family members who campaign against the death penalty and I know that for many of them the execution doesn't equal closure.**

**The prime personal reason why I'm against the death penalty is that I believe we are all on a spiritual journey and are supposed to learn and grow. The execution would stop that process and take away the chance that a prisoner comes to understand the extent of what he has done.**

For you and others, I accept that forgiving is the best way for you. Not for myself and others.

In my view, this again illustrates how most opponents make it all about the offender. Hug the killer and shun the victim. Yes, I know you are much more aware of the victim than other opponents, but I believe most give little thought to them while anguishing over and coddling the killer. This is what I refer to as naiveness. To me, the height of it is the European woman who travels to the U.S. to marry one of them. I wonder how many

of the happy brides have done any real research and truly know what their new husband has done, not a whitewashed version from an anti-capital punishment web site? I would bet my next paycheck that most believe they are innocent, or at least have no idea about the extent of their crimes. I think the offenders are victimizing another person by taking advantage of their naiveness, just not killing their victim this time. The naiveness of the sheep to the wolf. I don't find your views to be as naïve as the ones who seek out a killer to marry.

**I wonder, how do you keep yourself updated on death penalty cases and where do you have your opinion about “Euro women” from?**

I mostly read the Texas Department of Criminal Justice/ TDCJ web site, death row section. Also a local news web site here in Arizona sometimes carry stories about the death row inmates here, retelling the story of their crimes. I have read some on the [Canadian Coalition against the Death Penalty/ CCADP](#) site, with which I am sure you are familiar.

**What triggered you to write me that first message?**

I don't remember how I came across your name. I likely was reading about upcoming scheduled executions in Texas, and sometimes I will read other sources about the inmate's story, and I likely saw your name in relation to your pen pal. Very occasionally over the years, I have e-mailed people who appeared to be advocates of the killers. There is a woman on TX death row named B. Some years ago, there was a man from Scotland who was living in the US who had created a web site on her behalf showing horses running on the beach, creating this image of her as an innocent victim of Texas injustice. He and I exchanged a number of emails, and I asked him if he had really done any research about her, and would still be her advocate if she were not so physically attractive. Would he be running a web site for her if she was 5 feet tall and weighed 250 pounds? Maybe the fantasy of the beautiful innocent princess locked away in the dungeon awaiting the executioner would not fit so well if she were not so pretty? My suggestion that perhaps he had been duped by her and she was playing him for a sucker did not sit well with him, of course. I asked him to really read into and research her case and then see what you believe. Sometime later he took the web site down.

I posted a few messages on the site that I mentioned at the beginning of this interview before it was shut down. My few messages there were that they ought to be ashamed for portraying the monsters as poor innocent unfortunates and ignoring the true victims who had suffered horrible things at their hands. I truly believe that if advocates had lost someone they loved, they would have an entirely different view of their “friends” on the row.

**In fact, I have thought about the motivation of us writers – myself included – before. Some years ago, I actually set up a provoking thesis for our internal newsletter that women might find satisfaction in putting men back on their feet, while some men find satisfaction in humiliating women. Several members then commented on that thesis which made an interesting read.**

**From what you write, I see that you feel Texas and its justice system has done injustice. You seem to fight a battle either for or against something or someone to set this right. I sense a lot of anger inside of you. Am I right about this?**

A lot? I am sure you would say it is a lot. Some of your friends will call me sick with hatred. I speak for the victims and believe when an extreme killer is executed that some measure of justice is achieved for the victims.

True example: Young woman gave a ride to two men who kidnapped her and forced her to drive to her apartment, raped her for hours, stole her money, then took her out of the city to a cliff, and while she begged for her life they shoved her off. Since she was in excellent health (before she met them) she was still alive after the fall. They climbed down to her, and while she continued to beg them not to kill her, they stood over her and smashed her head in with large rocks.

And there are many more examples. Forgive them? If God wants to forgive them, that is His business. Not me.

Anger toward those who do such things? Yes, of course, as any just person should have. Do I harbor more anger than most people? Probably do. It is just that I feel more for the victims than I do for these purveyors of evil. I just have an abiding sense of right and wrong, evil and good, justice and accountability.

**You see, Jeff, in the course of writing these talks with you I came to care about you. Forgiving and not being angry mainly benefits the person who practices this, and not the person at whom it is aimed. If you can forgive your wrongdoer, you cut the bond to them and set yourself free.**

**If you stopped being angry, which I wish for you – you could, with a calm mind and heart, look for ways to help better the world. And I see that this is what you want. I believe you would find a way to contribute to the good.**

I care about you as well, Ines. My feeling is that you are a good person. A world filled with peaceful doves like you would be a good world, indeed. Unfortunately, with this dangerous violent world, the hawks are still needed. Maybe someday humankind can move beyond where it is today. I am sure we agree about a lot and it's ok when people disagree civilly about other things.

The dove and hawk – this analogy would never have come to my mind. There would be so much to discuss but I guess we need to stop here now. Food for thoughts for our readers, right?

I enjoyed getting to know you, Jeff, and wish you all the best.