

Arizona death row inmate takes nearly 2 hours to die during botched execution

Joseph Wood, 55, was 'gasping and snorting for more than an hour' after a secret combination of two drugs was applied Wednesday afternoon after a stay of execution was denied. His attorney filed an emergency stay to stop the cruel and unusual punishment.

BY [SASHA GOLDSTEIN](#) Follow / NEW YORK DAILY NEWS / Published: Wednesday, July 23, 2014, 7:11 PM
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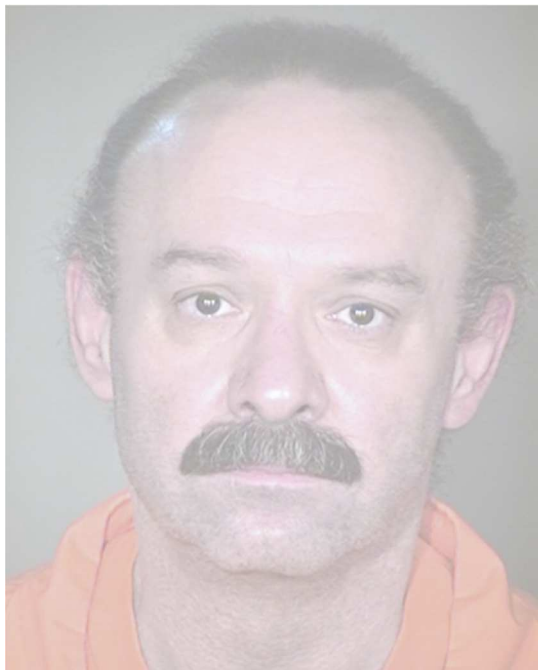
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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Joseph Wood, 55, was ordered to die for a 1989 double murder. His execution took nearly two hours Wednesday afternoon.

A convicted double murderer snorted and gasped some 600 times as it took him almost two hours to die during a botched Arizona execution Wednesday.

An attorney for Joseph Wood filed an emergency stay of execution about 70 minutes after the procedure had begun and left the 55-year-old inmate "gasping and snorting for more than an hour."

"This execution has violated Mr. Wood's Eighth Amendment right to be executed in the absence of cruel and unusual punishment," the filing read.

The man was pronounced dead at 3:49 p.m. local time, 117 minutes after it began. Dean Baich, Wood's defense attorney, said the execution using a combination of midazolam and hydromorphone, should have taken 10 minutes.

An administrator checked on Wood a half dozen times. His breathing slowed as a deacon said a prayer while holding a rosary.

"Throughout this execution, I conferred and collaborated with our IV team members and assured unequivocally that the inmate was comatose and never in pain or distress," said state Department of Corrections Director Charles Ryan.

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

Joseph Rudolph Wood III, et. al.,
Plaintiff,

The emergency stay was for nought after Wood finally died nearly two hours after the drugs were applied.

Charles L. Ryan et al

Case No: 2:14-cv-01447-NVW-JFM

Execution Scheduled for July 23, 2014



LLICO, FRANK

Gov. Jan Brewer had ordered a review of execution protocol, saying she's concerned with the amount of time it took.

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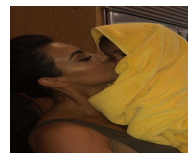
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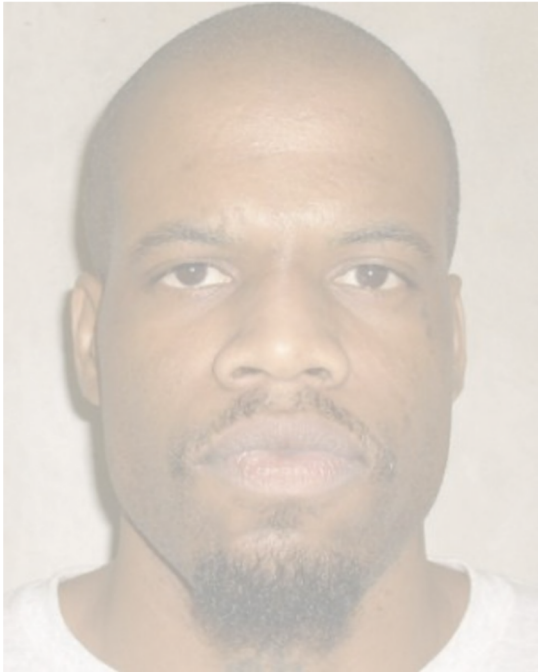
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"Arizona appears to have joined several other states who have been responsible for an entirely preventable horror — a bungled execution," Baich said afterwards. "The public should hold its officials responsible and demand to make this process more transparent."

Baich and other defense attorneys were granted a stay Tuesday by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals after arguing the secrecy of the drugs origins was unconstitutional. The ruling was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court, and a flurry of last minute stays Wednesday also failed.

Wood was sentenced to death for the 1989 double murder of his ex-girlfriend, Debbie Dietz, and her father.

"This man conducted a horrific murder and you guys are going, let's worry about the drugs," said Richard Brown, the brother-in-law of Debbie Dietz. "Why didn't they give him a bullet, why didn't we give him Drano?"



REUTERS

Oklahoma halted the execution of Clayton Lockett on April 29, 2014 due to problems with its lethal injection, but the inmate later died of an apparent heart attack, a spokesman for the prison system said.

The execution process, and the drugs used, have come under increased scrutiny after two other botched executions this year. In January, an Ohio inmate administered the same combination of drugs took nearly 30 minutes to die as he gasped for breath. Clayton Lockett died of a heart attack 45 minutes into a May execution in Oklahoma because the drugs used to kill him were not administered properly.

Wood smiled at family members of his victims as he said his final words.

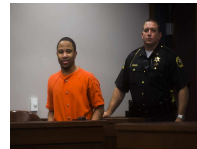
"I take comfort knowing today my pain stops, and I said a prayer that on this or any other day you may find peace in all of your hearts and may God forgive you all," he said.

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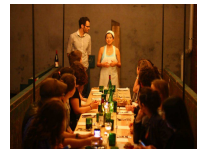
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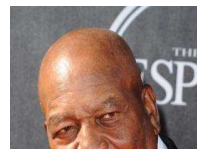
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SHANE PITTS

Call me callous -- but I can't seem to find any part of me that feels bad for the suffering of a convicted double murderer at his own execution.. As for his "Rights?" --please.

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ROD

13 hours ago

4

Yeah, I mean Govt never lies, right? And it's not like 113 INNOCENT poor men have been cleared OFF Death Row after it was proven police framed them! (Oh, wait a minute... that's EXACTLY what happened!) Only republicans trust govt.

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ROD

12 hours ago

1

Hey Shane, you and your loved ones have paid out BILLIONS in settlements because POLICE and DAs FRAMED INNOCENT MEN. At what point do you learn from the past? Hell, this isn't even the FIRST time you've heard of an execution going wrong, is it? YET the Big Govt you blindly trust told us they solved all these problems. (They said this 30, 40, 50 years ago. As well as this year, last year, the year before...) STILL TRUST THEM?

Like [REPLY](#)

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DENACE

11 hours ago

1

Only republicans trust govt...yet they want less of it while democrats want more of it. Seems legit.

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O KE

11 hours ago

6

As long as he is, indeed, the real murderer and there is DNA proof I have no problem with his issues. His victims struggled and suffered more. I'm OK with it.

Like [REPLY](#)

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JAMES CANNON

8 hours ago

1

I agree. IF we as a country continue with capital punishment (which at the very least is a sentence doled out very inconsistently) I don't quite get all the handwringing about how peaceful and easy the death is when 9 times out of ten the suffering of the victim is unspeakably heinous. Where are their 8th Amendment Rights?

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JERRY SMITH

8 hours ago

1

I suppose that was a bit easier than a hanging.

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[SHARE](#)

SOPHIA

11 hours ago

0

well, in this case you are callous. Since we don't live in a perfect Justice System, it is impossible to guarantee that all executed inmates were actually responsible for the crimes that have been accused of. Another interesting fact is that I have never heard of any millionaire white men or women been in the death row of executed. Probably crime is in the DNA of non blacks, poor or middle class men.

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ROBERT MCCABE

2 hours ago

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I seems his victims suffered cruel and unusual punishment and should be the ones anybody has

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any empathy for.I wish the killer could have gone through this a hundred times.

Like [REPLY](#)

E E

12 hours ago

11

what's that you say? a murderer suffered? you mean like his victims did and how their friends/family CONTINUE to suffer? i believe the saying goes, 'karma's a b*tch', right? seems more than appropriate here. case closed, move along.

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