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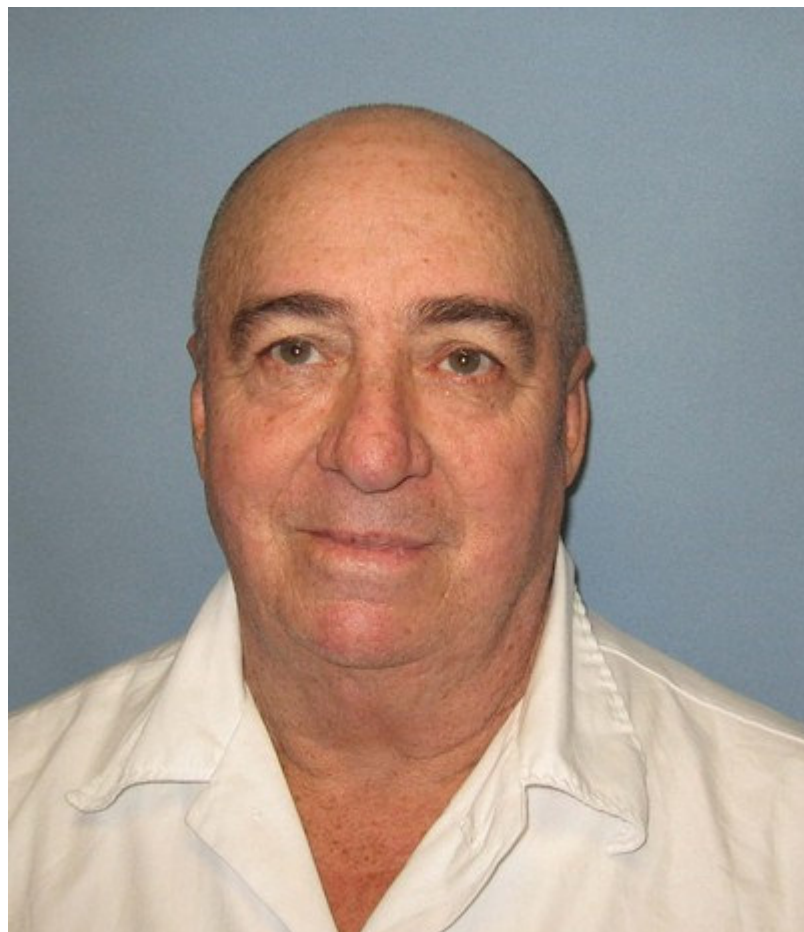
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[Home](#) / [news](#) / [local](#) /

Phillip Hallford executed for killing daughter's boyfriend

By Matt Elofson



ALABAMA DEATH ROW -- An absolute quiet filled the room overlooking the execution chamber on Thursday evening as the curtain opened for people to watch Phillip Hallford take his last breath.

The family of a slain 16-year-old Dale County boy received what they called “long overdue justice” as Hallford took his last breath.

Officials at Holman Correctional Facility executed the 63-year-old Hallford at 6 p.m. by lethal injection.

Hallford has been on death row for 23 years after a Dale County jury convicted him and sentenced him to death for the murder of Charles Eddie Shannon, the boyfriend of Hallford’s 15-year-old pregnant daughter, Melinda Hallford.

In the moments before his death when given the opportunity for any last words, he only replied with the word “no.”

Hallford spoke briefly with Chris Summers, the chaplain for Holman Correctional Facility, along with a corrections officer, just before his death. Brian Corbett, a state Department of Corrections spokesperson, said the time of death was pronounced at 6:26 p.m.

David Ferguson, Shannon’s brother, and Angelina Johns, Shannon’s stepmother, both attended the execution. Johns said in a written statement the execution gave her some long overdue justice.

“Speaking for my husband and I, we are glad justice has finally been done, and we can close this chapter,” Johns said in the statement.

Johns also said in the statement that Shannon did not deserve to lose his life at the young age of 16.

“Mr. Hallford had no reason for taking this young man’s life, particularly on the same night we had his sister laying in state at a Chipley, Fla., funeral home,” Johns said in the statement. “We lost two young lives within a week. It was very devastating for our family.”

Around a dozen people watched Hallford’s execution, including his lawyer, Shannon’s family, several prison officials, several corrections officers and two members of the media.

Melinda Hallford did not attend her father’s execution.

Evidence showed Hallford used his daughter to lure Shannon, her boyfriend, to a secluded bridge on April 13, 1986. Hallford shot Shannon once in the mouth then dragged him to the side of the bridge and shot him two more times in the head before throwing him over the bridge and into the water.

According to the Associated Press, trial testimony indicated Hallford had been abusive to his daughter since she was 7 years old. Court records show that after the killing, Hallford made his daughter wear a necklace made of shell casings from the bullets used in the shooting.

Corbett said Hallford did not request a last meal, but ate a ham and cheese sandwich from a vending machine. Corbett said Hallford also ate some cheese crackers and nacho cheese Bugles earlier in the day, which he washed down with a Dr. Pepper.

Two people attended the execution on Hallford’s behalf, which included his Philadelphia attorney Andrew Kantra and private investigator Glori Shettles.

Corbett said Hallford had several visitors in the hours before his death, which included his mother, Mertie Boyett, his brother, Ronald Hallford and his sister-in-law, Earra Hallford, a spiritual advisor, Donald Locker, along with Shettles and Kantra.

Corbett said Hallford gave several personal items he kept in his cell to his mother, which included a black watch, a Bible, an address book and a poster board painting.

Hallford became the fifth person executed in Alabama this year, and the second from the Wiregrass over the last two years. Willie McNair was executed in May 2009 for a murder in Henry County.

Corbett said it was the 24th execution under Gov. Bob Riley, and likely his last as the governor of Alabama.

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