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JUSTICE NEWS

Department of Justice  
Office of Public Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Monday, June 15, 2020

**Executions Scheduled for Four Federal Inmates Convicted of Murdering Children**

Attorney General William P. Barr today directed the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to schedule the executions of four federal death-row inmates who were convicted of murdering children in violation of federal law and who, in two cases, raped the children they murdered.

In July 2019, Attorney General Barr directed the BOP to revise the Federal Execution Protocol to provide for the use of a single-drug, pentobarbital — similar to protocols used in hundreds of state executions and repeatedly upheld by federal courts, including the Supreme Court, as consistent with the Eighth Amendment. A district court’s preliminary injunction prevented BOP from carrying out executions under the revised protocol, but the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C.

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Circuit vacated that injunction — clearing the way for the federal government to resume capital punishment after a nearly two-decade hiatus.

“The American people, acting through Congress and Presidents of both political parties, have long instructed that defendants convicted of the most heinous crimes should be subject to a sentence of death,” said Attorney General William P. Barr. “The four murderers whose executions are scheduled today have received full and fair proceedings under our Constitution and laws. We owe it to the victims of these horrific crimes, and to the families left behind, to carry forward the sentence imposed by our justice system.”

In accordance with 28 C.F.R. Part 26, the BOP has scheduled executions for the following death-sentenced inmates:

- Daniel Lewis Lee, a member of a white supremacist group, murdered a family of three, including an eight-year-old girl. After robbing and shooting the victims with a stun gun, Lee covered their heads with plastic bags, sealed the bags with duct tape, weighed down each victim with rocks, and threw the family of three into the Illinois bayou. On May 4, 1999, a jury in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Arkansas found Lee guilty of numerous offenses, including three counts of murder in aid of racketeering, and he was sentenced to death. Lee’s execution is scheduled to occur on July 13, 2020.
- Wesley Ira Purkey violently raped and murdered a 16-year-old girl, and then dismembered, burned, and dumped the young girl’s body in a septic pond. He also was convicted in state court for using a claw hammer to bludgeon to death an 80-year-old woman who suffered from polio and walked with a cane. On November 5, 2003, a jury in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri found Purkey guilty of kidnapping a child resulting in the child’s death, and he was sentenced to death. Purkey’s execution is scheduled to occur on July 15, 2020.
- Dustin Lee Honken shot and killed five people — two men who planned to testify against him, and a single, working mother and her ten-year-old and six-year-old daughters. On October 14, 2004, a jury in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Iowa found Honken guilty of numerous offenses, including five counts of murder during the course of a continuing criminal enterprise, and he was sentenced to death. Honken’s execution is scheduled to occur on July 17, 2020.
- Keith Dwayne Nelson kidnapped a 10-year-old girl rollerblading in front of her home, and in a forest behind a church, raped her and strangled her to death with a wire. On October 25, 2001, Nelson pled guilty in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Missouri to the kidnapping and unlawful interstate transportation of a child for the purpose of sexual abuse which resulted in death, and he was sentenced to death. Nelson’s execution is scheduled to occur on August 28, 2020.

Each of these inmates has exhausted appellate and post-conviction remedies, and no legal impediments prevent their executions, which will take place at U.S. Penitentiary Terre Haute, Indiana. Additional executions will be scheduled at a later date.

**Component(s):**  
Office of the Attorney General

**Press Release Number:**  
20-545

*Updated June 15, 2020*

Visited 09/08/2020

Washington, DC 20530-0001

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