

## Where is Hip Hop Culture on the Death Penalty since Tookie

Written by Robert ID3177

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A year ago hip hop artists and activist from all over the world spoke out on the pending execution of Stanley 'Tookie' Williams.

Most people familiar with hip-hop culture know who Stanley 'Tookie' Williams was. He was a Nobel Peace Prize nominee. His memoir, 'Blue Rage, Black Redemption' is a great informative read. The DVD 'Redemption' starring Jamie Foxx, and Lynn Whitfield has earned worldwide critical acclaim. Stanley 'Tookie' Williams was one of the founders of the Crips.

Many hip-hop and rap artists are members of or are affiliated with different gangs or sets and this is no secret; as many sport set tattoos or talk freely about their affiliations with different groups.

Rallies were held outside of San Quentin State Prison, where Tookie's awaiting execution was to take place. One such rally was led by another notable leader of the hip-hop generation, rap artist Snoop Dogg. A San Diego delegation, led by Minister Tukufu Kalonji, founder and director of the San Diego-based The Serudj Institute of Effective Socialization, was planning to go. How far the voices of those in attendance went seemed to be all in vain.

On Dec. 13th 2005, the State of California used an inhumane lethal injection procedure to kill peacemaker and anti-gang activist Stanley "Tookie Williams". Tens of thousands of people throughout the world protested this execution made possible by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger who denied clemency to Stanley "Tookie Williams". Nine months later, after an investigation, we learned the truth: the execution of Stanley Tookie Williams was botched, due to incompetence by California Department of Corrections personnel, causing him to die slowly and horrifically in excruciating pain, though he was paralyzed by the State so that he could not scream out.

Now a year after the execution, or state murder, of Stanley 'Tookie' Williams several states including California are re-thinking their procedures for state assisted murder.

Not only because of the blotched murder of Tookie Williams, but because of the recent rash of blotched state murders all over the country; it is getting harder and harder for supporters of the

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death penalty to defend the system.

The recent botched state murder of Angel Diaz last week in Florida seems to have brought the question of the death penalty and the way it is carried out to light again.

Florida Governor Jeb Bush immediately reacted to the Angel Diaz botched murder by reaffirming his belief in capital punishment, but ordering a halt to all executions (state assisted murder), and convening a special commission to review the state's lethal injection procedures to insure that, in the future, they do not result in cruelty and needless suffering. In other words they do not want to draw attention when they murder someone.

The list of botched executions in this country is not limited to Tookie or to Angel Diaz. The facts all suggest that Americans have growing doubts about the need for capital punishment (state assisted murder). Also in question is the way capital punishment (state assisted murder) is administered. Botched executions add to those doubts, raising questions about whether it will ever be possible for the state to kill in a humane way.

Sue Gunawardena-Vaughn, director of Amnesty International USA's Program to Abolish the Death Penalty, issued the following statement in response to U.S. District Judge Jeremy Fogel's ruling that California's lethal injection procedure represents "an undue and unnecessary risk" of a violation of the constitutional prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment:

"Judge Fogel's ruling comes at a time when numerous states across the country are encountering significant legal challenges to the constitutionality of their respective lethal injection methods. Earlier today, in the wake of a horribly botched execution, Florida Governor Jeb Bush created a commission on administration of lethal injection to examine the constitutionality of that state's lethal injection protocol.

"While Judge Fogel's ruling chastises California for continuing to administer a procedure that "lacks both reliability and transparency," the flaws that taint the state's death penalty system go well beyond the specifics of its executing mechanism. It is plagued by racial bias and there remains the very real possibility of executing an innocent person. California officials should not waste the state's valuable resources trying to "perfect" the apparatus of death. Instead, they should unequivocally reject the death penalty, which is both futile and irreparably flawed, and

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focus instead on developing genuine solutions to crime. The continuing search for an "ideal" way to extinguish a human life is no sign of a humane, evolved society. California can and must do better."

Hip hop culture has been silent on the death penalty since the execution of Tookie Williams. Maybe we should continue to use our voting power and voices to speak out against this injustice. Real life is more than clubbin and hootchies. In hip hop real recognizes real and this is something that is going on in the real world and not some BET video.

This is just food for thought. Think about it and act upon your feelings. Speak out and change the world. Total abolition of the Death Penalty is what we all should be seeking.

\*These are the thoughts of the writer Robert and do not necessarily reflect the beliefs or views of the ThugLifeArmy.com site.

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