# DEATH PENALTY QUIZ ANSWERS

1. **FALSE** Although the costs of incarceration are expensive (about $25,000 per year per inmate), that amounts to $750,000 to $1,000,000 depending on whether a person lives 30 or 40 years after his or her sentencing. On the other hand, the best studies on the cost of the death penalty indicate that it costs about $2 million per execution over the costs of a system which imposes life sentences for the same crimes. Moreover, about 70% of the costs occur at trial with only a minority of the costs for the appeal.

2. **FALSE** Through the end of February, 2006, 583 white people have been executed and 344 black people. About 34% of those who have been executed have been black, while 58% have been white. However, blacks constitute only about 12% of the U.S. population, so their execution rate is much higher than the rate of whites being executed. Racism in the use of the death penalty is also shown when one looks at the race of the victims in the underlying crime that resulted in sending the inmate to death row. You are much more likely to receive the death penalty if the person you murdered was white than if the person you murdered was black.

3. **TRUE** Gilmore refused to appeal his conviction or sentence and was executed only three months after his trial. Another person was executed by firing squad in 1996, also in Utah. Like Gilmore, John Taylor waived his appeal and asked to be shot.

4. **FALSE** There have now been over 120 people released from death row after they were exonerated. In all of these cases, there was a re-trial ending in acquittal, the state dropped all charges after the conviction was thrown out by a higher court, or an absolute pardon was granted on the basis of innocence. Thus, for every 8 executions carried out, there has been one person formerly death on row who is now deemed innocent.

5. **TRUE** While in 2002 the Supreme Court ruled in Atkins v. Virginia that it is unconstitutional to execute the mentally retarded, almost all states allow the execution of those with mental illness.

6. **FALSE** The statement is not quite true. Although there are 12 states that do not have the death penalty under state law, the federal death penalty governs cer tain crimes in ever y state. No matter what state you commit a crime in you can still receive the federal death penalty, providing you have broken one of the laws to which that federal penalty applies. For example, certain acts of kidnapping in which a death occurs could merit the federal death penalty, regardless of what state the crime occurs in.

7. **FALSE Delaware hanged one man in 1996 and the state of Washington conducted 2 hangings in the 1990s.**

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8. **TRUE** According to a Peter Hart Research Poll conducted in 1995 of police chiefs around the country, the officers named such measures as reducing drug abuse, a better economy, and controlling guns as more important than the death penalty in reducing violent crime. The poll also found that the majority of police chiefs do not believe that the death penalty is an effective law enforcement tool.

9. **FALSE** Velma Barfield was the first woman executed after the reinstatement of the death penalty. She was executed by lethal injection in Nor th Carolina in 1984. Since then, ten additional women have been executed. There are about 50 women on death row awaiting execution.

10. **TRUE The Supreme Court found the death penalty for juvenile offenders (those under 18 at the time of the crime) unconstitutional in Roper v. Simmons (2005).**

**Source: Death Penalty Information Center** http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/article.php?did=557&scid