

Rector's time came, painfully late

Moans pierced silence during wait

"We could hear every second ticking without having to look at the clock." — John Byus, administrator for medical and dental services at the state Department of Correction, discussing a 45-minute delay Friday night in the execution of Rickey Ray Rector of Conway.

BY JOE FARMER
Democrat-Gazette First Staff Bureau

VARNER — Nobody was happy with the execution of Rickey Ray Rector on Friday night.

The execution was scheduled to start at 9 p.m., but was delayed 45 minutes because the team assigned to set up the intravenous line for lethal injection couldn't find a vein in the 5-foot-tall, 298-pound condemned man.

Rector, 40, of Conway was sentenced to die for the 1981 shooting death of Conway police officer Robert W. Martin. After killing Martin, Rector shot himself in the head. His attorneys argued that he shouldn't have been executed because of his brain damage.

The courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, disagreed.

The state opted for injection as its means of execution in 1990. Rector had been sentenced to die by electrocution, but the law gave him a choice. He selected injection.

Jeff Rosenzweig and John Jewell of Little Rock, his attorneys who witnessed events in the death chamber at the Department of Correction's Cummins Unit in Lincoln County, said they heard moans and were concerned. Herbert Hule, president of the Arkansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty, called it a form of torture.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Here is a first-person account from the Log Cabin Democrat in Conway.

BY SONIA CLINESMITH
Log Cabin Democrat

VARNER — Rickey Ray Rector was not an easy man to execute.

Loud moans filtered from the death chamber as technicians pierced Rector's skin with needles and searched almost an hour for suitable veins to carry lethal doses of chemicals.

Thirteen witnesses in the next room could not see the procedure, their view veiled by a thick, black curtain. They later learned that Rector helped with the procedure.

After the three women and 10 men were seated, Art Lock-

hart, director of the state Department of Correction, gave them a brief overview of the procedure and thanked them. "It's a lengthy process when you use lethal injection," he said.

Lockhart couldn't have known how long it would really take for the state to complete the execution of the man who killed a Conway police officer almost 11 years ago.

Conversation in the witness room was light with few mentions of Rector and the case as the long wait began. The room seemed like a small theater playing a suspenseful movie.

Rector's outbursts interrupted the silence more than

once. Three Conway law officers, dressed in civilian clothing, took three of the five orange seats on the front row. "We're relieved it's finally going to be concluded," Sgt. Bill Murrain said.

With a small Bible tucked in his left vest pocket, the Rev. Kelvin Motton, Rector's minister and pastor of St. James CME Church in Conway, sat next to the officers. Two thin silver ribbons apparently marking his place dangled from the pages.

White County Sheriff Jess Odum took the remaining front row seat.

Another officer, Jerry Bradley, chief deputy at the Faulkner County sheriff's office, sat on the second row.

See CONWAY, Page B8

"We were looking for a new vein. We kept thinking the next one would be it."

Byus described a scene that was tense and growing worse by the second.

"I didn't notice any time," he said. "To us, every second was an hour."

He said the eight-member team went into the chamber at 8 p.m. expecting problems.

"We had eight people in there when this all started," Byus said. "The lie-down people were helping, and by the end we had three more medical people."

Byus said the team found a vein within five minutes of entering the room, but the vessel collapsed.

"We thought we had it, but we didn't," he said. "That's unusual, but it happens. He had spindly veins that collapsed easily. We searched. We were lucky to find a vein at all."

A combination of three lethal drugs is supposed to be fed through one of two IVs in each of the victim's arms. The second is a backup.

"That blood vessel has to handle 10 times the normal dosage of those drugs," Byus said.

By the time they found a vein in Rector's right hand, he said, the team already was preparing for a "sit-down" — a medical condition that can result in an air embolism.

See RECTOR, Page B8

Reading beauty



...i their
...tion.
...took
...largest
...oated
...ommu-
...- the
...worse
...of the
...ll on a
...ans to
...return

Clark's license on line if theft verdict stands

BY RACHEL O'NEAL
Democrat-Gazette Staff Bureau

As a convicted felon, former Attorney General Steve Clark may lose his law license without a job.

The state Supreme Court upheld Clark's 1990 felony theft conviction Tuesday, replacing his law license in jeopardy.

Clark, 44, was convicted in Faulkner County Circuit Court on Nov. 1, 1990, of theft by deception for fraudulently charging food and entertainment on

but the committee gives a 30-day grace period to Clark to get his license back before the disciplinary proceedings. Neal said he has until Feb. 9 to file an appeal.

Neal said the lawyer is then notified of the committee's decision to initiate disciplinary proceedings and is given the opportunity to surrender his law license.

If a lawyer refuses to surrender his license, the commit-

48 • ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE • SUNDAY, JAN. 26, 1992

13 outsiders view death of Rector

Witnesses listen; wait beyond curtain

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is a first-person account from The Associated Press of the Friday night execution of Ricky Ray Rector.

BY RON FOURNIER
Associated Press Writer

VARNER The witness room was stuffy and quiet. The witnesses were curious. What is that noise in the death chamber? Is Ricky Ray Rector groaning? Why hasn't the execution started?

At 8:50 p.m. Friday, six policemen, two lawyers, two reporters, a state employee, a pastor and a housewife filed into the witness area, a dimly lit 18-by-12-foot room.

About 9:55 p.m., Rector's lips moved rapidly - as if he was drawing shallow breaths. His lips stopped moving a minute later.

Almost like a movie crowd waiting for the feature picture, the witnesses stared ahead at four glass windows covered by dark curtains.

On the other side of the dark curtains, the brain-damaged police killer was being prepared for his 9 p.m. execution by injection. The witnesses were told.

Ten minutes passed, but the curtain did not open. The execution was not going to go off on schedule.

"This your first time?" Jeff Rosenzweig, one of Rector's attorneys, asked a fellow witness.

"Yes," the man said. "I hope it's my last," the lawyer said, rocking forward on his elbows and looking at the floor.

A.L. "Art" Lockhart, director of the Department of Correction, entered the witness room at 9:02 p.m. and looked at the dark curtains. "The medical team is having difficulty securing a good vein in both arms," he told the witnesses.



DEATH DISCUSSION - Jeff Rosenzweig, one of Ricky Ray Rector's attorneys, talks about Rector's execution Friday night at the Cummins Unit in Varner.

Rosenzweig witnessed the execution, which was delayed by problems finding a vein suitable for the lethal injection.

Rosenzweig said he had expected it would be tough to find a vein to inject the killer fluid because the nearly 300-pound Rector was flabby and out of shape.

At 9:17 p.m., the witnesses heard the first noise from behind the dark curtains. Rosenzweig said it sounded like Rector groaning, probably after getting stuck with a needle.

The same quick, deep noise was heard at least seven more times between 9:20 p.m. and 9:35 p.m. Prison officials later confirmed Rector was cooperative but groaned when stuck by a needle at least eight times.

Rosenzweig and co-counsel John Jewell talked about what would happen if the execution could not be carried out by midnight. They decided a new death warrant would be issued, but a new trial would not be required.

"Another 2 1/2 hours," Rosenzweig said. "And they'll have to start all over."

The witnesses could hear what sounded like skin slipping. Medical officials apparently were trying to raise a vein in Rector's arm.

"They're going to beat him

to death," Lt. Rod Pearson of the Conway Police Department said.

He and his colleagues attended the execution because Rector killed fellow officer Ashbert in 1981. After killing Martin, Rector shot himself in the head, causing severe brain damage. Courts and doctors said he was competent to be executed because he understood his punishment.

The medical team secured the tubes to Rector about 9:40 p.m. and the dark curtain opened 10 minutes later.

There's not anything moving in that monitor at all. It's straight across.

Rector was strapped to a gurney, a white sheet covered him from his feet to his lower lip.

The murderer moved his lips, but he could not be heard through the glass. Prison officials later said Rector's last words were: "I got baptized and saved."

Lockhart gave the order to begin the lethal drip about 9:50 p.m., 30 minutes behind schedule.

Rector blinked his eyes

slowly. He looked like a man nodding off to sleep for about two minutes when he closed his eyes for good.

Lockhart, now inside the execution chamber, fidgeted with a folded piece of paper, writing and reading, writing and reading.

Several witnesses stood up for a better view.

About 9:55 p.m., Rector's lips moved rapidly - as if he was drawing shallow breaths. His lips stopped moving a minute later.

He didn't move again.

At 10:08, Conway police detective Bob Barham looked at what appeared to be a heart monitor at the head of the gurney. "It looks like it's flat-lining," he said. "Oh, there was a jump. There's another flutter."

Two minutes later, he said, "There's not anything moving in that monitor at all. It's straight across."

Rector was pronounced dead at 10:09 p.m.

When an orange brace was removed from his neck, witnesses saw that Rector's black, gray beard had been shaved in a stubble.

"He wanted to look nice for his family," Jewell whispered. The dark curtains closed.

Actress

The Associated Pr

PARIS - Dallas, often called the "Blue" was suspended Friday and repeated jewelry store

Dalle, 28; ring in the "Blue" was log about 30 worth \$5,450 they believe November. I the jewelry

Francoise managed the

Unlock
Clear your mind
Lose 500
Lose 100

Sewing M
Clear Any
NAT
4000 Mc
NOI

LARR
...AND K

As seen
America,
Shore, his
and Oprah

WHAT I

Californian visits LR, uncorks 4 new wines

BY RICK KRON
Democrat-Gazette Food Editor

Most 2-year-olds drink milk, water and maybe even Kool-Aid, but for Jim Bundschu, wine was the beverage of choice.

Bundschu, now 48, is the fifth-generation owner of the

The new releases Bundschu unveiled included Gundlach Bundschu Gewurztraminer, 1990; Gundlach Bundschu Chardonnay, 1990; Gundlach Bundschu Merlot, 1989; and a 1989 cabernet sauvignon. The wines will retail for about \$14

age and is priced lower than normal.

The winery owner said the recent "80 Minutes" piece about the health benefits of red wine has given the wine industry a tremendous push.

"It's the first positive to

gives us some ammo to counterbalance the negative attacks."

Bundschu added that he likes to separate wine from the liquor or "booze" category.

"Wine is a beverage onto itself," he said. "It's a great ex-