

Last Thoughts

An article in the New York Times recently brought my attention to yet another miscarriage of justice in the American judicial system. This time a man by the name of Michael Morton wrongly convicted of murdering his wife. He got life imprisonment. He was rescued by DNA technology after 25 years in the slammer. Upon leaving prison he remarked, Thank God this wasn't a capital case.

Quite so.

After reading this story I found myself wondering what an enthusiast for the death penalty would think if they were condemned to die for a heinous crime they had not committed. Advocates of capital punishment seem to have no difficulty accepting the deaths a few innocents along the way. A small price to pay for the powerful deterrent effect they are sure the prospect of execution must bring to those with murder on their minds.

What goes through the mind, therefore, of such an innocent individual as they lie strapped to the gurney, just minutes away from the administration of the lethal injection? Would they say to themselves, Well, this is the price I must pay to make America safe for my children and my children's children, my only regret is that I have but one life to give?

Or, would the innocent one experience a death-bed conversion and decide that the death penalty was a very bad idea after all and they fervently sought its immediate abolition?

It's hard to say, isn't it?