

CHICAGO TRIBUNE 12-22-62
The justification of capital punishment

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS—In response to the Perspective article "Execution by injection: the doctors' dilemma":

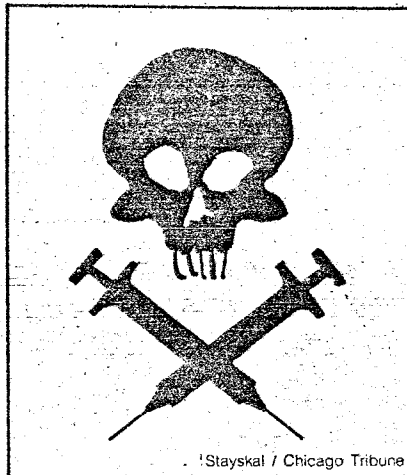
The recent executions in Virginia and Texas of two convicted murderers were justified for two reasons.

First, the imposition of the death penalty in these cases will help deter crimes like murder. As the late FBI director J. Edgar Hoover observed, "The professional law enforcement officer is convinced from experience that the hardened criminal has been and is deterred from killing based on the prospect of the death penalty.

A study conducted by the Los Angeles Police Department in 1970 and 1971 buttresses Hoover's observation. Ninety-nine criminals participated in the survey, each giving his reason why he committed his crime unarmed or did not use a weapon.

The study revealed a 5 to 1 ratio of deterrence over nondeterrence as reported by people in the best position to make such a judgment—the criminals themselves.

Second, the executions were justified on moral grounds. Some believe that capital punishment is "cruel and unusual punishment" and contrary to religious or humanitarian principles.



Stayskal / Chicago Tribune

But when, for example, someone has raped and murdered a child, he has relinquished his right to live.

Capital punishment in such a case is an act of restitution and demonstrates that a society and legal system are genuinely dedicated to preserving and protecting the rights and safety of the people. Charity, in other words, must also be displayed towards the victims of crimes and their relatives.

Haven Bradford Gow

CHICAGO TRIBUNE 12-16-62
Massachusetts OKs
death penalty bill

BOSTON—A bill putting the death penalty back on the books in Massachusetts after an absence of a decade went to Gov. Edward King on Wednesday, and he said he would sign it. King has sought reinstatement of capital punishment throughout his four-year term, which expires Jan. 6. He will be succeeded by Gov.-elect Michael Dukakis, an opponent of the death penalty. Opponents claim the death penalty measure is the broadest statute of its kind in the nation and is too vague to withstand a constitutional test. But King said: "We are satisfied at our counsel level that the bill is constitutional." The House and Senate enacted the bill, the product of a conference committee, Wednesday. The bill would have juries consider the death penalty—last imposed in Massachusetts in 1947—upon conviction of first-degree murder committed with premeditation or extreme atrocity. The bill permits a condemned murderer to choose electrocution or lethal injection.

WORDS OF LOVE CASE STUDY No. 9

These two items from the Chicago Tribune are not intended by me to represent a particular position even though they both are pro-death penalty pieces.

I basically put them here to give you an opening introduction to the subject of this morning's case study. In actuality, the subject this morning is more of a discussion topic than a case study.

We all have our own personal opinions concerning capital punishment but I want you to forget them for a few moments and just consider the following two questions dispassionately:

1. If we favor capital punishment, who are we showing love to and which of the four kinds of love is it?
2. If we oppose capital punishment, who are we showing love to and which of the four kinds of love is it?

Once we have established these answers, which position is most Christlike and why?