

# More Executions, Fewer Murders

by Earl P. Holt III

Recent mass shootings in New York and California will no doubt elicit renewed calls for gun control and repeal of the Second Amendment by the usual suspects. Instead, lawmakers would be wise to take an objective look at capital punishment as a general deterrent to murder. Its application should be very effective at discouraging mass shootings, particularly if perpetrators faced the likelihood of a firing squad or "*the needle*."

It's no coincidence that the *People's Republic of New York* and the *People's Republic of California* do not use capital punishment and haven't in decades. These last two inexcusable and heinous mass shootings sure as hell didn't take place in Texas, where killers would be more certain to pay for their crimes with their lives. The failure of **BLUE** states to use capital punishment is a typical leftist triumph of ideology over empirical evidence.

**The debate surrounding the effectiveness of capital punishment's deterrent effect is a settled fact. The Jews' Media have relentlessly tried to filter the evidence about capital punishment for decades, but its deterrent effect should be nearly beyond dispute. Their motive is clearly censorship and a desire to "filter" all news and facts which undermine their ideology.**

## **SOCIAL "SCIENCE"**

The quaint notion that capital punishment is not an effective general deterrent to murder came as a result of some very flawed research done in the late 1950s by a leftist Sociologist named Thorsten Sellin. (Thorstein Sellin. *The Death Penalty*. American Law Institute, Philadelphia. 1959.)

As usually occurs in these endeavors, objective truth was sacrificed to the "loftier" goals of ideology: That is, Sellin candidly acknowledged that he set out to "*prove*" that capital punishment did not deter the crime of murder in the U.S., and his bias was immediately evident in his results.

Sellin's flawed "*methodology*" compared U.S. murder rates in states with capital punishment statutes "*on their books,*" against murder rates in states without capital punishment statutes of any kind. Using a simple-minded correlation technique, Sellin found no significant difference between these two categories of states.

**The flaw in his methodology consisted of the fact that many states with capital punishment statutes "*on their books*" never actually used them, and some – particularly in New England -- had not carried out an execution for 50 years or more at the time of his study in 1959. This created a **fraudulent dichotomy** between these two categories of states, and obscured any deterrent effect that might have been in evidence.**

Naturally, empty-headed leftists in academia and the news media seized on and perpetuated Sellin's erroneous conclusions and engaged in a massive disinformation effort. This ensured that the public has remained egregiously misinformed about the true deterrent effect of capital punishment for 60 years.

## **EHRlich TO THE RESCUE**

Those who value objective truth as well as good government are forever indebted to an economist named Isaac Ehrlich, who re-examined the deterrent effect of capital punishment following the Supreme Court's decision in *Furman v. Georgia* (1972) that instituted a "*moratorium*" on executions in the United States.

In a more elegant and sophisticated design than that of Sellin, Ehrlich's model created three categories of states: First, states that had capital punishment statutes and which actually used them; Second, states which had capital punishment statutes but never used them; And, third, states which did not have capital punishment statutes of any kind.

**Using a far more sophisticated *Simultaneous Equation-Regression Analysis*, Ehrlich found that the application of capital punishment has a demonstrable and powerful general deterrent effect upon the crime of murder. In fact, Ehrlich found that for every person executed for the crime of murder in the United States, it saved the lives of between seven and eight innocent victims. (I. Ehrlich. "The Deterrent Effect of Capital Punishment." AMERICAN ECONOMIC REVIEW, June of 1975.)**

Ehrlich based his theory of criminal deterrence on a model first popularized by Nobel Laureate Gary Becker, which predicts that criminals respond to costs and benefits within the context of the criminal justice system, just as everyone else does in most other aspects of our lives. Even criminals are not exempt from weighing the costs and benefits of a given behavior, even if it happens to be a violent crime.

Ehrlich's hypothesis was fairly straightforward: Increasing the severity of a given punishment to potential murderers — in combination with the likelihood of its application -- should result in a lower incidence of the behavior studied, in this case, the crime of murder.

Interestingly, Ehrlich's later use of identical methodologies to study the incidence of other, non-capital crimes, generated little controversy within legal and so-called *scientific* circles: This proves

that the true opposition to his capital punishment research was political and ideological in nature, rather than scientific.

**Several recent studies have demonstrated a stunning vindication of Isaac Ehrlich's original research, and many show an even greater deterrent effect from capital punishment than that first demonstrated by Ehrlich in his pioneering study in 1975.**

Hence, Dezhbakhsh and Shepherd found that each U.S. execution for the crime of murder **saved the lives of 18 innocent victims**, by virtue of its general deterrent effect. (H. Dezhbakhsh and J. Shepherd. "*The Deterrent Effect of Capital Punishment.*" ***Economic Inquiry***, Vol 44, July of 2006.)

Dale Cloninger and Roberto Marchesini found that the 13-month Texas Death Penalty "moratorium" (From Jan. 1996 to Feb. 1997) precipitated the **murder of 90 additional victims**, whereas re-instituting executions "significantly" reduced the Texas murder rate. (D. Cloninger and R. Marchesini. "*Execution Moratorium is No Holiday for Homicides.*" 35 ***Applied Economics*** 569 -- 2001.)

Paul Zimmerman, a former Reagan Administration Economist, found that each U.S. execution **spared the lives of 14 innocent victims** as a result of capital punishment's deterrent effect. (P. Zimmerman. "*State Executions, Deterrence, and the Incidence of Murder.*" ***Journal of Applied Economics***, Vol. VII, May of 2004.)

## **CONCLUSIVE EVIDENCE**

In his review of the most recent studies on the deterrent effect of capital punishment for the *Senate Judiciary Committee* on February 1, 2006, former Reagan Economic Adviser Paul Rubin summarized his interpretation of the literature in this manner:

***“The literature is easy to summarize: Almost all modern studies and all the refereed studies find a significant deterrent effect of capital punishment. Only one study questions these results. To an economist, this is not surprising: We expect criminals and potential criminals to respond to sanctions, and execution is the most severe sanction available.”***

There's an old adage bemoaning the fact that ***“A lie is half-way around the world before the truth can get its boots on...”*** This is particularly true in the Jews' Media and Social Sciences, which have been largely subverted by Cultural Marxists in the course of their *“long march through the institutions.”*

If individual states are **REALLY** interested in deterring what appears to be an accelerating rate of mass shootings and murders, they should begin by resurrecting capital punishment statutes in their states. Otherwise, their efforts will remain just the usual empty rhetoric of useless politicians.