

II – QUESTIONS

- 1) Explain the state of Oklahoma's plan and the reasons why it has been criticized.
The state of Oklahoma plans to execute an abnormal number of inmates on the death row, with an objective for the end of 2024 of 25 executions.
Indeed, some critics brought forward potential negligence concerning cases involving mental illnesses which, if proved and sustained, would make the execution unconstitutional (forbidden by the law, banned to execute a mentally ill prisoner) as well as some possible innocent, wrongly convicted inmates.
Moreover, a worrying number of botched executions triggers even more criticism, especially here from a Fordham University Law Professor who is underlying the sadly known reputation of the state as far as executions are concerned.
- 2) Detail Oklahoma's scheduled execution program and its objectives.
James Coddington was the first to be executed (he was indeed executed on August 25, 2022, at 10:16 am). The following execution is to be Richard Glossip's, but the latter has always claimed his innocence and was successfully granted several stays of execution (up to February 16, 2023, so far). Then, 23 more inmates are scheduled to be executed up to 2024, resulting in killing more than half of the death row inmates in one year.
- 3) How does the attorney general defend this move?
He stresses the fact that Oklahomans had a say about the application of the death penalty and supported it for safety reasons.
So, this move can only satisfy the state's citizens and impress them with such efficiency.
- 4) How do experts define a botched execution?
 - Excessive pain
 - Any execution that is not carried out according to the official protocol for a specified method, commonly called the "standard operating procedure".
- 5) What is the risk involved by a series of executions within a short time?
= risk of negligence. No time to properly prepare and adjust to possible mistakes.
If political promises were made too quickly // If the political momentum triggered too many promises, then negligence may be sadly expected.
- 6) How did some prisoners react to botched executions? What was the answer they obtained from justice?
Because Clayton Lockett's and Charles Warner's executions accounted for botched ones in Oklahoma, some prisoners decided to sue the prison's officials on the grounds that the 3 drugs used did not correspond to the state's protocol and were thus unconstitutional (against the Eighth Amendment).
The judge in charge of the case rendered his verdict and rules against the prisoners, arguing the Eighth Amendment did not guarantee a painless execution.
- 7) How come the drugs used in the execution process raised issues?
When the lethal injection method was adopted by many states, the protocols endorsed involved 3 different drugs: the first one put the inmate to sleep and unconsciousness.
But the American and European industries stopped manufacturing this drug so that it may not be used any longer for executions.
So, the different states like Oklahoma have tried many cocktails, turning the execution process into experimentation (and more than often, painful executions).
- 8) Are those botched executions limited to Oklahoma?

No, Alabama and Arkansas are also mentioned.

9) What do these percentages/numbers refer to?

- 3% = Percentage of American botched executions.
- 7% = Highest percentage of botched executions due to lethal injection.
- 8% = The highest rate of botched executions due to lethal injection since 2010.
- 20% = Percentage of botched executions with unsatisfying sedative like Midazolam.
- 8 / in 11 days / 4 = series of executions in Arkansas = planned to kill 8 men in 11 days, resulting in killing "only" 4.
- 13 / 6 months = Number of inmates killed within 6 months at the federal level under Trump's administration.

10) Why are states like Oklahoma considered as anomalies in this text?

The main move has been to abolish the death penalty or impose moratoria over the last years rather than reinforce capital punishment, which is more and more discredited and unpopular.