

Child killer executed by lethal injection

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STARKE - Richard Henyard was executed by lethal injection tonight as the state carried out the death penalty against the 34-year-old Lake County man for the 1993 killings of 7-year-old Jamilya Lewis and her 3-year-old sister, Jasmine. Henyard was pronounced dead at 8:16 p.m.

Henyard was put to death at Florida State Prison after a delay of about two hours while authorities waited for a final U.S. Supreme Court ruling on a last-ditch appeal. The court denied requests for a stay.

Earlier in the day, Henyard was "somewhat quiet and withdrawn, but he is respectful," said Gretl Plessinger, spokeswoman for the state Department of Corrections.

A civil-rights lawyer who was appointed to represent him today had filed a new appeal with a federal appellate court in Atlanta. Henyard had brought a civil-rights complaint this morning in federal court, alleging that the state's "execution team" lacks training and could cause him to suffer a painful death if they "fail to properly insert the IV's as they did in (Angel) Diaz." Diaz' botched execution in Dec. 2006 caused the state to temporarily halt executions.

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Henyard wrote the complaint by hand, assisted by Mark S. Gruber, who has handled his death appeals for the state-funded Capital Collateral Regional Commission. It also alleged "The drugs that will be used by the Department of Corrections have been known to cause excruciating pain."

The state Supreme Court has ruled that challenging the death-penalty procedure is beyond the scope of the Capital Collateral Regional Commission, whose job is to handle trial-related appeals.

Henyard was sentenced to death for the 1993 murders of the Eustis sisters, who were carjacked along with their mother from a grocery store parking lot by Henyard and a juvenile accomplice, Alfonza Smalls. Henyard and Smalls took turns raping the girls' mother before shooting her four times. Prosecutors said Henyard then shot the girls as they cried out "Mommy." The girls' mother, Dorothy Lewis, survived, though she was shot between the eyes.

Smalls was too young to receive the death penalty. He is serving consecutive life terms for the crimes.

Plessinger said Dorothy Lewis' husband, Hugh Brockington, was among family members who were granted permission to witness the execution.

Henyard had a final meal of two fried-chicken breasts, turkey sausage, fried rice, chocolate-chip

cookies and Coca-Cola. He didn't eat all of it, Plessinger said.

He met late this afternoon with his spiritual advisor, Is-Hak Saddique, a muslim cleric. Henyard became a Muslim while in prison, Plessinger said.