

Deputy's killer executed

Former oilfield worker dies for Panhandle shooting

HUNTSVILLE (AP) — A former oilfield worker was executed last night for fatally shooting a sheriff's deputy who had been summoned to quell a family argument years ago.

Alvin Wayne Crane was pronounced dead at 6:23 p.m., nine minutes after the flow of lethal drugs began.

Crane, 41, gave a lengthy statement in which he expressed love for his family and apologized profusely. "I have caused you a lot of pain and suffering," he said. "I hope you find some peace and comfort in this. If you have any anger, I hope you let it go. I'm sorry for causing everybody so much trouble."

As the drugs began taking effect, several of Crane's family members sobbed as they watched through a window. He smiled, nodded to them and said, "Everything's going to be just fine. I love you all."

The needle inserted in Crane's right arm was a few inches above a tattoo of a skull. Once the drugs began taking effect, he turned purple.

He let out a long gasp, then two short gasps before slipping into unconsciousness.

Crane was the 26th condemned inmate executed in Texas this year and the first of four likely to receive lethal injection over the next two and a half weeks. Another execution is set for tomorrow evening.

"I don't think you totally ever recover. We still continue with our grieving."

— Lisa Drum
Victim's daughter-in-law

Crane, already on probation for assaulting a school bus driver in Oklahoma, was convicted of killing Ochiltree County Chief Deputy Melvin Drum with a single shotgun blast to the face the afternoon of March 28, 1987, in Perryton, in the northernmost reaches of the Texas Panhandle.

"I'm just relieved it's over," Lisa Drum, the deputy's daughter-in-law, said after watching the execution. "I don't think you totally recover. We'll still continue with our grieving."

Sheriff Joe Hataway said Drum's murder cost him not only a deputy but a friend.

"We all know family disturbances are one of the most dangerous calls to make and that's what this was," Hataway said. "This was a family feud. There were super-hot feelings, and when Deputy Drum drove up, the hatred was vented toward the deputy."

County Attorney Bruce Roberson, who prosecuted Crane, the county's only condemned inmate, also remembered Melvin Drum fondly.

"Melvin was more than a good friend," Roberson said. "He was one of those few people that really this entire community felt they could trust and rely on."

Network accused of mail fraud

Letters to offenders falsely used Department of Public Safety name

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — A statewide television network accused of falsely using the Texas Department of Public Safety's name to elicit information from registered sex offenders could face federal mail fraud and other charges, the DPS said yesterday.

The *San Antonio Express-News* reported yesterday the News of Texas, a San Antonio-based TV network with 26 affiliates around the state, sent out thousands of postcards last week asking offenders to confirm their addresses.

The network hoped to reveal that many of the state's 18,000 registered sex offenders have given authorities fake or outdated addresses.

DPS spokesperson Tela Mange said the postcards were deceptive because they bore no mark showing they were from a news organization and used the agency's name in the return address.

The news agency faces possible federal charges, including mail fraud, impersonating a government official and tampering with government records, Mange said. FBI agents directed calls to the U.S. postal inspector for San Antonio, who did not return calls to the Associated Press.

But a spokesperson for San Antonio's federal prosecutor said the case would be considered if the postal inspector found any wrongdoing.

"If the postal inspector determined there is a violation of federal law, then they would bring it to our attention and we would certainly consider it," Daryl Fields, spokesperson for U.S. Attorney Bill Blagg, said.

The network's president, Bob Rogers, said reporter Brian Collister, who used "Texas Department of Public Safety" in the postcards' return address without his editors' permission, was put on probation.

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Stupid things to say at a cool party #66

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