

Ring for Rodney Phone Bank Event

Who We Are Contacting:

- The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles (BPP): Has the authority to recommend clemencies and pardons to the Governor. We are asking them to recommend clemency for Rodney Reed, who is set to be executed on March 5th.
- Governor Abbott: The Governor may grant a 30 day extension for Rodney without the consent of the BPP. So even if the BPP doesn't recommend clemency right away, Governor Abbott can postpone Rodney's execution for an additional month if he wants.

What is Clemency?

- According to the BPP website, clemency includes "Full pardons after conviction, Conditional pardons, Pardons based on Innocence, Commutations of Sentence, Emergency medical reprieves, family medical reprieves, and, in cases of capital punishment, a commutation of sentence to a lesser penalty and a reprieve of execution." In other words, the BPP can recommend that the governor postpone Rodney's execution and reduce his sentence to something less severe than the death penalty. The BPP can also recommend that Rodney be conditionally pardoned pending further DNA testing.

Phone Numbers:

- Governor's Office "Opinion Hotline" (This goes straight to his voicemail box): **512-463-1782**
- Board of Pardons and Paroles, Clemency Section: **512-406-5852**
- Board of Pardons and Paroles, Central Office (W. 14th Street): **512-936-6351**
- Board of Pardons and Paroles, Huntsville Office (Board Presiding Officer Rissie Owens): **936-291-2161**
- Board of Pardons and Paroles, Gatesville Office (Board Member David G. Gutierrez): **254-865-8870**
- Board of Pardons and Paroles, Amarillo Office (Board Member James LaFavers): **806-359-7656**
- Board of Pardons and Paroles, Angleton Office (Board Member Cynthia Tauss): **979-849-3031**
- Board of Pardons and Paroles, San Antonio Office (Board Member Juanita Gonzalez): **210-564-3721**
- Board of Pardons and Paroles, Palestine Office (Board Member Michelle Skyrme): **903-723-1068**

Facts of the Case:

Rodney Reed was convicted in 1998 of raping and murdering Stacey Stites, a 19 year old white woman engaged to white police officer, Jimmy Fennel. Reed was convicted by an all-white jury in the town of Bastrop, Texas. The evidence used to convict Rodney was his semen, which was found inside Stacey. Rodney has admitted, and eyewitnesses have confirmed, that he had been having a consensual affair with Stites behind her fiancé's back. As such, the presence of Rodney's semen inside Stacy is not surprising. Stacey's fiancé is now serving 10 years in prison for raping a woman at gunpoint, while on duty. During his proceedings, many other women also testified that he had abused them in the past, indicating that Fennel had a history of sexual abuse and violence. Furthermore, Fennel is reported to have told a colleague of his, before Stacy's murder, that if he ever caught her cheating on him, he would strangle her with a belt "to avoid leaving fingerprints." That is exactly how Stacy was murdered. The belt and other evidence from the scene of the crime has never been tested for DNA. We are asking that this evidence be fully tested, since we think there is a high probability that it will prove Rodney's innocence, and could very well reveal the identity of the true killer. Rodney has been on Death Row since 1998.

On June 14, 2013, Rick Perry signed into law [Senate Bill 1292](#) "Relating to DNA Testing of Biological Evidence in Certain Capital Cases". The bill requires DNA testing of all biological evidence collected in a capital punishment case, and went into effect in September of 2013. The bill passed both the house and the senate unanimously, and had bipartisan support. One of the [biggest supporters](#) of the bill was the Attorney General, Greg Abbott, who is now Governor of Texas.

On November 25th of 2014, Texas Judge Doug Shaver [rejected](#) Rodney's attorneys' requests for further DNA testing, arguing that the new Senate Bill was not retroactively applicable. Rodney's attorneys have appealed this decision, but the courts are under no obligation to respond to his appeal before March 5th. So, unless Rodney gets clemency or his execution is postponed, he will probably be executed before the courts respond to his appeal. In other words, the courts are trying to run down the clock – hoping that Rodney will be executed so that they can wash their hands of his case. Our job is to make sure that that doesn't happen by forcing the folks in charge to acknowledge Rodney's situation and intervene to make sure he isn't executed while waiting for his day in court.

University of Texas Student Coordinating Committee to Free Rodney Reed

Script 1:

Hello, my name is _____ and I'm a student at the University of Texas at Austin. I am calling because Texas is about to execute a man who has not had a fair trial. Rodney Reed was convicted by a kangaroo court of raping and murdering Stacey Stites, a woman with whom he was having a consensual affair in 1998. The evidence that was used to convict him was semen found inside of the victim. Given the fact that he has admitted he was having an affair with the victim, the presence of his DNA inside of her is neither incriminating nor sufficient grounds for taking his life.

I'm calling because I believe that if the state of Texas executes Rodney, as it plans to do in one month's time, without even DNA testing the murder weapon, it will amount to a gross miscarriage of justice. I want to know why the Board of Pardon's and Paroles and Governor Abbott are taking so long to grant Mr. Reed clemency. There is no question in my mind, based on the facts of the case, that there should be a new trial, with full DNA testing of all of the evidence, before we sentence a man to death.

I'm calling because Texas law requires full DNA testing of evidence in capital punishment cases. Since this law, which was originally pushed by Governor Abbott during his time as attorney general, was passed after Rodney's conviction, the courts have decided that they are not legally required to DNA test the evidence in his case. If it is right and just to test for DNA in all capital punishment cases, there is no excuse for not applying the law retroactively, even if doing so is not legally required – it's just the right thing to do.

We only have one month left to stop this execution from moving forward, and we are mobilizing as students, faculty, and community members, to make our voices heard. We demand that Gov. Abbott and the BPP recognize Rodney's situation, and give his family the comfort and justice of making 100% sure that Rodney is guilty before taking his life. There is no reason not to test the remaining evidence for DNA, and given recent developments, including the fact that Stites' fiancé, police officer Jimmy Fennel, is now serving 10 years for raping a woman at gunpoint, while on duty, there are enough facts that remain unexplained, and enough unexamined evidence to warrant clemency in Rodney's case.

I want to be contacted by the BPP and by Governor Abbott as soon as possible regarding Rodney's case. What is perhaps most upsetting about this situation is the ease with which the BPP and Gov. Abbott could put an end to this abuse of justice, and this horrific situation. All we are asking is that Rodney be given the chance to prove his innocence through DNA testing. It is so easy for the BPP and Gov. Abbott to make this right, to correct this injustice. I expect to hear from you soon.

Script 2:

My name is _____ and I'm a student at UT. I'm calling about Rodney Reed. As you know, his execution is scheduled for one month from now, and the BPP and Gov. Abbott still have not intervened to grant him clemency. I want to know why the government refuses to speak up about this ridiculous injustice. Not only was Mr. Reed's original trial a farce, given the failure of the defense attorney to call witnesses that could have provided Mr. Reed with an alibi and the fact that Mr. Reed, a black man, was judged by an all-white jury, but the evidence surrounding the case, including the murder weapon and beer cans found at the scene of the crime, still haven't even been DNA tested! We have the technology and the resources to DNA test this evidence, and I find it abhorrent that the government would execute this man without even bothering to make 100% sure that he is guilty. I'm calling to demand clemency for Rodney, whether in the form of a new trial or DNA testing of the evidence. If the state goes forward with this murder without even stopping to make sure Rodney is guilty, it will be nothing less than a legal lynching – a racially-motivated, heartless, despicable act of absolute cruelty. Mr. Reed deserves justice. His family deserves justice. Our community deserves justice. I expect to hear back about this case immediately.

Script 3:

My name is _____ and I want to know why the BPP and Gov. Abbott still haven't granted clemency in the case of Rodney Reed, who is supposed to be murdered by lethal injection next month. The governor and the BPP are dragging their feet on this, and it is unacceptable. Justice will only be served by full DNA testing of the evidence from the case, including the murder weapon, and our community will accept nothing less. I expect to hear from you soon.