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Group Expresses Concerns Ahead of South Carolina Firing Squad Execution

Columbia, South Carolina - November 10, 2025 - With the announcement that Stephen Bryant has chosen to be shot to death when he is executed for his murders in 2004 of Willard Tietjen, Cliff Gainey and Chris Burgess at 6pm ET on Nov 14, 2025, [Death Penalty Action](#) has been circulating a [video](#) documenting purposeful off-center targeting by firing squad members in two of the last three firing squad executions in the United States.

"Either the firing squad members are purposely wanting to extend the suffering of the prisoner, or perhaps more likely, none of them want such a killing on their conscience," said Abraham Bonowitz, executive director of Death Penalty Action, which doesn't take a position on execution methods because it opposes all executions. "Whatever the motivation is for not hitting a correctly placed target, just the fact that this has happened should give us pause."

The five-minute video features comments made by Jonathan I. Groner MD, Professor Emeritus of Surgery, at the Ohio State University College of Medicine, who served as the medical director of a pediatric trauma program for over 20 years and cared for many patients with gunshot wounds. Dr. Groner reviewed and explained his findings from photos and the autopsy reports of the last three firing squad executions in the United States, two of which were in South Carolina. In the most recent firing squad execution in South Carolina, he found that two shooters were off-center and a third missed entirely.

The video is [here](#). It was edited from the recording of a longer press conference conducted in Utah in August prior to the then-scheduled firing squad execution of Ralph Menzies, whose execution was halted by the Utah Supreme Court pending a review of Menzies' mental competency.

Dr. Groner is available for interviews, as is **Randy Gardner**, brother of Ronnie Lee Gardner, the last person executed by firing squad in Utah in 2010, who is willing to share rarely seen autopsy photographs showing the off-center targeting by the firing squad in his brother's case. Contact info@deathpenaltyaction.org or 561-371-5204 to schedule interviews with Dr. Groner, Randy Gardner or Abraham Bonowitz.

[Resource folder](#) with images and documents: CAUTION - AUTOPSY PHOTOS

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