

On May 27,2009. I received a letter from The Court Appointed Lawyers. Who represent me informing me that the Governor's Office is intending to issue a death warrant on my case on June 2,2009. And to please don't be alarmed! That this was a formality. Well I must admit on getting this news I was a little shock and caught off guard. Being that back on February 24,2004 The Federal District Court Judge on my case order a stay of execution "Pending the complication of my Habeas Corpus Proceedings or until further order of this court."

On May 28,2004 my court appointed lawyers after 22yrs while in Federal Court were able to get their hands on boxes of exculpatory evidence. That was never given to any Lawyer, who ever represented me over this time. I'm talking about boxes of exculpatory evidence that would prove without a doubt I was innocent of this crime. I've now been in prison for the last 27yrs of my life, 1982 - 2009.

So the Federal District Court Judge on my case granted me leave. To return back to the lower courts, The Court Of Common Pleas. To give them a chance to review this newly discovered evidence. And make a ruling on it, which this is the law that I must do first, before they can review and rule on it themselves. So because of this my Federal Habeas Corpus petition was put in abeyance pending my return to Federal Court. So eventhough the Federal Court Judge did this my stay of execution remain intact until she say other wise.

So I return to the lower courts which I knew would be a waste of time. I first return to the Court Of Common Pleas. And then The Pennsylvania Supreme Court, both denying me any relief, basically blaming me and any attorney whoever represented me for not finding much sooner evidence that the D.A. Office a Mr. Roger King Jr. hide from me. I still can't quite understand that? So this whole process and waste of time took another five(5) years to go through. So as I mention on May 27,2009 just as I finally return back to the Federal District Court. I received the letter from my court appointed lawyers letting me know that the Governor's Office plan to sign a death warrant for me on June 2,2009. Which as I also mention my lawyers inform me that this was some type of formality. So don't be alarmed. But this didn't sound right to me at all! I knew better, after being on death row for so many years, that what they were telling me was not some kind of formality!

I couldn't understand why was they signing a death warrant for me when I already had a stay of execution? I also found out that they put out some type of Internet press release that a death warrant was sign for me. But they never made mention anywhere that I already had a stay of execution. Well the more and more I thought about this, plus checking around here on death row. And finding out that this has never happen to anyone else. I became convince that what they did to me wasn't just some type of formality. If it was just a formality then why not also state that I already have a stay of execution since 2004. They never came back and said this at all? This is why Organizations & People around the world was still thinking up to the very last minute. I was about to be executed.

Most of the letters I received people wishing me well. And hoping that I get a stay of execution. And some were like the thought that I might get a stay of execution didn't cross their minds. I know they meant well and their intention were in the right place. And maybe because most of the times someone gets a date it's carried out. Well maybe like I said this had something to do with why they might have thought this way? I just found it a little strange reading this like I didn't have a chance. It was like I was reading about someone else.

Now don't get me wrong I truly appreciate all the love and support I received from those who wrote me during this time. It really touch my heart a whole lot. The very kind words people shared with me during this time. But I must admit, I was still a little upset they never put out that I already had a stay of execution since February 24,2004. Also after thinking about it. I realize that at least when they release this to the public they couldn't also say that I had a stay of execution since 2004. If you think about it, never would it had made any since at all! I think those who would have read it would have realize just how crazy and a waste of time it was, what they where doing.

Plus I haven't even mention how it really upset my family when they found out about this on the local news in my hometown. And me having to explain everything to them, trying to assure them that I wasn't about to be executed.

So I'm still left with the question asking myself exactly why was this done to me? since it's clear that it wasn't a formality. I don't claim at this time that I know the reason why, but I wonder if it has anything to do with the newly discovered evidence that has come out in my case that was hidden from me and any attorney who ever represented me all these years? Or maybe this has something to do with an article that a local reporter in my hometown wrote for the local newspaper about me a couple of months back concerning how I'm now using the Internet trying to gain support. And how after 27yrs and countless appeals a death warrant has never been sign for me.

I guess I should be grateful that one wasn't sign for me until most recently. So I ask you the question is 10yrs to long? Or maybe 15yrs, 21yrs or 27yrs to long? Why should there ever be a time on innocence? And what if I was executed 21yrs ago? I guess it wouldn't have been long enough especially with the newly discovered evidence my court appointed attorneys were able to get their hands on. Well like I said I can't prove this was the reason behind why a death warrant was sign for me. All I do know is that this wasn't the normal procedure. "IT WASN'T A FORMALITY!" And last I would like to ask you to please read the following pages, your thoughts, opinions and support would truly be appreciated.

In Solidarity  
Ralph T. Stokes

## A letter from a concern friend + supporter

On the 2nd, of June, 2009 the unimaginable happened. A Death Warrant was signed for Ralph T. Stokes, the date of his execution set for Thursday the 30th, of July 2009.

However, back on the 24th, of February, of 2004, Ralph T. Stokes was granted a stay of execution pending completion of his Habeas Corpus Proceedings. Meaning as long as his case is active on Habeas Appeal, he is protected from being executed by a Federal court's order.

So why did the Pennsylvania Governor, Edward Rendell issue the warrant scheduling the death of our dear and beloved for the 30th, of July?

Could it be that Ralph T. Stokes is working very hard to surround himself with supporters to help in his fight to prove his actual innocence?

Can it be that now, after some 22-years (1982 to 2004) more and more information is being uncovered about the corrupt Philadelphia District Attorney, Roger King? Information that was unlawfully hidden from the defense lawyer at Ralph T. Stokes trial, evidence that would have help prove his actual innocence?

Can it be as I believe it to be true, that Ralph T. Stokes is innocence.

I encourage every one to join together and help in this fight to save Ralph T. Stokes. The D.A., Roger King very much knows what he did to wrongfully convicted Ralph T. Stokes and get him sentence to death. The Governor, knew that Ralph T. Stokes had a stay of execution since the year 2004.

In signing Ralph T. Stokes death warrant the Governor was

attempting to hide the truth --- deception. Publicly announcing that Ralph T. Stokes should be put to Death on the 30th.

Imagine how this news was received by the elder Stokes? Family? His senior parents and Aunts and Uncles. Further, how do you go about explaining to them that it's no need to worry at the moment, that their beloved had a stay of execution long before the governor signed this warrant of execution. I pray for his family and for them to have understanding. I really do.

Ralph T. Stokes should not be on Death Row.

He is innocent.

No matter how many times his warrant get signed, the truth is what it is. please help free Ralph T. Stokes.

**Documents Concerning A Death Warrant Being  
Sign For Me And My Stay Of Execution.**

**A. 1 of 1**

A copy of a letter that was sent to me from the Department Of Corrections. On the Behalf of The Governor's Office letting me know the death warrant has been sign for me.

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**B. 2 of 2**

A Copy of the death warrant that was sent along with the letter from the Department Of Corrections.

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**C. 1 of 1**

A copy of the notice of execution that was sent to my Lawyers along with a copy of the Death warrant.

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**D. 2 of 2**

A copy of the letter that the Governor's Office sent to the Judge on my case eventhough they knew I had a stay of Execution from this Judge since February 24,2004.

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**E. 2 of 2**

A copy of the stay of Execution The Federal District Court Judge on my case sign back on February 24,2004.

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**F. 1 of 1**

A copy of the Notice Of Stay Of Execution that was sent to my Lawyers along with The Notice Of Execution; Pay attention to the dates on both of them, June 2,2009.

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**G. 1 of 1**

A copy of the stay of execution that was given to me along with a copy of #B The Death Warrant both at the same time by a Lieutenant. So basically what he did was come and tell me a death warrant was sign for me on June 2,2009. And that it would be carried out on July 30,2009. And then in the other hand he gave me a copy of the stay of execution that I already had since February 24, 2004. So I ask the question why was a Death Warrant sign for me If I already had a stay of execution?

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**H. 1 of 1**

An article that was posted on the Internet By the Governor's Office but never mention anything about my stay of execution I had since February 24,2004. But how could they? Knowing that it wouldn't have made any sense to anyone who might have read it.



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
P. O. BOX 598  
CAMP HILL, PENNSYLVANIA 17001-0598

June 2, 2009

OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF CORRECTIONS

Ralph T. Stokes, AY-9034  
SCI Greene

Dear Mr. Stokes:

The Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has signed your execution warrant today. I am enclosing a copy of the warrant.

The Governor has set the date of Thursday, July 30, 2009, to carry out this order at the State Correctional Institution at Rockview.

Sincerely,

  
Jeffrey A. Beard, Ph.D.  
Secretary of Corrections

JAB/dk

Enclosure

B-1 of 2

Stokes

# Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



## Governor's Office

To Jeffrey A. Beard,

Secretary of Corrections, or your successor in office,

**GREETINGS:**

WHEREAS, at a Court of Common Pleas held at Philadelphia, in and for the County of Philadelphia as to information numbers 04578, 04583, and 04585, of the March Term of the Criminal Division in the year A.D. one thousand nine hundred and eighty-two, a certain Ralph Trent Stokes was tried upon certain informations charging him with the crime of Murder, and was on the twenty-second day of July, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and eighty-three, found guilty of Murder in the First Degree on said informations, and on the twenty-fifth day of July, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and eighty-three, the jury fixed the penalty at death, and was thereupon, to wit, on the ninth day of June, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and eighty-seven, sentenced by the Court to suffer death; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of this Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has reviewed the matter and upheld the constitutionality of the death penalty as well as affirmed its imposition upon said Ralph Trent Stokes, and has thus transmitted to the Governor a full and complete record of the trial, sentencing hearing, imposition of sentences and review by the Supreme Court pursuant to an Act of the General Assembly of this Commonwealth entitled the "JARA Continuation Act of 1980," approved the fifth day of October, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and eighty.

NOW THEREFORE, this is to command, authorize and require you, the said Secretary of Corrections, or your successor in office, to cause the sentences of said Court of Common Pleas to be executed upon said Ralph Trent Stokes, on the thirtieth day of July, A.D. two thousand and nine, in the manner prescribed by the Act of the General

B-2 of 2

Stokes

Assembly of the Commonwealth entitled "An Act providing for a procedure and method of execution; and making repeals," approved the eighteenth day of June, A.D. one thousand nine hundred and ninety-eight, and for so doing this shall be your sufficient warrant.

GIVEN

under my hand and the Great Seal of the State, at the City of Harrisburg, this second day of June in the year of our Lord two thousand and nine, and of the Commonwealth the two hundred and thirty-third.

BY THE GOVERNOR:

Edmund G. Rendell

ATTEST:

Henry A. Van Sickle  
Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth





COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL  
333 MARKET STREET, 17TH FLOOR  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17101  
(717) 783-6563

June 2, 2009

**RE: NOTICE OF EXECUTION**

Dear Ms. Charpentier:

Please be advised that on June 2, 2009, Governor Edward G. Rendell signed a warrant of execution for Ralph Trent Stokes as required by law. See 61 P.S. § 3002. Mr. Stokes' execution is scheduled for July 30, 2009. A copy of the warrant is enclosed for your information.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Alison Taylor  
Deputy General Counsel

Enclosure

1 of 2



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL  
333 MARKET STREET, 17TH FLOOR  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17101  
(717) 783-6563

June 2, 2009

Honorable Petrece B. Tucker  
United States District Court  
Eastern District of Pennsylvania  
United States Courthouse  
Independence Mall West  
601 Market Street, Room 6614  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Re: Ralph Trent Stokes  
Civil Docket No. 2:04-cv-00767

Dear Judge Tucker:

On November 21, 2008, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court issued an opinion, affirming the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas' denial of Mr. Stokes' petition for post-conviction relief. Pursuant to 42 Pa.C.S. § 9711(i), the Pennsylvania Supreme Court Prothonotary transmitted the record of post-conviction proceedings to the Office of General Counsel, which received that record on March 9, 2009

In capital cases, the Governor is required by law to issue an execution warrant within 90 days of the Office of General Counsel's receipt of such a record, unless a pardon or commutation has been issued. See 61 P.S. § 3002(a). Because Mr. Stokes has not been pardoned or his sentence commuted, the Governor must issue a warrant in Mr. Stokes' case on or before June 7, 2009, the 90-day deadline. Accordingly, Governor Rendell issued a warrant today, scheduling Mr. Stokes' execution for July 30, 2009. A copy of the warrant is enclosed for your information.

We realize that on February 24, 2004, you granted Mr. Stokes a stay of execution, pending completion of habeas corpus proceedings or until further order of the Court. I assure you that as long as the stay is in effect on July 30, 2009, the scheduled day of execution, your stay order will of course be honored and the execution will not be carried out. To that end, please let our office know if there is any change in the status of your order.

Honorable Petrece B. Tucker  
June 2, 2009  
Page 2

Thank you for your assistance. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Very truly yours,



Alison Taylor  
Deputy General Counsel

Enclosure

cc: Honorable Lynne Abraham  
District attorney  
Philadelphia County District Attorney's Office

Amy Zapp, Esq.  
Office of Attorney General  
Capital Litigation Unit

Helen A. Marino  
Assistant Federal Defender  
Federal Community Defender Office for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania

Suzanne N. Hueston  
Chief Counsel  
Department of Corrections

Superintendent Louis S. Folino  
State Correctional Institution - Greene

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE EASTERN DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA

RALPH TRENT STOKES,

Petitioner,

v.

JEFFREY BEARD, Commissioner,  
Pennsylvania Department of Corrections;  
LOUIS B. FOLINO, Superintendent of the  
State Correctional Institution at Greene; and  
FRANK TENNIS, Acting Superintendent of  
the State Correctional Institution at  
Rockview,

Respondents.

CIVIL ACTION

No. 2004 - 767

THIS IS A CAPITAL CASE.

**FILED**

FEB 24 2004

MICHAEL E. KUNZ, Clerk  
By \_\_\_\_\_ Dep. Clerk

ORDER

AND NOW, this 24<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2004, upon consideration of Petitioner's Motion for Appointment of Federal Habeas Corpus Counsel Under 21 U.S.C. § 348(q), a Stay of Execution, and Leave to Proceed in Forma Pauperis; and Respondents' position with regard to these applications, it hereby ORDERED:

1. Petitioner's Motion is granted;
2. The Capital Habeas Corpus Unit of the Federal Court Division of the Defender Association of Philadelphia is appointed pursuant to 21 U.S.C. § 348(q)(4)(B) to represent Petitioner in his to-be-filed habeas corpus petition;
3. In view of the Governor's death warrant-signing policy, and the imminence of the issuance of a warrant, Petitioner's execution is stayed pending completion of habeas corpus proceedings or until further order of this Court; and

**ENTERED**  
FEB 24 2004  
CLERK OF COURT

4. Petitioner's counsel is granted 120 days to file a Petition for Writ of Habeas

Corpus.

Rebecca B. Tucker  
J.



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL  
333 MARKET STREET, 17TH FLOOR  
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17101  
(717) 783-6563

June 2, 2009

**RE: NOTICE OF STAY OF EXECUTION**

Dear Ms. Charpentier:

Please be advised that on February 24, 2004, the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania issued an order staying the execution of Ralph Trent Stokes pending completion of habeas corpus proceedings or until further order of the Court. Mr. Stokes' execution had been scheduled for July 30, 2009. A copy of the order is enclosed for your information.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alison Taylor".

Alison Taylor  
Deputy General Counsel

Enclosure



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS  
P. O. BOX 598  
CAMP HILL, PENNSYLVANIA 17001-0598

OFFICE OF THE  
SECRETARY OF CORRECTIONS

**DATE:** June 2, 2009

**SUBJECT:** STAY OF EXECUTION

**TO:** Executive Deputy Secretary William Sprenkle  
Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore  
Deputy Secretary Barry Johnson  
Deputy Secretary David Wakefield  
Chief Counsel Suzanne Hueston  
Deputy Chief Counsel Randall Sears  
Press Secretary Susan McNaughton  
Director Kathleen Zwierzyna, Bureau of Standards and Security  
Superintendent Louis Folino, SCI Greene (VIA FAX)  
Superintendent Frank Tennis, SCI-Rockview (VIA FAX)  
Commissioner Frank E. Pawlowski, PSP (VIA FAX)  
PBPP Victim Advocate, Carol Lavery (VIA FAX)  
Jennifer Hendricks, Office of Population Management  
Office of Professional Responsibility, Director James Barnacle (VIA FAX)




**FROM:**   
Jeffrey A. Beard, Ph.D.  
Secretary of Corrections

On February 24, 2004, a Stay of Execution was granted for inmate RALPH T. STOKES, AY-9034, whose execution was scheduled to be carried out on July 30, 2009. Attached is a copy of the stay.

If you require additional information, please call Deputy Chief Counsel Randall Sears at (717) 731-0444.

JAB/dk

Attachment

 print  e-mail  link

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## PA Governor Rendell Signs Execution Warrants for Junious Diggs and Ralph Trent Stokes

HARRISBURG, Pa., June 3 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ — Governor Edward G. Rendell has signed execution warrants for Junious Diggs, 33, who shot his neighbor to death in Philadelphia in 2002; and Ralph Trent Stokes, 46, who killed three during a robbery of a Philadelphia restaurant in 1982.

In March 2002, Diggs entered 31-year-old Marion Johnetta Bryant's home and shot her ten times as Bryant's 13-year-old daughter looked on. In 2004, a jury convicted Diggs of first-degree murder and sentenced him to death. The state Supreme Court affirmed that judgment in June 2008 and denied reargument in August 2008. The U.S. Supreme Court declined to hear Diggs' appeal in March 2009.

In March 1982, Stokes and an accomplice held up a restaurant where he had worked previously, and Stokes shot the restaurant's manager, an employee, and a mailman who happened upon the scene. A jury found Stokes guilty of robbery, weapons possession, conspiracy, and three counts of first-degree murder in July 1983 and sentenced him to death for each of the three murder counts. In October 1992, the state Supreme Court affirmed the death sentences. Stokes made two appeals for relief under the state's Post Conviction Relief Act, but state courts denied relief.

Diggs' execution by lethal injection is set for July 28, and Stokes' is set for July 30. Both are held at the State Correctional Institution at Greene.

With these latest warrants signed on June 2, Governor Rendell has now signed 90 death warrants.

*The Rendell administration is committed to creating a first-rate public education system, protecting our most vulnerable citizens and continuing economic investment to support our communities and businesses. To find out more about Governor Rendell's initiatives and to sign up for his newsletter, visit [www.governor.state.pa.us](http://www.governor.state.pa.us).*

CONTACT:  
Chuck Ardo  
717-783-1116

SOURCE Pennsylvania Office of the Governor

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 back to top

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