

Films on the Death Penalty/Executions/Flawed Prison & Law Systems

Dead Man Walking – (1995) the life of a man after he has been sentenced to death until his execution

The Thin Blue Line – (1988) film regarding the wrongful conviction of Randall Dale Adams in Texas

Lessons Before Dying – in the 1940's South, an African-American is wrongly accused of the killing a white store owner.

The Life of David Gale – a 2003 movie about an anti-capital punishment activist and professor of philosophy who find finds himself on death row

Last Dance – (1996) a young lawyer is assigned to the clemency case of a woman convicted of first degree murder and sentenced to death.

Shawshank Redemption – 1994 fictional account of a man's "adjustment" to incarceration, based on Stephen King's novel

Capote – (2005) Truman Capote, during his research for his book *In Cold Blood*, an account of the murder of a Kansas family, the writer develops a close relationship with Perry Smith, one of the killers.

Aileen Wuornos: The Selling of a Serial Killer – 1994 documentary about media exploitation, police corruption, and some very ineffective assistance of counsel

The Green Mile – (1999) the film portrays Depression-era death row guards whose moral dilemma is fueled by their discovery that one of their prisoners has a special gift

I am a Fugitive From a Chain Gang – influential 1932 movie about chain gang brutality in Georgia

Brubaker – 1980 film about a reform-minded prison warden of a corrupt and brutal prison

The Executioner's Song – (1982) based on a true story, an unstable ex-com committed two cruel and senseless murders that resulted in his execution by firing squad. He was the first man executed since the government reinstated the death penalty in 1976.

Let Him Have It - (1991) a true-life drama about a simple-minded British teenager who befriends a group of gangsters, becomes implicated in the murder of a policeman, and ends up on death row.

Monster's Ball – (2001) A racist prison guard falls in love with the African-American wife of an executed prisoner.

The Widow of St. Pierre – (2001) (Written in French, with English subtitles)

In 1850 on the small, isolated Canadian island of Saint Pierre, a sailor, Neel Auguste, murders a man and receives the death penalty after a quick trial. Saint Pierre lacks the necessary tools for an execution, however, so while they wait for a guillotine to arrive from Paris, Neel Auguste moves into the house of the island's army captain. The captain's wife becomes fascinated by the prisoner, and she initially lets him do small jobs around the house, but Neel soon becomes an indispensable presence in her life and in the community. He repairs cottages and plants flowers, and his eagerness to do good makes him one of the most popular residents of the island. When the guillotine finally arrives, the army captain defies orders and calls off the execution, but his merciful act is regarded as seditious by the French government, and he receives his own death sentence.

A Case of Reasonable Doubt?: The Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal - (1997 documentary)

In this incendiary documentary, convicted cop killer Mumia Abu-Jamal and his case--along with the case's inconsistencies--are examined in detail. Since his incarceration in 1981, Abu-Jamal has become an author and NPR journalist, never offering an explanation of the events leading to his conviction, only insisting on his innocence.

The Farm: Angola, USA – (1998) documentary about Angola prison.

A Letter From Death Row – (1998)

A psychological thriller that takes you through the mind of convicted killer, Michael Raine and his experiences on death row. Was he guilty of killing his girlfriend or was he a victim of a conspiracy to frame him for a crime he didn't commit?

Deadline - The story begins with a group of Northwestern University journalism students uncovering evidence proving that a man sentenced to death was innocent. The film follows the 2002 clemency hearings ordered by Governor Ryan, visits inmates affected by the commutation and relates heartbreaking horror stories. One man on death row was so mentally ill that he didn't understand the meaning of the word execution (he announced that he was leaving part of his last meal so he could eat it later) but was executed anyway.