



South Carolina Department of Corrections

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For immediate release

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COLUMBIA, S.C. – The S.C. Department of Corrections received an order of execution for Death Row inmate Stephen Corey Bryant today for the death of Willard Tietjen of Sumter.

The order was served on inmate Bryant this morning. Bryant's execution date will be Nov. 14, which is set by law for four Fridays from the date the department receives the order.

By law, Bryant will be asked to elect his method of execution 14 days before execution day. Methods prescribed by statute are lethal injection, the electric chair and firing squad.

Bryant was sentenced to death for an eight-day Sumter County crime spree in October 2004. He murdered three people – Willard Tietjen, 62; Clifton Gainey, 36; and Christopher Burgess, 35. He also shot and wounded a fourth man.

During that time, Bryant gained access to isolated, rural homes by faking car trouble, then committed burglaries and brutal attacks. In Tietjen's case, Bryant shot him nine times, burned his face and eyes with a cigarette and wrote "catch me if you can" on the wall in the victim's blood. He also answered telephone calls from Tietjen's family telling them Tietjen was dead.

During his sentencing hearing, he attacked and seriously injured one correctional officer and threatened another.

He pled guilty to three counts of murder, two counts of first-degree burglary, two counts of assault and battery with intent to kill, second-degree burglary, second-degree arson, armed robbery, possession of a stolen handgun, and threatening the life of a public employee.

He was sentenced to death for Tietjen's murder.