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50 Years After Landmark Death Penalty Case, Supreme Court's Ruling Continues To Guide Execution Debate

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The state of Oklahoma [put James Coddington to death](#) on Aug. 25, 2022, for the 1997 murder of a 73-year-old friend who refused to give him money to buy drugs.

It marks the beginning of a busy period at the Oklahoma State Penitentiary's execution chamber. Last month, the [state announced plans](#) to carry out the death sentence of 25 people over the next couple of years.

As a scholar who has long [followed the capital punishment debate](#) in the U.S., I know that Oklahoma's plan runs against the grain of the death penalty's recent history. Over the past several years both the number of death sentences imposed and executions carried out across the U.S. [has declined sharply](#).