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## Snohomish County death penalty cases under current law

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Herald file photo / 1982

Charles Rodman Campbell was hanged in 1994.



Herald file

Charles Ben Finch was sentenced to die in 1994. His sentence was later overturned.



Herald file photo / April 25, 1997

Richard Mathew Clark leaves the courtroom after being sentenced to die.



Herald file photo

Condemned murderer James Elledge hides his face by hanging his head as he is led through a Snohomish County Courthouse. Elledge died by lethal injection in 2001.



Herald file photo / 2003

Barbara Opel appears in court on April 7, 2003. A jury opted for a life sentence rather than the death penalty for Opel.



Genna Martin / The Herald

Byron Scherf stands with his lawyers after his death penalty sentencing is read by Judge George Appel in May 2013 in Snohomish County Superior Court.

### Herald Staff

The cases of six convicted murderers show how the death penalty played out in Snohomish County since the state's current capital punishment law was approved in 1981:

- **Charles Rodman Campbell** was hanged in 1994 for the throat slashing murders of two women and a girl near Clearview in 1982. Campbell raped one of the women about a decade before the killings. She had testified against him, sending him to prison for the sexual assault.
- **Charles Ben Finch** was sentenced to die for the 1994 shootings of a sheriff's sergeant and a blind man. His sentence was tossed out five years later when judges ruled that jurors should not have seen him in handcuffs and a nylon hobble. At the conclusion of his second trial in 2000, Finch jumped from an upper tier at the county jail, injuring his spine. He was in a coma when a hung jury resulted in him being [sentenced to life](#) in prison. Finch regained consciousness but died from his injuries a few weeks later.
- **Richard Mathew Clark** was sentenced to die for the 1995 murder of 7-year-old Roxanne Doll, but the sentence was overturned on appeal because jurors were told too much about his past crimes. Faced with a new trial, prosecutors in 2006 [agreed not to seek death](#) for Clark in exchange for his admission that he'd killed the girl. He's now serving a life sentence and has waived all appeals. Roxanne's family supported the outcome.
- **James Homer Elledge** died by lethal injection in 2001. He was convicted of the 1998 stabbing and strangulation of a woman at a Lynnwood church. The former convict, who was working as a janitor, requested the death penalty and directed his attorney not to fight to keep him alive.
- **Barbara Marie Opel** faced a potential death sentence after being convicted of aggravated murder for recruiting her own daughter and several other teens to kill her landlord in 2001. A [jury in 2003](#) opted instead to sentence Opel to life in prison, where she [remains](#).

- **Byron Scherf** was sentenced to die last year for the 2011 killing of corrections officer Jayme Biendl in the prison chapel at the state reformatory in Monroe. Already serving life, the repeat rapist has [just begun](#) his appeals, starting with a mandatory review by the state Supreme Court of his conviction and sentence. He is the only person currently under a death sentence for a crime in Snohomish County.

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