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NOTE

THE STORY OF THE LAST MEAL

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I. INTRODUCTION

When you hear about an inmate who is on death row about to be executed, what comes to mind? Maybe it is the lethal injection drug cocktail, a gurney in the shape of a cross, a gas chamber, or the electric chair. However, there is another thing that the general public and media are always interested to hear about and report on when talking about an execution: the inmate's last meal. This fascination with last meals is not only present in the United States, but also in Japan. In 2018, Tokyo opened a two-week pop-up restaurant called Ningen, which served last meals of infamous killers like Gary Mark Gilmore, John Wayne Gacy, and Joseph

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Paul Jernigan.¹ Why? Why does the public care so much about what a condemned inmate decided to eat as his or her last meal?

The first question is where did this concept of a “last meal” come from? Though no one has been able to pinpoint exactly how the tradition originated, its roots can be found in different parts of history. Since then, it has become one of the most publicized aspects associated with an execution. We hear about infamous inmates’ last meals, such as Oklahoma City Bomber, Timothy McVeigh, eating two pints of mint chocolate chip ice cream; notorious serial killer, Ted Bundy, declining a last meal and receiving steak and eggs as a substitution; or John Wayne Gacy, requesting shrimp, KFC chicken, fries, and strawberries.² Is food so special to us that we feel inclined to know what these murderers ate for their last meal?

Why do horrible killers even get a last meal? One idea is that “[t]he last meal is not . . . offered as a means of connection[,] but food offered as a way to simulate concern and perhaps to disarm the offender, in effect serving as a distraction from the killing to come.”³ Perhaps that is why some inmates on death row—when given the chance to pick a last meal—choose items of comfort to them, items with a special meaning that take them back to a happier time in their lives, items that are most delicious to them, or items of spiritual significance. When an inmate declines a last meal, it could potentially be because they feel remorse, guilt, or merely because they just would not have the strength to eat, knowing they are about to be executed within a matter of hours.

The “last meal” is a ritual that is left up to each death penalty state because “[c]urrently, there is neither a recognized [c]onstitutional right to a last meal, nor is there a nationally uniform administrative policy.”⁴ Thus, each state has enacted its own policies and procedures for serving a last meal to an inmate on death row. However, all states seem to have an

1. Anay Katyal, *A Restaurant in Tokyo is Serving the Last Meals of Famous Death Row Inmates*, INSIDER (Oct. 26, 2018, 4:55 PM), <https://www.insider.com/tokyo-restaurant-serves-last-meals-death-row-inmates-2018-10#:~:text=The%20installation%2C%20called%20the%20Ningen%20Restaurant%20%E2%80%94%20or,last%20meals%20requested%20by%20famous%20death%20row%20inmates>.

2. Dina Spector, *Famous Last Meals: What Notorious Criminals Ate Before They Were Executed*, BUS. INSIDER (Oct. 21, 2011, 11:50 PM), <https://www.businessinsider.com/famous-last-meal-2011-10>.

3. Robert Johnson, *Reflections on the Death Penalty: Human Rights, Human Dignity, and Dehumanization in the Death House*, 13 SEATTLE J. SOC. JUST. 583, 592 (2014).

4. Sarah L. Gerwig-Moore et al., *Cold (Comfort?) Food: The Significance of Last Meal Rituals in the United States*, 3 BRIT. J. AM. LEGAL STUD. 409, 438 (2014).

unwritten rule that an inmate cannot receive alcohol or any illegal substance as part of the last meal.

Throughout writing this Note, the author had the pleasure of interviewing former Texas Death Row Chef, Brian D. Price. From February 26, 1991, to June 26, 2001, Chef Price prepared last meals for those awaiting execution at the “Walls Unit,” located in Huntsville, Texas, which is where Texas death row inmates are executed.⁵ During his time as the Texas death row chef, Price prepared nearly 200 last meals.⁶ This Note will talk about the conversations Chef Price and the author had about his book, *Meals to Die For*, which he began writing while he was both an inmate and the chef at the Walls Unit. His book details the stories of every inmate he prepared a last meal for, including the crimes they were accused and convicted of, their last meal request, what they actually received for their last meal, what their last words were, and, for some inmates, a deeper look into the day of administering their last meal.⁷ Chef Price reflected on his opinions about the last meal and why he believes the last meal ritual should continue in the future.⁸

In addition to having a phone interview with Chef Price, ten days later the author had the incredible opportunity to meet Chef Price at the Texas Prison Museum in Huntsville, Texas. At the museum, Chef Price introduced the author to his former warden, Jim Willett, who is now the Museum’s researcher, and another former warden, David Stacks, who is the current Director at the Texas Prison Museum.⁹ As a former Deputy Director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Mr. Stacks was very knowledgeable about the history behind executions in not only Texas, but in the United States.¹⁰ The museum has a glass case with a couple of death row inmates’ handwritten last meal requests, which was chilling to see.

After touring the Texas Prison Museum, Chef Price and the author drove around the outside of the Walls Unit. Chef Price showed the author where the execution chamber was, the room that the families of the inmate and victim wait in prior to the execution, the pathway where inmates are released after serving their sentences, and the building where he prepared

5. BRIAN D. PRICE, *MEALS TO DIE FOR* 143 (2007).

6. *Id.* at 13.

7. *Id.* at 13-15.

8. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, Former Texas Death Row Chef (Mar. 1, 2022).

9. *Meet Our Staff*, TEX. PRISON MUSEUM, <https://www.txprisonmuseum.org/copy-of-staff> (last visited Apr. 4, 2022).

10. *Id.*

inmates' last meals. Next, Chef Price and the author traveled down the road to the Captain Joe Byrd Cemetery, which is considered to be "the nation's largest prison graveyard."¹¹ This is where inmates who are executed are buried when their families do not claim them.¹²

While Chef Price, Mr. Willett, Mr. Stacks, and the general public know that a last meal exists for an inmate and is often reported in the media prior to an execution, no one is quite sure where this ritual came from. Thus, this Note begins with the history behind the last meal ritual. Second, this Note analyzes the states that currently have the death penalty and their procedures regarding requesting and giving a last meal to an inmate. Third, this Note details the reasons for and against administering a last meal to an inmate. Finally, this Note will predict what the future holds for the last meal ritual in the United States.

II. HISTORY OF THE LAST MEAL AROUND THE WORLD

There are many theories about how the last meal ritual originated in the United States and around the world. As one commentator has noted, "the last meal may have begun in ancient Greece, and in Rome gladiators were fed with a . . . last meal, the *coena libera*, the night before their date in the Colosseum."¹³ Much of the history shows how the last meal has ties to religion and superstition. Other history illustrates a focus upon the concepts of "forgiveness, salvation, . . . [and] marking the transition from living to dead."¹⁴

Throughout the Middle Ages, as people convicted of crimes were scheduled for execution, the last meal took on additional significance as executioners—who were often religious or superstitious—did not want to be haunted by the spirits of the executed.¹⁵ Executioners believed that if a condemned prisoner was "well-fed" prior to being executed, the ghost of

11. Sonia Smith, *The Story Behind the Nation's Largest Prison Graveyard*, TEX. MONTHLY (Jan. 21, 2013), <https://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/the-story-behind-the-nations-largest-prison-graveyard/>.

12. Interview with Brian D. Price, Former Texas Death Row Chef, in Huntsville, Tex. (Mar. 11, 2022).

13. Brent Cunningham, *Last Meals*, LAPHAM'S Q., <https://www.laphamsquarterly.org/death/last-meals> (last visited Jan. 20, 2022).

14. *Id.*

15. Robert Walsh, *The History of the Last Meal – A Final Compassionate Act or an Undeserved Reward?*, HIST. IS NOW MAG. (May 24, 2014), <http://www.historyisnowmagazine.com/blog/2014/5/24/the-history-of-the-last-meal-a-final-compassionate-act-or-an-undeserved-reward#.YeGTO9HMI2w=>.

the prisoner would not come back to haunt them, as this was the fear of many executioners.¹⁶ However, “[i]f the meals were poor, many believed prisoners would return as malevolent spirits bent on tormenting those involved in their deaths.”¹⁷ In Thailand, executioners would prepare the favorite foods of those about to be executed and then present the meal to the monks, which they believed would allow them to escape bad karma due to being involved in the execution process.¹⁸

In the Aztec culture, prior to execution, prisoners would indulge in feasts, and once the condemned were executed, their bodies would be put in a corn stew. The stew was called “*tlacatlolli*,” and it was then served at a feast with the executed person’s family and the people who took part in the execution. This was done so that the living would not be haunted by those who were executed.¹⁹

In addition to superstition, religion has played a huge role in influencing the last meal ritual. “A mental image of Christ’s Last Supper is often referenced as a parallel to a modern-day convict choosing their final [meal]. It also symbolizes a prisoner making peace with their executioners, breaking bread with them in the same way that Christ invited Judas Iscariot to the Last Supper.”²⁰ The most likely theory for how the tradition of last meals began in the United States seems to be when the Puritans of Massachusetts held feasts with the condemned that were intended to resemble the Last Supper.²¹

Similarly, in Bavaria, the last meal ritual was named “St. John’s Blessing,” after Saint John the Baptist, who forgave those who turned against him.²² This ritual consisted of allowing the prisoner a morning drink in the cell with the person who was about to execute them.²³

The concepts of forgiveness and acceptance shaped the last meal ritual around the world, dating back to the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries.²⁴ Prisoners were told to ask for forgiveness and in return they

16. *Id.*

17. *Id.*

18. Bigert & Bergstrom, *The Last Supper*, VIMEO (Apr. 15, 2010, 5:58 PM), <https://vimeo.com/10964671>.

19. See Cunningham, *supra* note 13.

20. Walsh, *supra* note 15.

21. See Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4, at 418.

22. See Cunningham, *supra* note 13.

23. See *id.*

24. See *id.*

would receive a roasted goose for their last meal.²⁵ The German meal, known as the “Hangman’s Meal” or “*Henkers Mahlzeit*,” was where prisoners were allowed one final meal, which included a huge party outside the prison with the prisoner, the prisoner’s friends, the prisoner’s family, a priest, local officials, and the judge.²⁶ “[T]he ritual of the Hangman’s Meal . . . reinforced the idea that the impending execution was not a personal vendetta, but that the executioner was acting impartially[,] as an employee of the Crown[,] and was simply enforcing the laws of the land.”²⁷ In London, the night prior to an execution, condemned prisoners were allowed to have one final get together outside the prison, and on the way to the execution, the prisoner would be allowed to stop at a pub for one final “great bowl of ale to drink at their pleasure, as their last refreshment in life.”²⁸

In some cultures, the last meal ritual was seen as part of the transition from life to death.²⁹ In Egypt, a skeleton was brought around before the last meal to remind the condemned of their mortality.³⁰ “The ancient Egyptians painted images of food on the walls of tombs, so that if the deceased’s ancestors ever failed in their duty to make offerings, his soul would still be nourished and comforted.”³¹ During times of war in Japan, prior to a prisoner going before a firing squad, they were given tobacco instead of food, in order to calm them down and come to terms with what was about to happen.³²

III. THE LAST MEAL’S EVOLUTION IN THE UNITED STATES

It seems unclear how exactly the last meal ritual developed in the United States. However, according to historians on American prison culture, it appears that the last meal ritual began in the United States between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.³³

25. See Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4, at 417.

26. Bigert & Bergstrom, *supra* note 18; Cunningham, *supra* note 13.

27. Lenny Flank, *Last Meal: A Gustatory History of the Death Penalty*, HIDDEN HIST. (Aug. 25, 2015), <https://lflank.wordpress.com/2015/08/25/last-meal-a-gustatory-history-of-the-death-penalty/#:~:text=The%20custom%20of%20a%20Last%20Meal%20for%20condemned,King%20or%20stealing%20a%20chicken%2C%20or%20even%20witchcraft>.

28. Cunningham, *supra* note 13.

29. See *id.*

30. See Bigert & Bergstrom, *supra* note 18.

31. Cunningham, *supra* note 13.

32. See Bigert & Bergstrom, *supra* note 18.

33. See Cunningham, *supra* note 13.

In America, many last meals reflect tradition and are seen as symbolizing rebirth and peace. Victor Feguer was executed in Iowa in 1963; however, prior to being executed, Feguer asked for a single olive as his last meal and that the olive pit be placed in his shirt pocket when he was buried.³⁴ An olive pit is a symbol of rebirth, and it is believed that Feguer told the guards he hoped an olive tree would sprout from his grave.

³⁵ This seemed to resonate with Robert Buell. In 2002, he asked for a single black unpitted olive as his last meal to pay respect to Victor Feguer.

³⁶ In 1990, James Edward Smith requested dirt from the grave he would be buried in.³⁷ Smith said that he “wanted to use the dirt to mark his body so his spirit could move on.”³⁸ Unfortunately for Smith, his request for dirt was substituted with yogurt.³⁹ Rickey Ray Rector was executed in Arkansas in 1992, and after he ate the majority of his last meal—consisting of fried chicken, steak, and Kool-Aid—he had a slice of pecan pie left and told the guards that he was “saving it for later.”⁴⁰ He never got the chance to finish his slice of pie, since he was executed hours later.

At the time of Danny Ray Harris’s execution in Texas in 1993, he had accepted Christ and made his “last meal” request of “God’s saving grace, love, truth, peace, and freedom.”⁴¹ Carlos Santana, who was executed at the Walls Unit in Texas in 1993, requested, “[j]ustice, temperance, with mercy” as his last meal.⁴² In 2000, Odell Barnes, Jr., who maintained his innocence as he was executed at the Walls Unit, requested “[j]ustice,

34. Alema Ljuca, *Nine Bizarre Last Meal Requests of Death Row Prisoners*, HIST. OF YESTERDAY (Oct. 4, 2021), <https://historyofyesterday.com/9-bizarre-last-meal-requests-of-death-row-prisoners-c0efaea50eab>.

35. *Id.*

36. *John Waters and Meals to Die For*, BLACKBOOK (June 27, 2008), <https://blackbookmag.com/archive/john-waters-and-meals-to-die-for/>.

37. Luke Kenton, *Final Feast: Inside Death Row Inmates’ Last Meals From One Olive to Lump of Dirt as Carl Wayne Buntion is Executed for Killing Cop*, U.S. SUN (Apr. 21, 2022, 7:00 PM), <https://www.the-sun.com/news/3951842/death-row-last-meals-john-grant-julius-jones-execution/>.

38. *Id.*

39. *Id.*

40. *Weird Last Meals Series: Rickey Ray Rector*, I CAN’T BELIEVE IT’S NONFICTION (Dec. 10, 2019), <https://icantbelieveitsnonfiction.com/2019/12/10/weird-last-meals-series-3/#:~:text=Ricky%E2%80%99s%20last%20meal%20was%20fried%20chicken%2C%20steak%20and,schedule%20execution%2C%20lethal%20injection%20had%20become%20the%20standard>.

41. PRICE, *supra* note 5, at 171.

42. *Id.* at 163.

equality, and world peace” as his last meal request.⁴³

Additionally, a last meal can reflect a person’s religion. “Over the years, new traditions surrounding a last meal emerged, sometimes even incorporating a final [Holy] Communion.”⁴⁴ In 1998, Jonathan Wayne Nobles of Texas requested the Eucharist as his last meal.⁴⁵ When giving his last statement, he quoted Bible verse 1 Corinthians 12:31B - 13:13 (NIV), and as he was executed, he sang Silent Night.⁴⁶ In the same year in North Carolina, Ricky Lee Sanderson declined a last meal because he had strong views on abortion, since he had become deeply religious on death row.⁴⁷ Sanderson said he declined his last meal “because I have very strong convictions about abortion and the 33 million babies that have been aborted in this country. Those babies never got a first meal, and that’s why I didn’t take the last in their memory.”⁴⁸ In Utah in 2010, Ronnie Lee Gardner chose to consume his last meal 48 hours before facing the firing squad because he “wanted to fast for ‘spiritual reasons.’”⁴⁹

Last meal requests can also include acts of kindness before an inmate is executed. In 1997, Robert Madden of Texas asked that his last meal be given to a homeless person.⁵⁰ Chef Price noted that this request was not granted.⁵¹ Similarly, in 2007, Philip Workman asked that his last meal of a vegetarian pizza be given to the homeless.⁵² His request was also

43. *Id.* at 325.

44. Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4, at 417.

45. *See* PRICE, *supra* note 5, at 248.

46. *See id.* at 248; Steve Earle, *Death in Texas*, GUARDIAN (Jan. 21, 2001, 9:08 PM), <https://www.theguardian.com/theguardian/2001/jan/22/features11.g2?msclkiid=5893d193b36111ecbe4934f8e2d96a97>.

47. Neal Auch, *The Last Supper: Ricky Lee Sanderson* (Dec. 12, 2019), <https://nealauch.com/blog/2019/12/10/the-last-supper-ricky-lee-sanderson?msclkiid=64266019b36211ec9e5b3dcda4882481>.

48. Bill Dunn, *Death Penalty Brings Last Words, Last Meals*, FREEDOM FROM RELIGION FOUND. (Aug. 2010), <https://ffrf.org/publications/freethought-today/item/13553-death-penalty-brings-last-words-last-meals#:~:text=Ricky%20Lee%20Sanderson%20declined%20a%20last%20meal%20in,I%20didn%E2%80%99t%20take%20the%20last%20in%20their%20memory.%E2%80%9D?msclkiid=64260d09b36211ecb63473f1184f373d>.

49. *Id.*

50. *See* PRICE, *supra* note 5, at 62.

51. Chef Price did acknowledge that he has thought about this last meal request and is going to take it upon himself to fulfill it. *See* Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

52. Mara Bovsun, *Philip Ray Workman’s Last Request*, N. Y. DAILY NEWS (Aug. 18, 2019, 6:00 AM), <https://www.nydailynews.com/news/crime/ny-philip-ray-workman-justice-story-20190818-gdxkm7vssvhvno6dj5tvr3xbqa->

denied.⁵³ Once Workman's request was reported in the media, however, numerous vegetarian pizzas were donated to the Nashville homeless shelters by the public.⁵⁴ Even though prison officials did not fulfill Workman's request before he died, society took humanity into its own hands.

Thus, these last meal requests show that even though the American last meal ritual has become more constrained than in the past, the ritual continues. Further, inmates' choices seem to have historical parallels.

IV. LAST MEAL PROCEDURES IN THE UNITED STATES⁵⁵

In the United States, there are currently twenty-four states that have the death penalty.⁵⁶ These states include: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.⁵⁷ A "last meal" is not required by any binding federal law, and each state has its own procedures for administering a death row inmate's last meal.⁵⁸ As one commentator has noted, "[p]olicy decisions about last meal provisions are made most directly by correctional administrators themselves with the result that execution protocols are likely to answer to operational needs."⁵⁹ Each American state that currently has the death penalty will now be analyzed based upon its (known) procedures for administering the last meal.

In Alabama, the last meal is given the day of the execution, and an inmate can request anything that can be prepared from what is in the prison kitchen.⁶⁰ Alabama's last execution was on January 27, 2022, when the

story.html?msclkid=1a9fe0b7b35b11eca797bc7dc0f1f619.

53. *Id.*

54. *Id.*

55. All information in this section is updated as of Feb. 18th 2022.

56. *State & Federal Info.: State by State: States With and Without the Death Penalty 2021*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/state-and-federal-info/state-by-state> (last visited Jan. 25, 2022).

57. *Id.*

58. See Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4.

59. *Id.* at 427.

60. *This is How Alabama Executes Inmates: Court Releases Details on Drugs, Process*, MONTGOMERY REAL-TIME NEWS (Oct. 17, 2019, 4:18 PM), <https://www.al.com/news/montgomery/2019/10/alabama-execution-protocol-details-on-drugs-process.html>.

state executed Matthew Reeves.⁶¹ Reeves declined breakfast, lunch, and a last meal.⁶²

In Arizona, in order to request a last meal, inmates must fill out a form fourteen days before their execution date.⁶³ The last meal is served by 7:00 p.m. the night before the execution, and reasonable efforts are made to accommodate the inmate's meal request.⁶⁴ Joseph Wood was the last person executed in Arizona, on July 23, 2014, and his "last meal" was two cookies that were served as a side to the regular prison meal that night.⁶⁵

In Arkansas, last meals are prepared in the prison kitchen or are taken from the kitchen commissary pantry.⁶⁶ Arkansas's last executions were in 2017, when four men were all executed within seven days of each other.⁶⁷ Ledell Lee was executed on April 20, 2017, and he chose Holy Communion as a substitute for his last meal.⁶⁸ Four days later, Jack Jones and Marcel Williams were executed on the same day.⁶⁹ Jones's last meal consisted of three chicken breasts, potatoes, sliced cheese, beef jerky, three Butterfinger bars, tartar sauce, two cups of punch, and a chocolate shake with Butterfinger candy.⁷⁰ Marcel Williams's last meal was three pieces of fried chicken, fried potato wedges with ketchup, nachos with chili cheese sauce, jalapenos, banana pudding, ice cream and two Mountain Dews.⁷¹ Arkansas's most recent execution was three days later, on April

61. See *Executions: Execution List 2022*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., (Oct. 26, 2022), <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/2022>.

62. Brittney Donovan, *Matthew Reeves' Death Row Poetry Written Weeks Before Execution as it's Revealed Disabled Inmate Refused Last Meal*, N.Y. TIMES POST (Jan. 28, 2022), <https://www.nytimespost.com/matthew-reeves-death-row-poetry-written-weeks-before-execution-as-its-revealed-disabled-inmate-refused-last-meal/>.

63. ARIZ. DEP'T OF CORR., REHAB. & REENTRY, DEP'T ORDER MANUAL, 4 (2017) https://documents.deathpenaltyinfo.org/ArizonaProtocol_03.10.2021.pdf.

64. *Id.* at 15.

65. *Convicted Murderer Joseph Wood Executed*, ARIZ. DEP'T OF CORR., REHAB. & REENTRY (July 24, 2014), <https://corrections.az.gov/article/convicted-murderer-joseph-wood-executed>.

66. Max Kutner, *Arkansas Executions: What the Prisoners Ate for Their Last Meals*, NEWSWEEK (Apr. 28, 2017, 12:43 PM), <https://www.newsweek.com/arkansas-death-row-inmates-last-meals-591767>.

67. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Arkansas&federal=No> (last visited Jan. 25, 2022).

68. See Kutner, *supra* note 65.

69. See *Execution Database*, *supra* note 66.

70. See Kutner, *supra* note 65.

71. See *id.*

27, 2017, when Kenneth Williams was executed.⁷² Kenneth Williams, too, chose to take Holy Communion rather than a last meal.⁷³

In Florida, last meals must cost no more than \$40 and must be purchased locally.⁷⁴ It is unclear when the last meal is generally given, but Robert Long, executed on May 23, 2019, ate his last meal of roast beef, bacon, french fries, and soda at 9:30 a.m.⁷⁵ The most recent man to be executed in Florida was Gary Bowles, on August 22, 2019.⁷⁶ His last meal was three cheeseburgers with french fries.⁷⁷

Georgia's procedures for administering the last meal are unclear. One of the last executions was that of Donnie Lance, on January 29, 2020.⁷⁸ Lance's last meal was two chili steak burgers, french fries, onion rings, mustard, ketchup, and soda.⁷⁹

In Idaho, inmates choosing a last meal are to select a meal from the regular prison menu, and the meal is served by 7:00 p.m. the night before the execution.⁸⁰ The last execution in Idaho was on June 12, 2012, when Richard Leavitt was put to death.⁸¹ Leavitt's last meal was baked chicken, french fries, and milk.⁸²

72. See *Execution Database*, *supra* note 66.

73. See Kutner, *supra* note 65.

74. *Death Row*, FLA. DEP'T OF CORR., <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/ci/deathrow.html> (last visited Apr. 12, 2022).

75. Tom Davidson, *Serial Killer Bobby Joe Long Requests Special Final Meal Ahead of Execution*, MIRROR ONLINE (May 23, 2019, 11:13 PM), <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/us-news/serial-killer-bobby-joe-long-16192224>.

76. Daniel Avery, *Last Words of Serial Killer Executed After Killing Six Gay Men: "You Don't Wake Up And Decide to Become a Serial Killer."* NEWSWEEK (Aug. 24, 2019, 9:50 PM), <https://www.newsweek.com/gary-bowles-serial-killer-executed-1456014#:~:text=Bowles%27%20final%20meal%20consisted%20of%20three%20cheese%20burgers%20and,on%20Thursday%2C%20August%2022%2C%202019.%20Florida%20State%20Prison%2FGetty>.

77. *Id.*

78. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Georgia&federal=No> (last visited Jan. 25, 2022).

79. *Lance Execution Media Advisory*, GA. DEP'T OF CORR. (Jan. 23, 2020), <http://gdc.georgia.gov/NewsRoom/PressReleases/lance-execution-media-advisory>.

80. *Rhoades' Last Meal*, IDAHO DEP'T OF CORR., https://www.idoc.idaho.gov/content/story/front_news/rhoades_last_meal (last visited Jan. 12, 2022).

81. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Idaho&federal=No> (last visited Jan. 25, 2022).

82. Todd Dvorak, *Richard Leavitt Execution Set Today*, IDAHO PRESS (June 12, 2012), <https://www.idahopress.com/news/local/richard-leavitt-execution-set-today/article>

In Indiana, the last meal is called “[the] special meal.”⁸³ When the special meal first began “[i]n Indiana, inmates [were] actually given their ‘last meal’ three days before their scheduled death since, as prison officials explained, [inmates] tended to lose their appetite on the day of their execution.”⁸⁴ Now, the special meal may be ordered from a local restaurant; however, it must be consumed within four hours. The inmate is allowed to share the meal with guests, and it is served 36-48 hours prior to the execution.⁸⁵ Matthew Wrinkles was the last person to be executed in Indiana, on December 11, 2009.⁸⁶ Wrinkles’s last meal was prime rib, a loaded baked potato, pork chops, steak fries, rolls, and two salads with ranch.⁸⁷

Kansas is the only state that currently has the death penalty but has not actually executed anyone in the modern era, i.e., since the death penalty was upheld as constitutional in 1976 in *Georgia v. Gregg*.⁸⁸

In Kentucky, the last meal procedures are unclear. However, Marco Chapman was the last person executed, on November 21, 2008, and he received a last meal of a 32-ounce sirloin steak, twenty butterfly shrimp, salad, iced tea, and a banana cream pie.⁸⁹

In Louisiana, when Burl Cain became the warden at the Louisiana State Penitentiary in 1995, he viewed the last meal as akin to the Last Supper. Cain would join the inmate when he or she ate the last meal and would even extend this invitation to other inmates and guests of the inmate’s choice.⁹⁰ Warden Burl Cain left the Louisiana Department of Corrections in 2015 and is now the head of the Mississippi Department of

[_c76ef884-b450-11e1-9ad2-001a4bcf887a.html](https://www.indystar.com/story/news/crime/2019/12/11/death-penalty-indiana-inmates-last-hours/2607497001/).

83. Vic Ryckaert, *This is What a Condemned Inmates’ Last Hours are Like on Indiana’s Death Row*, INDYSTAR (Dec. 11, 2019, 8:58 AM), <https://www.indystar.com/story/news/crime/2019/12/11/death-penalty-indiana-inmates-last-hours/2607497001/>.

84. Flank, *supra* note 27.

85. See Ryckaert, *supra* note 82.

86. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Indiana&federal=No> (last visited Jan. 25, 2022).

87. See Ryckaert, *supra* note 82.

88. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Kansas&federal=No> (last visited Jan. 25, 2022); *Gregg v. Georgia*, 428 U.S. 153 (1976).

89. *Kentucky Executes First Inmate In Nine Years*, CBS NEWS (Nov. 21, 2008, 11:14 PM), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/kentucky-executes-first-inmate-in-9-years/>.

90. See Walsh, *supra* note 15.

Corrections.⁹¹ Since Warden Cain is no longer in Louisiana, it is unclear what the last meal procedures are in the state now. However, the last Louisiana execution took place during his tenure, on January 7, 2010. This was the execution of Gerald Bordelon. One can assume that Warden Cain shared Bordelon's last meal with him, which was fried sac-a-lait, crawfish etouffee, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, and cookies.⁹²

In Mississippi, Warden Cain is currently the commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections.⁹³ Although the procedures for administering the last meal in Mississippi are unclear, perhaps Warden Cain still shares inmates' last meals, though this has not been publicly reported. Mississippi's last execution was of David Cox, on November 17, 2021, and his last meal was fried catfish, french fries, cornmeal (not defined in public reports), and banana pudding.⁹⁴

In Missouri, the last meal procedures are unclear; however, the last execution took place in 2021.⁹⁵ Ernest Johnson was the last person executed in Missouri, on October 5, 2021, and his last meal consisted of two bacon cheeseburgers, onion rings, a large pizza, and a strawberry milkshake.⁹⁶

In Montana, the only information known about the procedure of the last meal is that the inmate gets to choose.⁹⁷ Montana's last execution was

91. Bryn Stole, *Burl Cain, Storied Former Angola Warden, Hired to Head Mississippi Prison System*, NOLA.COM (May 20, 2020, 6:40 PM), https://www.nola.com/news/article_834bca42-9ad9-11ea-8f20-df863bb2fdd5.html.

92. *Gerald J. Bordelon*, OFF. OF CLARK CNTY. PROSECUTING ATT'Y, <https://clarkprosecutor.org/html/death/US/bordelon1191.htm> (last visited Jan. 25, 2022).

93. Matthew Clarke, *Former Angola Warden Burl Cain Appointed Head of Mississippi Prison System*, PRISON LEGAL NEWS (Nov. 1, 2020), <https://www.prisonlegalnews.org/news/2020/nov/1/former-angola-warden-burl-cain-appointed-head-mississippi-prison-system/>.

94. Leonie Chao-Fong, *David Neal Cox: Bizarre Last Meal Request of Death Row Inmate Who Killed Ex Wife*, MIRROR ONLINE (Nov. 17, 2021, 10:02 PM), <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/us-news/bizarre-last-meal-request-death-25485164>.

95. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Missouri&federal=No> (last visited on Jan. 25, 2022).

96. Jeanne Kuang & Luke Nozicka, *Missouri Executes Ernest Johnson, Killer of Three But Mentally Disabled, Supporters Say*, MSN (Oct. 6, 2021), <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/crime/missouri-executes-ernest-johnson-killer-of-3-but-mentally-disabled-supporters-say/ar-AApBcBl#:~:text=Johnson%27s%20last%20meal%20was%20two%20bacon%20cheese%20burgers%2C%20onion,was%20originally%20published%20October%205%2C%202021%206%3A28%20PM.>

97. See *David Thomas Dawson*, OFF. OF CLARK CNTY. PROSECUTING ATT'Y.,

of David Dawson and took place on August 11, 2006.⁹⁸ Dawson's last meal was two double cheeseburgers, two large servings of french fries, a half-gallon of vanilla fudge ripple ice cream, and two bottles of Dr. Pepper.⁹⁹

In Nebraska, the most recent execution was of Carey Moore and took place on August 14, 2018.¹⁰⁰ Although Nebraska's last meal procedures are unclear, it is known from Moore's last meal that he requested a Pizza Hut pizza, strawberry cheesecake, and a Pepsi, all of which the warden approved.¹⁰¹ Additionally, the warden let Moore eat his last meal with the prison pastor and his brother.¹⁰² While eating his last meal, Moore passed around pizza slices to the prison guards who were there.¹⁰³

In Nevada, the last meal has to be prepared at the prison, and outside food is prohibited.¹⁰⁴ Daryl Mack was the last person executed in Nevada, on April 26, 2006.¹⁰⁵ His last meal was a fish fillet sandwich, french fries, and a lemon-lime soda.¹⁰⁶

In North Carolina, the procedures for administering a last meal are unknown. However, the last four executions took place in 2006, and the four last meal requests have been reported.¹⁰⁷ Perrie Simpson was executed on January 20, 2006, and his last meal consisted of a McRib sandwich from McDonald's, a double cheeseburger from Wendy's,

<http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/death/US/dawson1039.htm> (last visited Jan. 28, 2022).

98. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Montana&federal=No>.

99. See *Gerald J. Bordelon*, *supra* note 96.

100. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Nebraska&federal=No>.

101. Taylor Barth, *Brother, Witnesses Recall Carey Dean Moore's Final Hours Before Execution*, KETV (Aug. 15, 2018, 12:23 AM), <https://www.ketv.com/article/brother-witnesses-recall-carey-dean-moores-final-hours-before-execution/22732373#>.

102. *Id.*

103. *Id.*

104. Brett McGinness, *Sixteen Last Meal Requests From Nevada's Death-Row Inmates*, RENO GAZETTE J. (Nov. 3, 2017, 7:45 AM), <https://www.rgj.com/story/news/crime/2017/11/03/16-last-meal-requests-nevadas-death-row-inmates/827460001/>.

105. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Nevada&federal=No>.

106. See *Daryl Linnie Mack*, OFF. OF CLARK CNTY. PROSECUTING ATT'Y, <http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/death/US/mack1019.htm> (last visited Jan. 26, 2022).

107. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=North+Carolina&federal=No> (last visited Feb. 10, 2022).

macaroni and cheese, cheesecake, and a Pepsi.¹⁰⁸ Patrick Moody was executed on March 17, 2006 and received a last meal at 5:00 p.m. the day of his execution. Moody was served turkey with dressing, a tossed salad with blue cheese dressing, strawberry cheesecake, and a Coke.¹⁰⁹ Willie Brown was executed on April 21, 2006, and his last meal was a well-done T-bone steak, rice, four rolls with butter, and a piece of German chocolate cake.¹¹⁰ The most recent execution was Samuel Flippen, on August 18, 2006.¹¹¹ Flippen's last meal was recorded at 5:00 p.m. the night before the execution, and consisted of popcorn shrimp, hush puppies, fries, and a Coke.¹¹²

In Ohio, the last meal procedures are unclear, but the last execution was of Robert Van Hook, on July 18, 2018.¹¹³ Van Hook's last meal was double cheeseburgers, french fries, strawberry cheesecake with whipped cream, a vanilla milkshake, and grapefruit juice.¹¹⁴

In Oklahoma, according to the Execution Policy Handbook, the last meal request form for inmates states, "[u]pon approval of the warden, you may select your last meal. There is a \$25.00 limit on your last meal. Dinner will be served between 1700 and 1900 hours the day prior to the scheduled execution."¹¹⁵ From 2021 to February 2022, Oklahoma executed four people.¹¹⁶ John Grant, who was executed on October 28, 2021, received a

108. *N.C. Man Executed For 1984 Murder*, WRAL NEWS (Jan. 20, 2006, 7:56 AM), <https://www.wral.com/news/local/story/1091395/>.

109. See *Patrick Lane Moody*, OFF. OF CLARK CNTY. PROSECUTING ATT'Y, <http://clarkprosecutor.org/html/death/US/moody1014.htm> (last visited Jan. 25, 2022).

110. WFMY Staff, *Willie Brown Jr. Executed This Morning For 1983 Killing*, WFMY NEWS (Apr. 21, 2006, 2:18 AM), <https://www.wfmynews2.com/article/news/local/willie-brown-jr-executed-this-morning-for-1983-killing/83-403372963>.

111. See *Execution Database*, *supra* note 106.

112. See *Samuel Russell Flippen*, OFF. OF CLARK CNTY. PROSECUTING ATT'Y, <http://www.clarkprosecutor.org/html/death/US/flippen1041.htm> (last visited Jan. 26, 2022).

113. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Ohio&federal=No&page=2> (last visited Feb. 10, 2022).

114. Jennifer Baker, *"Vicious Killer" Put to Death: "I'm No Good"*, FOX 19 NOW (July 18, 2018, 11:00 AM), <https://www.fox19.com/story/38668302/official-says-homosexual-panic-killer-is-receiving-visitors-reveals-last-meal/>.

115. *Execution of Inmates Sentenced to Death: Last Meal*, OKLA. DEP'T OF CORR., <https://oklahoma.gov/content/dam/ok/en/doc/documents/policy/section-04/040301af5.pdf> (last visited Jan. 29, 2022).

116. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=oklahoma&federal=no&page=3> (last visited Sept. 29, 2022).

last meal of a two-liter bottle of Mr. Pibb, barbeque chips, and two bacon cheeseburgers with onion, tomato, pickles, lettuce and mustard.¹¹⁷ Bigler Stouffer, who was executed on December 9, 2021, declined a last meal. Instead, he received the normal prison menu for that day, which was a chicken patty, two slices of bread, fries, broccoli, mixed fruit, two cookies, a fruit drink, and one bottled water.¹¹⁸ On January 27, 2022, Donald Grant was executed, and for his last meal, he requested sesame chicken, six egg rolls, shrimp fried rice, and a large apple fritter; however, if the apple fritter was not available he asked for three pints of strawberry ice cream.¹¹⁹ Oklahoma's most recent execution¹²⁰ was on February 17, 2022, when Gilbert Postelle was put to death.¹²¹ Postelle's last meal was twenty chicken nuggets with various dipping sauces, three large fries with ketchup, one crispy chicken sandwich, one chicken sandwich, one large soda, and one caramel frappe.¹²²

In South Carolina, the last meal procedure is unknown, possibly because they have not executed anyone in over eleven years.¹²³ The last execution was on May 6, 2011, of Jeffrey Motts. It was reported that Motts was given his last meal of pizza, fried fish, popcorn shrimp, french fries, sweet tea, and cherry cheesecake between 3:30 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. the day before his execution.¹²⁴

In South Dakota, there is little available information about what an

117. Josh Dulaney, *Who Was John Grant? What we Know About the First Person to be Executed in Oklahoma Since 2015.*, OKLAHOMAN (Oct. 28, 2021, 5:38 PM), <https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/2021/10/28/john-grant-execution-oklahoma-death-penalty-lethal-injection/8566922002/>.

118. Brother Ashanti, *The Last Meal of Convicted Murderer Bigler "Bud" Stouffer*, 79, NEWS BEYOND DETROIT, <https://newsbeyonddetroit.net/2021/12/09/the-last-meal-of-convicted-murderer-bigler-bud-stouffer-79/>.

119. Lavanya VJ, *Donald Grant: Oklahoma Death Row Inmate's Last Meal Had Three Pints of Strawberry Ice Cream*, MEAWW (Jan. 28, 2022, 2:28 PM), <https://meaww.com/donald-grant-murder-case-2001-oklahoma-death-row-inmate-last-meal-2022-first-death-penalty-execution>.

120. This was the most recent execution at the time the Note was written.

121. See *Execution Database*, *supra* note 115.

122. Chris Polansky (@ChrisKPolansky), TWITTER (Feb. 17, 2022, 6:22 AM), <https://twitter.com/ChrisKPolansky/status/1494286253126205441>.

123. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=South+Carolina&federal=No>.

124. Reuters Staff, *South Carolina Executes Man Who Strangled Prison Inmate*, REUTERS (May 6, 2011, 5:45 PM), <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-execution-south-carolina-idUSTRE7456SK20110506>.

inmate's last meal entails. Michael Winder, a spokesman for the Department of Corrections in South Dakota, said that neither family nor friends of the inmate can prepare the inmate's last meal and that the meal is "either made or acquired by the prison food service provider."¹²⁵ On November 4, 2019, Charles Rhines was the last person executed in South Dakota.¹²⁶ Rhines requested a last meal of fried chicken, cantaloupe/musk melon, lefse (a type of potato crepe), strawberry and cherry yogurt, butter, black licorice, cookies and cream ice cream, root beer, and coffee with cream and sugar.¹²⁷

In Tennessee, although procedures for the last meal are not clear, the last meal is called "[the] special meal," and does seem to be given on the day of the execution.¹²⁸ Before Donnie Johnson's execution, on May 16, 2019, he was permitted to spend up to \$20 on a last meal, but he declined to do so and was then given what was on the prison menu for the day of the execution.¹²⁹ The most recent execution took place on February 20, 2020, when Nicholas Sutton was put to death.¹³⁰ The Tennessee Department of Corrections reported Sutton was to receive his last meal of fried pork chops, mashed potatoes with gravy, and a peach pie with vanilla ice cream on the day of his execution.¹³¹ It is unclear if the \$20 limit Donnie Johnson had was still enforced when Sutton requested his last meal

125. Stephen Lee, *Death Row's Rhines Had Different Last Meal*, CAP. J. (May 4, 2021), https://www.capjournal.com/news/death-rows-rhines-had-different-last-meal/article_3a8ccc82-0756-11ea-a604-f76e0a540e9f.html.

126. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=South+Dakota&federal=No>.

127. See Lee, *supra* note 123.

128. Madalyn Torres, *Dinner Before Death: What Some Tennessee Death Row Inmates Have Chosen as Their Final Meals*, WBIR-TV KNOXVILLE (Apr. 21, 2022, 9:19 AM), <https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/crime/dinner-before-death-what-some-tennessee-death-row-inmates-have-chosen-as-their-final-meals/ar-AAWsEdb#:~:text=Inmates%20on%20death%20watch%20are%20granted%2C%20with%20reason%2C,the%20restaurant%20Fat%20Mo%27s%20for%20his%20last%20meal.>

129. Adam Tamburin & Natalie Neysa Alund, *Death Row Inmate Forgoes Last Meal, Asks Supporters to Feed Homeless*, WATERTOWN PUB. OP. (May 16, 2019, 4:49 PM), <https://www.thepublicopinion.com/story/news/2019/05/16/death-row-inmate-forgoes-last-meal-asks-supporters-to-feed-homeless/44402481/>.

130. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Tennessee&federal=No>.

131. *Sutton Selects Last Meal*, TENN. DEP'T OF CORR. (Feb. 19, 2020, 3:30 PM), <https://www.tn.gov/correction/news/2020/2/19/sutton-select-last-meal.html>.

almost a year later.

In 2011, one Texas legislator effectively “abolished” the “last meal” tradition for death row inmates, after inmate Lawrence Russell Brewer requested (and wasted) a large meal, which caught the attention of Texas State Senator John Whitmire.¹³² In Texas, prior to this execution, it was known that inmates were given their last meal hours before their execution, and the last meal was usually prepared with items in the prison kitchen.¹³³ However, Chef Price notes that “on several occasions I was brought food items purchased by chaplains, officers in charge, or officials who had a heart of compassion” to be included in an inmate’s last meal.¹³⁴

Lawrence Brewer’s last meal consisted of a request of triple meat cheeseburger, fried okra, two chicken fried steaks, three fajitas, one pound of barbeque, a meat lovers pizza, peanut butter fudge with crushed peanuts, three root beers, and a pint of vanilla ice cream.¹³⁵ However, after ordering this large last meal, Brewer did not eat a single bite, which outraged Senator Whitmire.¹³⁶ After hearing about this, Senator Whitmire sent a letter to then Executive Director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Brad Livingston. Whitmire stated that if Livingston did not end the tradition of giving condemned inmates a last meal, he would bring this issue to the legislature and enact a state statute to abolish the procedure.¹³⁷ Livingston ended the policy immediately and announced that from that time forward, death row inmates would get whatever was on the prison menu for that day.¹³⁸ Over ten years have passed, and this is still the operational policy regarding last meals in Texas today.

In Utah, Ronnie Gardner was the last person executed in the state, on June 18, 2010.¹³⁹ His last meal was prepared by prison employees, was served at 6:30 p.m., and “included steak, lobster, 7-Up, apple pie[,] and vanilla ice cream[,] at a cost of \$35 to the state,” all while watching *The*

132. *Texas Prisons End Special Last Meals for Inmates After “Ridiculous” Request*, FOX NEWS (Nov. 29, 2015, 12:06 AM), <https://www.foxnews.com/us/texas-prisons-end-special-last-meals-for-inmates-after-ridiculous-request>.

133. *Id.*

134. PRICE, *supra* note 5, at 14-15.

135. *See Texas Prisons End Special Last Meals for Inmates After “Ridiculous” Request*, *supra* note 130.

136. *See id.*

137. *See id.*

138. *See id.*

139. *See Execution Database, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR.*, <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=Utah&federal=No>.

Lord of the Rings.¹⁴⁰ It is unclear as to whether a dollar amount limit was placed upon Gardner's last meal or if this was just additional information provided to the media. As of 2017, the manual for Utah's execution process stated, in regard to an inmate's last meal: "The Food Services Director/designee shall confirm the condemned's choice of a last meal. The confirmation should be made 48-24 hours prior to the execution. Alcoholic beverages shall not be served nor used for cooking."¹⁴¹

Lastly, because Wyoming has not executed anyone since 1992, it is unclear what their procedures are today regarding an inmate's last meal.¹⁴²

Mark Hopkinson was the last inmate executed, on January 22, 1992.

¹⁴³ The only information about his last meal was that "[a]t 3:30, he ordered his last meal, a pizza and a fruit plate, and shared the meal with members of his family."¹⁴⁴

V. REASONS FOR AND AGAINST THE LAST MEAL RITUAL

Going forward, there are many reasons in favor of the last meal ritual and also reasons for abolishing it. Tradition, humanity, guilt by those involved with carrying out executions, comfort to those about to be executed, and peace to both the condemned and prison personnel involved in executions are some of the reasons why the last meal ritual should be continued. The last meal ritual can be used as a chance for the justice system, prison personnel involved in the execution process, and society to show a sense of grace, humanity, and compassion toward a condemned human being. On the other hand, people who oppose giving a last meal argue that the cost of the last meal is too expensive, that the victims never

140. Ray Sanchez, *Ronnie Lee Gardner Faces Firing Squad in Utah*, ABC NEWS (June 14, 2010, 4:51 PM), <https://abcnews.go.com/US/Broadcast/convicted-killer-faces-firing-squad-utah/story?id=10913967#:~:text=His%20last%20meal%20included%20steak%2C%20lobster%2C%207-Up%2C%20apple,the%20cooking%20of%20the%20meal%2C%22%20the%20guidelines%20state>.

141. Curtis Waltman, *Utah Department of Corrections Releases Technical Manual for Their Execution Process*, MUCKROCK (Mar. 30, 2017), <https://www.muckrock.com/news/archives/2017/mar/30/utah-death-penalty-manual/>.

142. See *Execution Database*, DEATH PENALTY INFO. CTR., <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/executions/execution-database?state=wyoming&federal=no>.

143. See *id.*

144. *Evil in the Heartland: The Story of Mark Hopkinson, the Mobster of Wyoming, and the Necessity of the Death Penalty*, SUZUKI'S THOUGHTS: DISSERTATIONS FROM THE DESK OF SUZUKI NATHIE (July 19, 2018), <https://suzukisthoughts.blogspot.com/2018/07/evil-in-heartland-story-of-mark.html>.

got a last meal, and that when inmates do get a last meal, sometimes they do not eat it.¹⁴⁵

Proponents of the last meal ritual have expressed many reasons as to why the last meal tradition should continue or be reinstated. First, because the last meal ritual goes back at least as far as the eighteenth century, and arguably to biblical times. No matter, it is a historically strong tradition. Chef Price suggests that if there is one reason why last meals should be continued, it is because it is a tradition.¹⁴⁶ Sarah L. Gerwig-Moore, an Associate Professor at Mercer University School of Law notes, “[a]cross cultures. . . , even in the context of the realities of a forthcoming execution, the last meal emerges as a tradition verging on a celebration. . . . Many see a value in that, even as they protest . . . the execution itself.”¹⁴⁷ Today, the last meal tradition is no longer practiced as a big parting celebration with all the family and friends of the condemned inmate, and many states have put limits on what a person can receive. Yet many states still incorporate the tradition of giving condemned inmates a special last meal before they are executed.

Hence, last meals should be continued in the United States mainly for their tradition and humanity. “Last meals and the items in them serve as symbols in the discourse on crime and punishment.”¹⁴⁸ Today, when inmates are given a choice of a last meal, most choose their favorite foods, but others choose items with symbolic meanings that revert back to the history of the ritual.

In addition, basic humanity and the “guilt” of guards, wardens, and prison personnel involved with executions play a role in why some people say death row inmates should be given a last meal. Chef Price spoke about how, on many occasions, guards and wardens would bring food into the prison that was not normally available in the prison, such as fruit, because they knew it was on the inmate’s last meal request, and they had compassion for that person.¹⁴⁹

Perhaps, as suggested by one analyst, we feed the condemned not because of their own wrongs but rather

145. See Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4, at 409.

146. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

147. Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4, at 418.

148. Michael Owen Jones, *Dining on Death Row: Last Meals and the Crutch of Ritual*, 127 No. 503 J. OF AM. FOLKLORE 3, 15 (2014).

149. See PRICE, *supra* note 5, at 15.

because we ourselves are guilty as well. We use the last meal not as a gift, therefore, but rather as a tool to repress our own guilt spurred from participating in a state sanctioned killing. Conversely, to suppress or cast doubt on our own guilt, we provide these last meals to the condemned in order to move the spotlight from ourselves and onto someone else who we've deemed more deserving of it. Additionally, it's quite possible that the wardens and death row personnel use the last meal to help them cope with and overcome their reluctance to kill or the potential guilt which might stem from that killing – for being a part of an execution team is, psychologically, a difficult task.¹⁵⁰

Chef Price told a somber story about when he prepared the last meal for Karla Faye Tucker.¹⁵¹ After he had wrapped her last meal tray, as he did with every meal (so that it would stay fresh and other inmates would not look to see what it was), Captain Faye Parkins, Chef Price's supervisor, personally delivered the last meal to Karla Faye.¹⁵² When asked why Captain Parkins did this (because usually a guard delivered the last meal to the inmate), Chef Price stated that Captain Parkins had compassion for Karla Faye because she really did turn her life around in prison.¹⁵³ Chef Price said that after Captain Parkins returned from dropping off the last meal, she went to her office overcome with emotion and that Captain Parkins expressed that she wished she had not delivered the last meal to Karla Faye.¹⁵⁴ Chef Price noted that this experience stuck with both himself and Captain Parkins.¹⁵⁵ This is probably why some guards will bring in food items that are not readily available in the prison, which were requested by the inmate.¹⁵⁶ Other officials, like Captain Parkins, will help decorate an inmate's tray with nice plates and napkins.¹⁵⁷ And Chef Price would pray over the meal before it was taken to be delivered to the

150. Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4, at 434.

151. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

152. *Id.*

153. *Id.*

154. *Id.*

155. *Id.*

156. *Id.*

157. *Id.*

condemned inmate.¹⁵⁸

As noted above, Commissioner Burl Cain showed humanity to condemned inmates when he sat and ate the last meal with them and invited guards to join in.¹⁵⁹ Cain reported that he did this because of his faith, and his compassion for the condemned person.¹⁶⁰ Perhaps the concept of eating with an inmate goes with the notion of “guilt” as well and that if guards and wardens engage in this compassionate gesture, they will feel a little bit better about themselves and the circumstances regarding what is about to happen.

Additionally, some guards, wardens, and the general public may feel some sense of peace and kindness in letting an inmate request a last meal, knowing that this will probably be one of the inmate’s last real “choices” in life. As one commentator notes, “[w]hen you lose so much of your freedom, . . . things like food take on tremendous importance [to a condemned inmate].”¹⁶¹ Inmates on death row hardly ever get a say in anything while they are imprisoned. Thus, allowing a condemned inmate to be able to speak up and choose what they want as their last meal must mean a lot. “But to some men on death row, the whole idea of choosing a last meal had always felt obscene.”¹⁶² Juan Ramos,¹⁶³ who served time on death row in Florida, had strong feelings in this regard: “I thought about my last meal. . . .It’s disgusting of you to offer me the best food when I’m [going to] puke it back in your face.”¹⁶⁴

Nevertheless, when inmates are given the chance to request a last meal, Chef Price noted that most do so.¹⁶⁵ Allowing an inmate to choose his or her last meal often seems to bring a sense of peace and thankfulness from the inmate.¹⁶⁶ One commentator asserts, however, that “[t]he last meals . . . tradition[] keep[s] offenders and the public from responding to

158. *Id.*

159. *See* Clarke, *supra* note 92.

160. *See id.*

161. Jones, *supra* note 146, at 4.

162. Keri Blakinger & Maurice Chammah, *From Last Meals to Last Words, What Can Death Row Prisoners Request Before They Die?*, MARSHALL PROJECT, (Sept. 9, 2021, 6:00 AM), <https://www.themarshallproject.org/2021/09/07/from-last-meals-to-last-words-what-can-death-row-prisoners-request-before-they-die?msclkid=bd8aa77fb29311ecb5530ad5c6dc3780>.

163. Juan Ramos was acquitted in April 1987. Juan Ramos - National Registry of Exonerations Pre 1989 (umich.edu).

164. Jones, *supra* note 146, at 10.

165. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

166. *Id.*

the violence of executions. These practices pacify prisoners by giving them personally meaningful or satisfying tasks to do in their final moments.”¹⁶⁷ Chef Price recalled that after preparing one of his initial last meals, the condemned inmate told the guard to tell the cook “thank you” and that this was a very surreal moment for him.¹⁶⁸ Chef Price realized that the “thank you” the inmate gave to him was most likely his last “thank you” on Earth, which was rather chilling.¹⁶⁹

Supporters of the last meal ritual also argue that it should continue as an offering of peace and comfort to an inmate whose life is about to be ended by the state. One commentator notes, “[t]he comforting physical sensations of warm, easily eaten, filling foods and the emotional association of food with particular individuals and pleasurable events provide relief of distress for many inmates facing their execution; this factor dominates in explaining culinary selection among the condemned.”

¹⁷⁰ Chef Price recalled that a hamburger with french fries was the top last meal request at the Walls Unit.¹⁷¹ Warden Willett concurred with this statement and noted that during the “electric chair era,” from 1924-1964, fried chicken and mashed potatoes were the most popular requests.¹⁷²

One study analyzed 193 “last meals” between 2002 and 2006 and concluded that the most popular items “were meat (83.9[%]), fried food (67.9[%]), desserts (66.3[%]), and soft drinks (60[%]).”¹⁷³ Perhaps, the last meal is intended to help a condemned inmate be somewhat relaxed through indulging in their favorite foods, and foods that take them back to a happier time and place.

Opponents of the last meal ritual have voiced several reasons why other states should follow the lead of Texas in effectively abolishing the last meal ritual. One of the most common reasons cited for abolishing the last meal tradition is that the victims of these killers on death row never got to savor a “last meal.”¹⁷⁴ This was the reason Chef Price gave when asked what one reason would be to abolish the last meal ritual.¹⁷⁵ As

167. Daniel LaChance, *Last Words, Last Meals, and Last Stands: Agency and Individuality in the Modern Execution Process*, 32 LAW & SOC. INQUIRY 701, 716 (2007).

168. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

169. *Id.*

170. Jones, *supra* note 146, at 13.

171. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

172. Interview with Jim Willett, *supra* note 157.

173. *See* Jones, *supra* note 146, at 20.

174. *See* Jones, *supra* note 146, at 16.

175. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

Texas Senator Whitmire has expressed, “[i]t is extremely inappropriate to give a person sentenced to death such a privilege [of a last meal].”¹⁷⁶

Senator Whitmire did not believe condemned inmates should be given a last meal and treated as “special”: “Why in the world are you going to treat him like a celebrity two hours before you execute him? It’s wrong to treat a vicious murderer in this fashion. Let him eat the same meal on the chow line as the others.”¹⁷⁷

But condemned inmates are already viewed as “special,” due to the circumstances and procedures put in place regarding their executions. In Texas, the person who prepares the last meal must do so on a volunteer basis, and Chef Price agreed to fill that role.¹⁷⁸ Chef Price maintained that these men and women do not “deserve” a special last meal, based upon the horrific crimes they were convicted of.¹⁷⁹ Yet, he continued: “Even if one could make the argument that these men and women do not *deserve* a last meal – a last choice – they’ve nevertheless grown to expect it.”¹⁸⁰ Furthermore, Chef Price emphasized that these death row inmates are still someone’s daughter, son, loved one, friend, etc., and that they should be treated as such.¹⁸¹

Another common argument for getting rid of the last meal tradition is the cost associated with it. Opponents of the last meal tradition argue that there should not be any extra money spent on giving condemned killers a last meal and that giving them an unlimited budget to do so (in some states) is unfair.¹⁸² “Expense and punishment, after all—regardless of one’s opinion about a last meal—are two core concerns of prison administration.”¹⁸³ Nevertheless, Chef Price noted that extra cost is not really a big problem with the last meal tradition because many states prepare last meal requests with food already available in the prison kitchen.¹⁸⁴ He commented that when Senator Whitmire spoke about why he was going to fight for getting rid of the last meal, it was not because it had been a cost to the taxpayers, but rather because Senator Whitmire had received a death threat from a particular death row inmate with a cell

176. Blakinger & Chammah, *supra* note 162.

177. Jones, *supra* note 146, at 16.

178. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

179. *Id.*

180. Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4, at 437.

181. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

182. See Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4, at 421.

183. *Id.*

184. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

phone. Consequently, he became determined to eliminate the last meal tradition for all, due to the actions of one inmate.¹⁸⁵

After Chef Price was no longer the Texas death row chef, he opened his own cafe. . . near Huntsville and offered to continue making “last meals” at his own expense.¹⁸⁶ He noted that he knew what inmates could and could not have, what time the meals needed to be prepared, what the meals needed to look like when prepared, and what time the last meal would be given to a guard to be sent off.¹⁸⁷ Chef Price noted that he made this offer many times to Senator Whitmire and other Texas Department of Criminal Justice officials.¹⁸⁸ However, everyone has declined his offer.¹⁸⁹ Thus, Chef Price maintained that (at least in Texas) the “cost argument” for getting rid of the last meal is a false and hollow argument.¹⁹⁰

Some also question why the last meal ritual should be continued when, despite being given the chance to eat their requested last meal, some inmates decline or only have a few bites. Opponents of the last meal argue that inmates such as Lawrence Brewer (from Texas), who requested a huge feast of food but then chose not to eat a single bite, use the last meal as a slap in the face to the criminal justice system.¹⁹¹ Yet others see it differently. One commentator asserts, “[w]hen Brewer rejected the food, [although] it seemed like a final act of defiance[,] . . . it was just because the condemned man . . . was nervous.”¹⁹² In fact, there are many reasons why a condemned inmate might choose not to eat much of his or her last meal. Perhaps they are overcome with emotion and the reality of what is about to happen is setting in, or perhaps maybe they simply are not feeling well, in light of their situation. As one commentator notes, “[t]he last meal . . . is usually ordered the day before execution[,] when the condemned still harbor the hope of reprieve; by the time the meal arrives, however, ‘your appetite goes with your hope.’”¹⁹³

Picture yourself in a death row inmate’s shoes. You are hours away from being put to death, sitting in your cell all alone. A guard delivers your “last meal” to you, and it may not even be the one you requested. It may

185. Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 12.

186. *Id.*

187. *Id.*

188. *Id.*

189. *Id.*

190. *Id.*

191. See Blakinger & Chammah, *supra* note 162.

192. *Id.*

193. Jones, *supra* note 146, at 11.

just be what they had available in the prison kitchen that day. Once the guard sets down your tray, you know that you may possibly never eat again on this Earth. The reality sets in. Would you then be able to eat all or even most of your “last meal”? “[O]ne has to imagine . . . that the person dies a little with each bite of [[his last] meal.”¹⁹⁴ To make the situation even worse, imagine if you are innocent and in that position. Would you still be able to eat the last meal? “In fact, many of the convicted, whose guilt was called into question after their execution, chose not to eat the meal served to them.”¹⁹⁵

Thus, there are a number of reasons why a death row inmate could choose to decline a last meal—even one that was prepared and arranged as requested—or could lack the appetite to eat it, which critics of the tradition should take into consideration.

VI. WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR THE LAST MEAL IN THE UNITED STATES

The future of the last meal ritual in the United States is uncertain, though it seems doubtful that it will be abolished in every state. The reasons that proponents of the last meal pose, such as tradition, comfort, and peace for both the condemned inmate and those involved in the executions, humanity toward the condemned, and the guilt and discomfort of the prison personnel carrying out the executions seem to outweigh the reasons for getting rid of the last meal tradition.

Going forward, the last meal should be given the night before the inmate’s scheduled execution. This allows the inmate to consume and digest the food overnight, rather than in the hours immediately prior to the execution. Especially if the inmate requested and received “a heavier” last meal, the food should have time to “settle into” the body before the body is filled with lethal drugs. The timing of the last meal may have been an issue when John Marion Grant was executed in Oklahoma. Mr. Grant ordered a large amount of food for his last meal.¹⁹⁶ His last meal was consumed the night prior to his execution.¹⁹⁷ The morning of his

194. Johnson, *supra* note 3, at 593.

195. Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4, at 435.

196. See Dulaney, *supra* note 116.

197. See Nolan Clay, *Will Death Penalty Protocol be Changed because Killer Threw Up During His Execution?*, OKLAHOMAN (Oct. 31, 2021 5:00 AM), <https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/2021/10/31/john-grant-oklahoma-execution-vomit-raises-questions-death-penalty-protocol/6200566001/>.

execution, Mr. Grant had eggs for breakfast, declined his lunch, and then the execution proceeded that afternoon.¹⁹⁸ Mr. Grant convulsed numerous times throughout his execution and appeared to vomit.¹⁹⁹ Journalists who observed Mr. Grant's execution reported that Mr. Grant vomited after the first drug entered into his body and proceeded to vomit again after his body began to raise up from the convulsions.²⁰⁰ The autopsy report confirmed that Mr. Grant breathed in his own vomit.²⁰¹

Vomiting is not commonly reported during an execution, which raises the question of whether the vomiting was caused by the convulsions, or if Grant's large last meal was the cause of his vomiting. Alternatively, could it be perhaps that the vomiting was due to the closeness of when he ate his eggs and the time of the execution? Judge Stephen Friot, a United States District Court Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, notes that forty-five minutes before Mr. Grant's execution, he was snacking on chips and soda.²⁰² Judge Friot stated, "Grant's substantial intake of food and beverages in the hours before he was executed would naturally have predisposed him to [vomit]."²⁰³ Considering that Grant apparently did consume eggs and snacks the morning and afternoon of his execution, it appears that his "last meal" was not actually his last meal.

The last meal ritual (in nearly every state) is given the evening prior to the execution. One might wonder what food is consumed by the condemned, if any, the day of the execution and how close in time that person is given that food to the time of the execution. These answers are unclear because it is not specifically addressed in any state's procedures. In Texas, Chef Price noted that condemned inmates are given breakfast

198. *See id.*

199. *See id.*

200. Jason Hanna & Raja Razek, *John Grant: Oklahoma Puts First Inmate to Death Since 2015, But Witness Reports He Convulsed and Vomited During Execution*, CNN (Oct. 30, 2021, 8:09 AM), <https://www.cnn.com/2021/10/28/us/oklahoma-execution-john-marion-grant/index.html>.

201. Adrian O'Hanlon III, *Oklahoma Prison Director Defends Execution After Scrutiny*, MCALESTER NEWS-CAP. (Oct. 29, 2021), https://www.mcalesternews.com/news/local_news/oklahoma-prison-director-defends-execution-after-scrutiny/article_ec6073b1-c0c1-5fbf-9c61-72dc3cd2c507.html; Nolan Clay, *Oklahoma Execution: Autopsy Shows Inmate John Grant Breathed in Vomit*, OKLAHOMAN (Feb. 16, 2022, 5:01 AM), <https://www.oklahoman.com/story/news/2022/02/16/autopsy-shows-executed-inmate-john-marion-grant-breathed-in-vomit/6798720001/>.

202. *Glossip v. Chandler*, No. CIV-14-0665-F, 2022 WL 1997194, at *5 (W.D. Okla. 2022).

203. *Id.* at *6.

between 3:00 a.m. and 5:30 a.m., lunch is served between 10:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., and the execution takes place later that afternoon.²⁰⁴ It is reported that the morning of Mr. Grant's execution, he consumed a breakfast of eggs.²⁰⁵ However, it is not known for sure (despite having been seen snacking) what time he ate the eggs or if he had anything else to eat up to the time of his execution.²⁰⁶

Subsequent to Mr. Grant's execution, Oklahoma has changed its policy and now carries out executions at 10:00 a.m. instead of 4:00 p.m.²⁰⁷ The reason for this change is unclear, but it does raise the question of whether an inmate will still be given a light breakfast the morning of the execution or if the inmate's "last meal," i.e., the one served the night before the execution, really will now be their last meal.

Moreover, it appears that not all the states that have the death penalty will get rid of the last meal ritual, as Senator Whitmire effectively did in Texas in 2011.²⁰⁸ It has been over ten years since Texas discontinued the last meal ritual, and since then, it appears that no state has followed Texas's approach. However, it seems that states could change their last meal procedures if condemned inmates "abuse" the opportunity, as Lawrence Brewer arguably did, by ordering an enormous amount of food. Usually, when inmates' last meals are publicized in the news, the chosen meals are, for the most part, modest and reasonable. But if a last meal request does appear irrational or absurd, the public could potentially become angered by this and put pressure on legislatures and prison personnel to eliminate or modify the practice.

Thus, it seems that there should be some reasonable limits on what an inmate is allowed to receive. Particularly, if the state lets an inmate request food from outside of the prison, there should be a reasonable cost limit regarding how much can be spent on the meal and where it can come from. It seems that Florida has the most reasonable last meal procedure, which is that the last meal must be purchased "locally" and cost no more than \$40.²⁰⁹

204. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

205. *See* Clay, *supra* note 196.

206. *See id.*

207. Kate Randall, *Oklahoma Executes Gilbert Postelle Despite Clear Evidence That State's Lethal-Injection Protocol Causes Extreme Pain and Suffering*, WORLD SOCIALIST WEB SITE (Feb. 17, 2022), <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2022/02/18/exec-f18.html>.

208. *See Texas Prisons End Special Last Meals for Inmates After "Ridiculous" Request*, *supra* note 130.

209. *Death Row*, FLA. DEP'T OF CORR., <http://www.dc.state.fl.us/ci/deathrow.html> (last

Furthermore, America's last meal ritual should be expanded to resemble older last meal traditions from other cultures, where inmates were allowed to share their last meals with family, friends, officials, guards, etc. Commissioner Cain's tradition of joining and sharing in a condemned inmate's last meal is a particularly heartwarming gesture, so that the inmate is not alone during their last meal. Ideally, the last meal should be shared with the condemned person's loved ones, so long as there are proper security measures in place. Arguably, if an inmate would want his or her last meal to be cooked by someone special to them, that person could be allowed into the prison kitchen to make the last meal. However, this would probably only work if there was a background check on the individual, the individual would not be allowed to bring in any of their own items, all ingredients and cooking items would have to be provided by prison officials, and strict supervision of the individual would be required at all times. Preferably, the condemned inmate would not be alone (unless they want to be) when eating the final meal. Rather, when possible, they should be comforted for what is to come with foods they enjoy and the presence of persons they love because this tradition is not only a ritual deeply rooted in our country's history and tradition, but also one shared around the world and with a long historical pedigree.

The last meal ritual is a chance for both society and the condemned inmate to show humanity. Although many states have put some restrictions on the ritual, most states have continued the tradition, which has been a part of execution history since the early ages.

VII. CONCLUSION

Our modern approaches to the last meal ritual are both similar to and different from the traditions, concerns, and approaches of the past. One commentator notes, "[t]he [last] meal comprised a grand symbolic gesture implying complicity between condemned and condemner, forgiveness and acceptance in the breaking of bread[,] and the bittersweet satisfaction of earthly desires."²¹⁰ Though it is unreported exactly when and where the last meal ritual originated, it appears that the last meal ritual has roots as far back as biblical times, as well as to the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.²¹¹ In some cultures, the last meal ritual has been used to

visited Apr. 12, 2022).

210. Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4, at 417.

211. See Cunningham, *supra* note 13.

commemorate the Last Supper, i.e., how Jesus Christ invited Judas, his betrayer, to feast with him and the other disciples at the table, even though Judas had committed grave sins and was about to betray Jesus.²¹² Also, the historical tradition reveals that people who were taking part in executions often wanted to make sure that those killed were first nourished and comforted, both as an act of kindness and so that the inmate's ghost did not come back to haunt the executioners.²¹³

The themes of humanity, religion, compassion, and forgiveness continue to be illustrated in the way states handle last meal requests even today. Even though the special last meal is not seen as a celebration in America today, as it was in some cultures, the ritual still allows the condemned the "freedom" to choose what he or she would like to have as a last meal before death. However, as Chef Price notes, just because the inmate requests a meal, does not mean that he or she is going to receive everything asked for, due to the limits each state has regarding how the meal must be prepared, cost, convenience, etc.²¹⁴

It seems that most states do the best they can to fulfill an inmate's last meal request because most guards, wardens, and other prison personnel have compassion or even a sense of discomfort in the realization that this is the person's last meal on this Earth.

As history indicates, the last meal is intended to give the inmate comfort and peace before the condemned is killed.²¹⁵ While many inmates choose comfort type foods, such as hamburgers, french fries, steak, pie, ice cream, etc., or foods that take them back to happier times—like when Kenneth Gentry asked for butter beans because his mother used to make them for him—others choose to request more symbolic foods or gestures that are associated with rebirth, religion, and peace.²¹⁶

When executions are set to take place, the media and public are curious about what an inmate has chosen as his or her last meal. Widespread media attention to the last meal is another reason that the tradition is unlikely to go away. "Maybe [the last meal is] just a last sentiment of kindness from the State, the guards, and the wardens, or perhaps no one really knows and it is merely continued as blind tradition sustained not by thoughtful understanding, but only by a vestigial sense of

212. See Walsh, *supra* note 15.

213. See *id.*

214. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

215. See Cunningham, *supra* note 13.

216. Telephone Interview with Brian D. Price, *supra* note 8.

obligation.”²¹⁷ While a death row inmate arguably does not “deserve” a last meal, the ritual has become a popular phenomenon associated with executions in the United States and around the world and should be continued for its tradition.

It appears that the last meal ritual should and will continue in the United States for the foreseeable future.²¹⁸ The arguments in favor of maintaining a last meal ritual, including compassion, humanity, and tradition, seem to far outweigh the arguments about cost and wasted food that opponents propose. Consequently, the last meal ritual prior to a condemned inmate’s execution should be continued and perhaps expanded in the United States.

217. Gerwig-Moore et al., *supra* note 4, at 433.

218. *See id.* at 438.