

# Terry Lenamon on the Death Penalty

Sidebar with a Board Certified Expert Criminal Trial Attorney



**Terence M. Lenamon** is a Florida Bar certified expert in the area of criminal trial law. With over 17 years experience he has built a reputation as one of Florida's most respected criminal defense lawyers. His defense has been sought by many high-profile clients and has led him through 20 first-degree murder trials and eight death penalty cases. That experience has brought him national recognition as a go-to commentator on death penalty issues. He is the force behind both [deathpenaltyblog.com](http://deathpenaltyblog.com) and Florida Capital Resource Center ([floridacapitalresourcecenter.org](http://floridacapitalresourcecenter.org)), and can be reached at [terry@lenamonlaw.com](mailto:terry@lenamonlaw.com).

## Death Row Appeal Based on Love Affair Between Judge and DA Rejected by U.S. Supreme Court

Posted on April 23, 2010 by [Terry Lenamon](#)

The sordid saga of [Texas trial judge Verna Sue Holland](#) and state prosecutor [Thomas S. O'Connell, Jr.](#) carrying on a sexual affair during the capital murder trial of Charles Dean Hood continues, and the latest chapter doesn't tell a happy tale.

This week, without comment, the United States Supreme Court declined to hear Mr. Hood's appeal based upon the judge and the district attorney's secret love affair -- which was going on during both the guilt and penalty phases of Hood's trial. That's just not in dispute here: the judge and the state attorney have both signed affidavits admitting to it.

Charles Dean Hood's Conviction While the Judge and DA Were Having a Love Affair is a Big Deal.

1. [This case has received national attention. It continues to do so.](#)
2. This case had an [amicus brief](#) signed by 20+ of the country's legal elite -- federal judges at the trial and appellate level, a former governor of the State of Texas, a former director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation among them. They all argued to the High Court on behalf of Charles Dean Hood. Something about the appearance of impropriety and the need to protect respect for the judiciary ....

Right now, it appears that lots of people are reeling at the High Court slamming the door in Mr. Hood's face. That's no surprise. It's shocking, isn't it?

What Happens Now?

In a somewhat bizarre twist, [Charles Dean Hood has had help from the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals](#) - the highest criminal court in the State of Texas. A court where both Verna Sue Holland and the infamous Sharon Keller have both sat as justices (Keller's still there, for now, as Chief

Justice; for more on Keller, search for her name here on the blog. It's quite a story in its own right.)

How did this court help? [Mr. Hood has been granted another sentencing trial](#) - where it is hoped he will escape his current death penalty sentence. However, it is questionable whether or not Mr. Hood will have a trial on guilt or innocence in front of a judge that isn't ... well... "involved" with the prosecutor.

Why not? We don't know. The US Supreme Court didn't tell us.