

Execution: The Guillotine, the Pendulum, the Thousand Cuts, the Spanish Donkey, and 66 Other Ways of Putting Someone to Death

Geoffrey Abbott

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In his own darkly humorous style, Geoffrey Abbott describes the instruments used and their effectiveness and reveals the macabre origins of familiar phrases such as "gone west" or "drawn a blank," as well as the jargon of the underworld. He covers everything from the preparation of the victim to the disposal of the body. Execution is everything you ever wanted to know about the ultimate penalty---and a lot you never thought to ask.

It includes such hair-raising categories as:

- · Cave of Roses: A rare Swedish method of execution in which the victim was confined to a cave full of snakes and poisonous reptiles.
- · Bastinado: Involved the victim being caned gently and rhythmically with a lightweight stick on the soles of the feet until the mental collapse and eventual death of the victim.
- · Sewn in an Animal's Belly: A living person is sewn into the belly of an animal and left to die.
- · The Spanish Donkey: This method of torture consisted of seating a victim on top of a wall that resembled an inverted "v" with weights attached to the ankles, the weights slowly increased until the victim's body split in two.
- · Iron Chair: The victim is tied to an iron armchair and pushed nearer and nearer to a blazing fire.
- · Sawn in Half: Victims are secured in a standing position, pinned between two wide boards fixed between a stake driven deep into the ground while two executioners (one on each side) would wield a long, twohandled saw downwards through the boards.

Execution is a unique fascinating look at the grim and gritty history of sanctioned death.



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