

Ohioans to Stop Executions

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Campaign and Advocacy

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[Hannah Kubbins](#) / February 7, 2019

AT THE CORONERS OFFICE in Dayton, Ohio, Dr. Mark Edgar stood over the body of Robert Van Hook. The deceased 58-year-old weighed 228 pounds; he wore blue pants, a white shirt, and identification tags around his ankles. Edgar, a professor of pathology at Emory University School of Medicine, had done countless autopsies over the years. But this would be the first time he examined the body of someone executed by the state.

Van Hook had died one day earlier, on July 18, 2018, inside the death chamber at the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility in Lucasville. After a tearful apology to his victims family, he was injected with 500 milligrams of midazolam the first of a three-drug formula adopted in 2017. Media witnesses [described](#) labored breathing from Van Hook shortly afterward, including gasping and wheezing loud enough to be heard from the witness room. Nevertheless, compared to recent executions in Ohio, things seemed to go smoothly.

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