

### **A Case Study of Texas Death Row Final Statements: Remorse Analysis**

Since the 1980s, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice has maintained a public record of executions, including the final words spoken by individuals on death row [1]. These statements—ranging from expressions of love and faith to denial, anger, and sometimes, sincere remorse—offer a rare window into the emotional and psychological state of individuals at the moment of death. While death row sentences are often debated for their ethics and effectiveness, less attention has been paid to the *language* used by those condemned, and what it might reveal about human capacity for reflection—even in the most extreme circumstances.

Texas death row prisoners typically spend over a decade in solitary confinement, isolated from regular contact and stripped of rehabilitative opportunities [1,2]. Previous research has shown that a portion of inmates express remorse in their final words [3], but little is known about how that remorse may be shaped by factors such as the amount of time spent awaiting execution, the year of execution (before or after changes in state policy), or the nature of the crime committed. As capital sentencing rates have declined in recent years [4,5], this project seeks to revisit the dataset through a data science lens and determine whether there are any meaningful correlations between time, crime, and expressions of remorse.

The overall goal of this case study is to analyze the final statements of Texas death row inmates using natural language processing and sentiment analysis. By examining over 590 executions from 1982 to 2024, you will identify emotional and thematic patterns in the inmates' last words and explore how those patterns relate to execution timelines, inmate demographics, and crime classifications.

#### **The Deliverable:**

In this assignment, you will use the dataset from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, which includes transcribed last words, inmate information, and details about each case. Starter scripts are available in the GitHub repository to help you get started with cleaning and analyzing the data. Your task is to produce a GitHub repository that includes your finalized code, relevant data and outputs, and a one-page written summary of your findings and takeaways.

**GitHub Link:** <https://github.com/diyavgupta/DS-4002-Case-Study/blob/main/README.md>

**References:**

- [1] “Size of Death Row by Year,” *deathpenaltyinfo.org*, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/death-row/overview/size-of-death-row-by-year>. [Accessed Jan. 30, 2025].
- [2] “Time on Death Row,” *deathpenaltyinfo.org*, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/death-row/death-row-time-on-death-row>. [Accessed Jan. 30, 2025].
- [3] J. Eaton and A. Theuer, “Apology and Remorse in the Last Statements of Death Row Prisoners,” *Justice Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 2, June, 2009. [Online serial]. Available: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248967751\\_Apology\\_and\\_Remorse\\_in\\_the\\_Last\\_Statements\\_of\\_Death\\_Row\\_Prisoners](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/248967751_Apology_and_Remorse_in_the_Last_Statements_of_Death_Row_Prisoners). [Accessed Jan. 30, 2025].
- [4] “Texas,” *deathpenaltyinfo.org*, 2025. [Online]. Available: <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/state-and-federal-info/state-by-state/texas>. [Accessed Feb. 4, 2025].
- [5] “Death Row Information,” *tdcj.texas.gov*, Oct. 2, 2024. [Online]. Available: [https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/death\\_row/dr\\_executed\\_offenders.html](https://www.tdcj.texas.gov/death_row/dr_executed_offenders.html). [Accessed Jan. 30, 2025].