

And obviously we must
punish criminals, so
who's



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

nd their families. Taking the life of another individual exempts the taker of that life the right to live. For example, take the case of Stephanie Schmidt, a young woman who was brutally raped and murdered 5 years ago, outside of Pittsburg, Kansas. Her murderer, Donald Gideon, was a convicted sex offender.

He received 40 years without parole, but does this really seem to be fitting for his crime. What does it say about the value of Stephanie's life when the man who tortured, raped, and killed her is provided with clean clothes, three square meals a day, and cable television? Gideon will enjoy all of these things while Stephanie will still be dead. By not executing criminals like Gideon, the state is preserving a life that has lived to devalue others' lives.

Executing murderers removes an element from society that has held the value of all life in contempt. This upholds the value of all life. Many would argue that this so-called "eye for an eye" approach is unconstitutional, citing the 8th Amendment of the U. S. Constitution. Th 8th Amendment states "Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted." This was meant to limit the severity of punishment imposed on an offender by judge or jury, but instead it creates a paradox with its usage of the words 'cruel' and 'punishment.' Webster's dictionary defines cruel as "causing, or of a kind to cause pain, distress, etc.

" Using this definition, one has to wonder how our justice system is suppose to punish criminals at all. Wouldn't every punishment be cruel if we took the criminal's point of view? Obviously we must punish criminals, so who's to say

the punishment shouldn't fit the crime. The U. S. justice system seeks prevention of crimes, retribution for victims, or reformation of the offender. Taking the life of a killer would both prevent further crimes by that individual and also serve as retribution for the victim. In the case of murder, where human life is so grotesquely cheapened, the only punishment fitting for that tremendous loss would be the execution of that offender.