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## Ohio executes inmate with new death-penalty drug

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By Andrew Welsh-Huggins - Associated Press 12:56 p.m., Thursday, March 10, 2011



**\*\* FILE \*\*** Johnnie Baston, convicted in 1995 of killing Chong-Hoon Mah, a South Korean immigrant who operated retail stores in Toledo, Ohio, was executed on Thursday, March 10, 2011, in the country's first use of the surgical sedative pentobarbital as a stand-alone execution drug. (AP Photo/Ohio Department of Corrections, File)

LUCASVILLE, Ohio (AP) — Ohio on Thursday put to death a Toledo store owner's killer with the country's first use of the surgical sedative pentobarbital as a stand-alone execution drug.

Johnnie Baston was pronounced dead at 10:30 a.m., about 13 minutes after the 5 gram dose of the drug began flowing into his arms. About a minute into the execution, Baston appeared to gasp, then grimace and wince, but then was quickly still.

In a 5-minute final statement, Baston said the governor should have respected the opposition of his victim's family to the death penalty and commuted his sentence to life without parole. Baston also said he made a bad decision and said he hoped both his family and that of his victim could move on. He asked his brothers, both of whom were witnesses, to watch out for his teenage children as they grow up.

"I want you to tell them stories about me," Baston said. "I want them to know the good things about me."

Baston, who grew tearful at times, also said he had hoped he wouldn't cry. "It's OK. It's OK," said his brother, Ron Baston. "You can cry."

A few minutes later, as the drugs began to flow, Ron Baston stood up and slammed his fist against a wall dividing the viewing area, the noise loud enough to draw the attention of Warden Donald Morgan on the other side of the viewing glass.

"Easy, sir," a prisons guard said.

Such a physical outburst is unprecedented in Ohio's 40-plus executions.

"We'll clear his name," Richard Baston said as he comforted his brother. "We'll get justice for him. I promise."

Ohio switched to pentobarbital as its execution drug after the company that made the drug the state previously used, sodium thiopental, announced that production was being discontinued. Oklahoma also uses pentobarbital, a barbiturate, but in combination with other drugs that paralyze inmates and stop their hearts.

States around the country have dwindling supplies of sodium thiopental, and several have looked for supplies overseas.

Baston's execution also marked a change in Ohio's process, giving inmates speedier access to attorneys in case something goes wrong

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when needles are being inserted into them.

Ohio has had problems inserting needles in a handful of cases, including the botched 2009 execution of Romell Broom, who was sentenced to die for the rape and slaying of a teenage girl abducted in Cleveland as she walked home from a football game. The governor stopped the failed needle insertion procedure after two hours.

Broom complained that he was stuck with needles at least 18 times and suffered intense pain. He has sued, arguing a second attempt to put him to death would be unconstitutionally cruel.

Now, an attorney concerned about how an execution is going could use a death house phone to contact a fellow lawyer in a nearby building with access to a computer and cell phone to contact courts or other officials about the problem, said Carlo LoParo, a spokesman for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction.

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By Stephen Dinan - The Washington Times

Painting himself as the sunny, optimistic Republican choice, former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman Jr. on Tuesday officially joined the 2012 GOP presidential field, laying out a broad call to push through tough economic times, but with few specifics on how he would do so. Published 10:51 a.m. June 21, 2011



**Key GOP lawmaker slams administration labor plan**

By David R. Sands - The Washington Times

The chairman of the House Education and the Workforce Committee harshly attacked on Tuesday proposed new rules from the National Labor Relations Board designed to drastically shorten the period workers have to consider a vote to join a union. Published 11:56 a.m. June 21, 2011



**Obama likely to cut 10K troops from Afghanistan**

By Julie Pace and Robert Burns - Associated Press

President Obama is expected to withdraw roughly 10,000 U.S. troops from Afghanistan this year, with about 5,000 forces leaving this summer and an additional 5,000 Americans coming home by the end of the year, a senior U.S. defense official said Tuesday. Published 1:38 p.m. June 21, 2011

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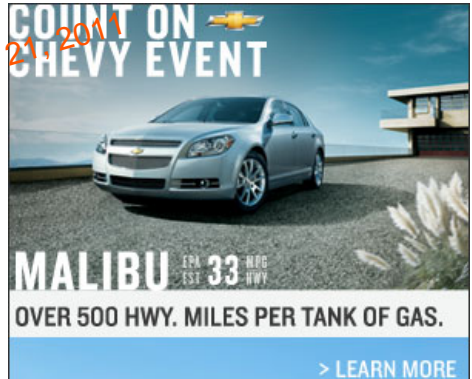


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