

ORIGINAL

OFFICIAL TRANSCRIPT  
PROCEEDINGS BEFORE  
THE SUPREME COURT  
OF THE  
UNITED STATES

CAPTION: BRYAN STUART LANKFORD, Petitioner

V. IDAHO

CASE NO: 88-7247

PLACE: Washington, D.C.

DATE: February 19, 1991

PAGES: 1 - 49

ALDERSON REPORTING COMPANY

1111 14TH STREET, N.W.

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005-5650

202 289-2260

LIBRARY  
SUPREME COURT, U.S.  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20540

1                   IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE UNITED STATES

2   - - - - - X

3   BRYAN STUART LANKFORD,                   :

4                   Petitioner                   :

5           v.                                   :   No. 88-7247

6   IDAHO                                       :

7   - - - - - X

8   Washington, D.C.

9   Tuesday, February 19, 1991

10                   The above-entitled matter came on for oral  
11   argument before the Supreme Court of the United States at  
12   12:58 p.m.

13   APPEARANCES:

14   JOAN MARIE FISHER, ESQ., Genesee, Idaho; on behalf of the  
15                   Petitioner.

16   LARRY ECHOHAWK, ESQ., Attorney General of Idaho, Boise,  
17                   Idaho; on behalf of the Respondent.

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1	<u>C O N T E N T S</u>	
2	<u>ORAL ARGUMENT OF</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
3	JOAN MARIE FISHER, ESQ.	
4	On behalf of the Petitioner	
5	LARRY ECHOHAWK, ESQ.	
6	On behalf of the Respondent	
7	<u>REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF</u>	
8	JOAN MARIE FISHER, ESQ.	
9	On behalf of the Petitioner	
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17		
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		





1 that if the prosecution doesn't seek the death penalty  
2 under Idaho law, then the death penalty cannot be imposed  
3 under Idaho law. Is that a correct statement of Idaho  
4 law?

5 MS. FISHER: That is not a correct statement of  
6 Idaho law, especially in light of this case. However, it  
7 had never occurred before that the State had affirmatively  
8 pled a, or taken the death penalty out of the sentencing  
9 proceeding, and the court had imposed the death penalty.

10 QUESTION: Why would the death penalty -- there  
11 is an Idaho case that neither side cites, by the way,  
12 called State v. Rossi, which didn't involve the death  
13 penalty, but it involved a case in which the judge imposed  
14 a sentence double that that the State had recommended.  
15 And it was appealed on the same grounds that you are using  
16 today to the Idaho Supreme Court, and the Idaho Supreme  
17 Court said, we hold that a trial court is not bound by a  
18 sentence recommendation made by the State, even though  
19 that recommendation was offered in conjunction with a  
20 negotiated plea. Why, why would it be any different for  
21 the death penalty?

22 MS. FISHER: The major difference, of course, or  
23 the critical difference, is that this is a death penalty  
24 case in which we --

25 QUESTION: Well, why is that critical? I

1 mean --

2 MS. FISHER: We go beyond a mere recommendation  
3 of sentence into an affirmative pleading that they're not  
4 seeking the death penalty. Obviously, capital cases or  
5 capital sentencing proceedings under Idaho law are  
6 significantly different than noncapital sentencing  
7 proceedings.

8 QUESTION: Not insofar as whether you're bound  
9 by the recommendation of the prosecution is concerned. I  
10 mean, I can understand thinking in some newly created  
11 judicial system that whatever the State recommends is the  
12 maximum you could get, but you know in Idaho that that's  
13 not the case. This case, Idaho Supreme Court case was  
14 before this litigation.

15 MS. FISHER: Well, State v. Rossi, if it was  
16 before the litigation, there's two things. Number one, if  
17 it was entered in accordance to a plea agreement, so he  
18 entered a plea of guilty, obviously the court at that time  
19 advised the defendant they were not, that he was not bound  
20 by the State's recommendation. In this case the court  
21 order requiring the State to advise the defense whether or  
22 not they were seeking the death penalty, and if they were  
23 seeking the death penalty to state the specific statutory  
24 aggravating factors upon which it relied, was an  
25 affirmative notice order leading the def -- leaving no

1 reason for the court to have ordered that notice unless  
2 the State could have, unless the defense could have relied  
3 on it.

4 QUESTION: Suppose what the court had said was,  
5 in a third paragraph of that order, and in the event the  
6 state does not educe further evidence of aggravating  
7 factors, the court will, on its own motion, weigh the  
8 aggravating factors disclosed at trial and determine  
9 whether or not the death penalty is appropriate. Could  
10 the court have done that?

11 MS. FISHER: The court could have done that.  
12 Had the court done that I would have been --

13 QUESTION: So then it's not the question of  
14 whether or not the State can in effect waive the death  
15 penalty, it's a question of whether or not you had notice.  
16 Isn't that true?

17 MS. FISHER: That's correct, Justice Kennedy.

18 QUESTION: And -- in that respect I'm concerned  
19 that, unless I misread the record, you indicate nothing in  
20 your briefs and nothing in the trial court to indicate  
21 that you would have done anything any differently, nor did  
22 you express any surprise or make any objection when the  
23 penalty was imposed, but correct me if I'm wrong.

24 MS. FISHER: Um -- insofar to the first  
25 ques -- the first portion of that question, yes, things

1 would have been done differently had I known it was a  
2 capital proceeding.

3 QUESTION: Well, has there been any showing of  
4 that in this record?

5 MS. FISHER: Your Honor, there has always been  
6 argument that I would have treated the case differently  
7 because, because there were a number of things that would  
8 be relevant, a certain amount of evidence that could have  
9 been marshaled in argument that went directly to the  
10 aggravating factors, but I didn't know that the  
11 aggravating factors were at issue.

12 QUESTION: Well, you knew those aggravating  
13 factors were at issue with reference to the length of the  
14 prison sentence. I would assume that if you had something  
15 that was important in mitigation you would have brought it  
16 up in connection with the, the sen -- the hearing on the  
17 length of the prison sentence.

18 MS. FISHER: There are a number of items that I  
19 would have done had I known it was a capital sentencing  
20 that I would not have done, and did not do because it was  
21 a noncapital sentencing. For instance, I certainly would  
22 have organized my time, my research, and my energies  
23 towards the sentencing proceeding and not gone into the  
24 motion for new trial. I would have listened to the tapes.  
25 I would have developed the forensic evidence at trial. I



1 would have called the polygrapher who would not have,  
2 whose testimony would not have been admissible in a  
3 noncapital case, but certainly would have been admissible  
4 under the mitigating circumstances in a capital case --

5 QUESTION: Well, you're telling us that now, I'm  
6 not sure that it's an appropriate argument for us to take  
7 into account when you did not make that submission at any  
8 point below or in your briefs.

9 QUESTION: Ms. Fisher, this was a capital case.  
10 I mean --

11 QUESTION: Justice Kennedy asked her a question,  
12 I think.

13 MS. FISHER: I -- we have always argued that  
14 there were things that I would have done -- and I have  
15 always argued that there were things that I would have  
16 done had I known it was a capital case. At the  
17 postconviction hearing, which was the first available time  
18 which I could raise the issue of notice, I said I wouldn't  
19 have done it this way as a result -- I would have  
20 addressed, I would have developed the evidence in  
21 conjunction with the statutory aggravating circumstances  
22 at trial. I indicated that the effect of the lack of  
23 notice or the affirmative misleading of the notice led me  
24 to act differently. At oral argument in the State supreme  
25 court I advised the State supreme court that there was a

1 number of things that I would have done differently. So  
2 this is --

3 QUESTION: Where did you advise -- in the record  
4 does it show that you have advised the trial court of  
5 that?

6 MS. FISHER: I believe it's in the -- there's an  
7 excerpt in the J.A. on the postconviction proceeding.

8 QUESTION: Well, you can return to it later if  
9 you wish. I think it's an important point.

10 MS. FISHER: The argument has been made,  
11 certainly, as to specific things that I would have done  
12 differently, they have been argued -- it has not been  
13 argued. It has been argued in general terms because no  
14 one has ever asked. When the Idaho Supreme Court asked, I  
15 did in fact refer to specific things that would have been  
16 done differently.

17 QUESTION: I don't see how the calligrapher is  
18 one of them. Are you saying you couldn't have introduced  
19 the calligrapher because it wasn't a capital case? I was  
20 a capital case.

21 MS. FISHER: It was a nondeath case. We  
22 were -- this proceeding --

23 QUESTION: As far as that rule of evidence is  
24 concerned?

25 MS. FISHER: Yes, Your Honor. In the

1 presentence -- It's a polygrapher, I'm sorry. The  
2 polygraphist. The trial court, there was a reference to a  
3 polygraph in the presentence investigation. I attempted  
4 to correct it because the reference in the presentence  
5 investigation was incorrect, and the trial court advised  
6 me that it was not admissible. I acquiesced in the fact  
7 that the results of the polygraph were not admissible  
8 because it was a noncapital proceeding. Had I known it  
9 was a capital proceeding, I would not have acquiesced in  
10 that inadmissibility.

11 QUESTION: But your objection would have, would  
12 have been just as valid whether it was a capital, whether  
13 you knew the death sentence was going to be imposed or  
14 not, wouldn't it?

15 MS. FISHER: Well, the issue, the issues to  
16 which the polygraph had been, had been given were  
17 specifically in reference to those issues that arise under  
18 the statutory aggravating factors.

19 QUESTION: But -- but aren't those aggravating  
20 factors relevant to the length of the prison sentence as  
21 well?

22 MS. FISHER: They are relevant. But the  
23 admission of the polygraph is not -- well, it was my  
24 understanding of the law and it was the court's  
25 understanding of the law that in a, that polygraphs were

1 not admissible. Had I known it was a capital sentencing,  
2 I would not have agreed to that interpretation of the law  
3 because of the broad rulings that this Court has given in  
4 that all mitigation evidence can come before the trial  
5 court in a capital sentencing hearing.

6 QUESTION: And you think we would not have  
7 applied that rule simply because the State here had said  
8 that it was not going to, going to seek the death penalty?

9 MS. FISHER: That's correct. Certainly  
10 polygraphs have been held inadmissible in other, in  
11 noncapital sentencings. But certainly a major difference,  
12 or what the defendant was deprived of in this case was the  
13 ability to argue against the appropriateness of the death  
14 penalty. For 3 weeks we had a number of proceedings in  
15 the court, each time the court taking some significant  
16 amount of effort to advise the defendant of the matters at  
17 risk.

18 For instance, at the motion to dismiss his trial  
19 counsel, the first one where I was appointed as cocounsel,  
20 he discussed the risks of getting new counsel at this  
21 stage. He does not mention the risk of the death penalty.  
22 In, on March 10 when we had the hearing to dismiss the  
23 trial counsel, the trial judge goes into significant  
24 lengthy colloquy with the defendant to advise him of the  
25 risk because I had not read the record, because I had not



1     been present at the prior proceedings, because I was not  
2     aware of everything that had taken place. What he doesn't  
3     advise the defendant, and what he doesn't advise me, is  
4     that the significant risk here is that he is facing the  
5     death penalty.

6             QUESTION: At the conclusion of the sentencing  
7     hearing, Ms. Fisher, the judge did say that one possible  
8     upshot of it would be the death penalty, did he not?

9             MS. FISHER: At the conclusion, after all of the  
10    evidence, all of the argument and evidence was heard in  
11    the sentencing, there is a reference by the trial judge to  
12    "or death." Taken in the context of those proceedings and  
13    taken in the context of the affirmative notice otherwise,  
14    that comment was not regarded as a statement that he in  
15    fact was considering the death penalty, but rather as a  
16    statement to the prosecution that these had been my  
17    options, and you come in here and recommend the minimum.  
18    But in hindsight, and looking at the cold record --

19            QUESTION: Don't you think that had you to do it  
20    again, and perhaps any lawyer exercising a reasonable  
21    judgment in that situation, when the judge said that, it  
22    would have alerted them if they hadn't been alerted  
23    before?

24            MS. FISHER: No question that if I had to do it  
25    again, I, it would have alerted me. Whether or not it was

1 reasonable at that time, I believe in the context of the  
2 proceedings and the fact that we had gone 3 weeks without  
3 ever mentioning the death penalty -- there are two times  
4 prior in the sentencing proceeding where the words "or  
5 death" would have had a significant impact, would  
6 certainly have alerted me. When the prosecutor stands up  
7 and says well, as the court required, we filed the formal  
8 pleading waiving the death penalty -- he doesn't say  
9 specifically waiving, but saying that we weren't seeking  
10 the death penalty, so what are the options left,  
11 indeterminate life or determinate life. Had the judge  
12 interjected there "or death," that would have alerted me.  
13 Had, when I stood up and said to the trial judge, the  
14 question that I have to argue here is whether or not this  
15 court should impose an indeterminate life or a determinate  
16 life on the defendant, had the judge interjected the words  
17 "or death," that certainly would have alerted me. But  
18 if --

19 QUESTION: Well, sometimes counsel don't want to  
20 mention the most frightening possibility for their case.  
21 They want to get the judge thinking in another direction.  
22 It's like a punitive damages cases. All you want to talk  
23 about is compensatory damages. The less said about  
24 punitive, the better, just in order to have a context  
25 within which it's difficult for the judge to make that

1 decision. So you could interpret this record as a  
2 tactical decision to focus on the determinate sentences  
3 simply in order to put the judge's mind in that frame.

4 MS. FISHER: Well, there is no question that at  
5 trial counsel where they received affirmative notice from  
6 the State that they're not seeking death is in a dilemma  
7 as to whether or not argue against, set up argument as to  
8 the potential of the death penalty. And as the case law  
9 now is in Idaho because of this case, trial counsel are in  
10 that dilemma. At the time there was no reason to believe  
11 that the death penalty was at issue.

12 QUESTION: You say there was no reason -- under  
13 Idaho law there was no reason to believe it was at issue?

14 MS. FISHER: That's correct.

15 QUESTION: Why was that? Do you have any case  
16 that even suggests that what the prosecutor asks is the  
17 upper limit?

18 MS. FISHER: There has to be -- there has to be  
19 a distinction between a recommendation -- I obviously knew  
20 that the court was not bound by the recommendation of the  
21 State. The State recommended the minimum of 10 years.  
22 What Idaho had so far was Osborn 1. Osborn 1 said that in  
23 a case where the defendant has no, has had informal notice  
24 of the aggra -- evidence in aggravation and argument to be  
25 had, in a case where he has been present at all the prior

1 proceedings, in a case where the trial court has advised  
2 him at the time of his plea of the potential of the death  
3 penalty, then the requirement of a formal notice that the  
4 state is seeking the death penalty is not required.

5 Osborn 2 -- or, Gibson then comes down in 1983  
6 and refers to this mandatory procedure, and includes the  
7 notice that the State is seeking the death penalty.  
8 Osborn 2 then comes down and says in a noncapital  
9 sentencing case, even though clearly Osborn was a first  
10 degree murder conviction where the State, I mean where the  
11 court imposed life, they said in a noncapital sentencing,  
12 Idaho Code 2515(d), which is the necessity of inquiry  
13 under the death penalty statute, doesn't apply. So there  
14 wasn't any reason to believe, in 1984, that if the State  
15 didn't seek the death penalty, that the court would impose  
16 it sui sponte without any comment as to the possibility or  
17 to the fact that he was in fact considering that option.

18 QUESTION: Well, there might not have been a  
19 reason to think that a judge would normally do that, but  
20 you think there was no reason to think that it could be  
21 done in law? I mean, I understand how you could  
22 reasonably believe the chances were 99 to 1 that the judge  
23 would, of course, if the State wasn't seeking death, not  
24 impose death. But you're saying that you thought as a  
25 matter of law that the judge could not do it? Is that



1 what you're saying?

2 MS. FISHER: Well, certainly -- you know, my  
3 thoughts are not in the record, but I never contemplated  
4 the possibility that the judge could in fact impose the  
5 death penalty at --

6 QUESTION: The legal possibility.

7 MS. FISHER: That's correct.

8 QUESTION: Did Osborn 2 advert specifically to  
9 Gibson?

10 MS. FISHER: No, it did not. Gibson -- and the  
11 reference in Gibson is simply a, an outline of the  
12 capital, the mandatory capital procedure. Gibson and  
13 Osborn were not interrelated in any way.

14 QUESTION: I take it that outline was not the  
15 holding of the case in Gibson, however?

16 MS. FISHER: Well, they had a number of holdings  
17 because there were a number of issues. I don't believe  
18 that the issue was notice in Gibson.

19 QUESTION: Ms. Fisher, when was the first time  
20 that the judge made it known that death was still in the  
21 case? You have mentioned before that he did it; was that  
22 the first time?

23 MS. FISHER: Assuming that you accept the  
24 reference at the conclusion of the sentencing hearing as  
25 such notice, that would have been the first time. As

1 taken in the context of proceedings, the first time that  
2 the judge made it known was when he actually imposed the  
3 death penalty, and that was on October 15, 1984.

4 In this case there is more than a lack of  
5 notice. Assuming that the constructive notice of the  
6 statutory requirement, or statutory sentencing, was in  
7 fact constructive notice, once the trial court exercised  
8 its discretion, which it clearly had under Idaho  
9 sentencing law, to notify, or to order notice in regard to  
10 the issues to be litigated, the -- and the subsequent  
11 court compliance with the order, it moved beyond a lack of  
12 notice into an affirmative misleading situation where the  
13 defense detrimentally relied on the fact that the death  
14 penalty was not in the case. As a consequence Bryan  
15 Lankford stands sentenced to death under procedures that  
16 were not reasonably calculated to give him the opportunity  
17 to defend against the death penalty.

18 QUESTION: Did Idaho law permit you to move the  
19 trial court to reconsider the sentence?

20 MS. FISHER: The post -- because of the  
21 post -- the consolidation statute in capital cases, the  
22 first opportunity to raise that issue would have been in  
23 the postconviction --

24 QUESTION: You mean at the time he enters a  
25 sentence in the trial court you can't ask him to consider

1 whether or not he might withdraw that determination --

2 MS. FISHER: The motion --

3 QUESTION: -- based on a showing that you were  
4 surprised?

5 MS. FISHER: I -- the motion -- there is a Rule  
6 35 in which you can move to reduce a sentence. And that,  
7 that motion is a one-time motion that can be, could have  
8 been made at the time of Bryan Lankford's sentencing  
9 either within 40, within the 42 days that you have for an  
10 appeal or within 120 days after a mandamus. Consequently,  
11 and because of the consolidation statute where I was  
12 required by law to raise any and all issues within 60 days  
13 of the imposition of death, that Rule 35 was exercised  
14 after the mandamus. If you understand what I mean -- we  
15 had, in Idaho we have two -- at the time of this  
16 sentencing there was an opportunity to raise a motion to  
17 reduce the sentence one time. You could only raise it  
18 once. We could have raised it either within the initial  
19 period of appeal, or we could raise it within 120 days  
20 after the affirmance --

21 QUESTION: Did you raise it at one of those two  
22 points?

23 MS. FISHER: Yes, I did, Justice Kennedy.

24 QUESTION: And did you include -- at which  
25 point? The 120-day point?

1 MS. FISHER: 120 days after the affirmance, yes.

2 QUESTION: Did you include in there an affidavit  
3 or a showing or an allegation that you had been surprised?

4 MS. FISHER: Yes.

5 QUESTION: And does that contain an enumeration  
6 of the things you would have done differently?

7 MS. FISHER: I don't believe that it does,  
8 Justice Kennedy. It -- you know, it certainly contains  
9 the argument that if I had adequate -- if there was  
10 adequate notice through the statute, then Bryan Lankford,  
11 then the flip side of the issue was that I had not  
12 presented what needed to be presented in a capital case.

13 QUESTION: Is that motion and those proceedings,  
14 are they in that record, in the record?

15 MS. FISHER: The -- I believe it's a different  
16 appeal, because we also appealed that, that ruling. I'll  
17 reserve my remaining time for rebuttal.

18 QUESTION: Very well, Ms. Fisher. General  
19 Echohawk.

20 ORAL ARGUMENT OF LARRY ECHOHAWK

21 ON BEHALF OF THE RESPONDENT

22 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Mr. Chief Justice, and may it  
23 please the Court:

24 I believe what we have here today is a claim by  
25 the petitioner that he was totally surprised on the day of



1 sentencing, October 15, 1984, when he received the death  
2 penalty. The law clearly states from the very beginning  
3 when he was charged with first degree murder that the  
4 sentencing court upon conviction would have two options; a  
5 life or a death sentence. The record is replete with  
6 examples of how the defendant was aware that the death  
7 penalty was at stake.

8 I believe the claim of the petitioner turns on  
9 an unfounded assumption, and that is that in some way the  
10 prosecutor, by making a recommendation that it did not  
11 intend to seek the death penalty, could bind the court in  
12 limiting the option that the court could consider at the  
13 time of sentencing. And there is virtually no case law or  
14 statutory authority to back up that assumption.

15 QUESTION: Do you consider --

16 QUESTION: What do you make of the --

17 QUESTION: Do you consider it fair play?

18 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor --

19 QUESTION: Yes or no?

20 GEN. ECHOHAWK: I believe that it is.

21 QUESTION: And you believe that if that grew up  
22 to be a practice it would be legitimate all over the  
23 country if we say so?

24 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I believe that the  
25 petitioner and the petitioner's counsel are presumed to

1 know the law. The law speaks for itself. And under  
2 Idaho --

3 QUESTION: And doesn't the law speak that  
4 prosecutors shall tell the truth?

5 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor --

6 QUESTION: Or would you like to see it be the  
7 law?

8 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I believe the  
9 prosecutor gave a recommendation in good conscience to the  
10 court that the death penalty was not appropriate; but  
11 under Idaho law it's not the prosecutor's job to decide  
12 what that ultimate sentence will be. That's reserved to  
13 the court, and the court followed the Idaho statutory  
14 proceedings very carefully. What you have in this case is  
15 a argument on the part of the petitioner that there needed  
16 to be some kind of extraordinary warning or signal that  
17 the court intended, regardless of the prosecutor's  
18 recommendation, to consider 19-2515 and to consider the  
19 aggravating factors that are set forth.

20 QUESTION: Well, it's something more than that,  
21 isn't it? The order of May 17 directs that in the event  
22 the State shall seek the death penalty, it shall formally  
23 file with the court a statement listing the aggravating  
24 circumstances, and the defendant shall specify in a  
25 concise manner all the mitigating factors. Is it -- would

1 it be a reasonable construction of that order to conclude  
2 that when the submission has not been made by either  
3 counsel that the court will not consider the death  
4 penalty? Is that a reasonable construction?

5 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I don't believe it  
6 is. And I believe that --

7 QUESTION: So you, you interpret this order as  
8 saying that the -- could the State have argued for the  
9 death penalty after failing to make this file?

10 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I believe the State  
11 would be in a position as it approached to change its  
12 recommendation.

13 QUESTION: Despite noncompliance with the  
14 court's order of May 17?

15 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Well, Your Honor, I think it's  
16 important to recognize that the, the order that the court  
17 released in May was as a result of a hearing that was held  
18 on April 5; and the counsel has, the petitioner's counsel  
19 has argued that this was something that the court pretty  
20 much thought up on its own. And the fact is that it came  
21 as a request from the defendant. And I think that that  
22 April 5 --

23 QUESTION: Well, but whatever its genesis, it's  
24 a court order, and each side is ordered to set forth the  
25 aggravating or mitigating circumstances, as the case may

1 be. And when this isn't done, all I'm suggesting is that  
2 it might be a reasonable interpretation that the death  
3 penalty may not be considered absent these filings.

4 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, the way that the  
5 Idaho capital punishment law is structured, it is very  
6 clear that it is the judge who makes that sentence. And  
7 the law in Idaho is also very clear that the prosecutor  
8 may give a recommendation, but in no way is that binding.  
9 And I think that the April --

10 QUESTION: Well, suppose the judge said the  
11 death penalty is not going to be part of my consideration,  
12 then he changes his mind after the arguments. Would that  
13 be proper?

14 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Well, that's not the case here,  
15 Your Honor.

16 QUESTION: I know that's not the case. What if  
17 it were the case?

18 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Well, I think ultimately the --

19 QUESTION: I'm testing whether or not the trial  
20 court can take any action which misleads counsel.

21 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Well, Your Honor, the point is  
22 that the court has the ultimate decisionmaking authority  
23 on the sentence, and if it were to change its mind and  
24 some way give a false signal and then come back and do, do  
25 something else, I believe that the counsel would be in a



1 better position to make the argument. But here the court  
2 gave a very consistent statement all the way through the  
3 proceedings about what it intended to do. Upon the  
4 request of defendant, it's true the court did ask the  
5 State to identify whether or not it was going to seek the  
6 death penalty.

7 But I think that, this is not in the Joint  
8 Appendix, but I think that the Court ought to look very  
9 carefully at the record in the supreme court, the  
10 transcript from the April 5 proceeding, because in that  
11 proceeding the court makes this statement after there is  
12 some discussion about and recognition that notification by  
13 the State is not required as to its position. The court  
14 goes on to say, there obviously needs to be inquiry  
15 pursuant to 19-2515 as to the statutory aggravating  
16 circumstances that may exist, regardless of whether or not  
17 the State intends to pursue the death penalty. I think  
18 the court made it pretty clear in that statement that yes,  
19 we're going to identify what the prosecutor's position is,  
20 but the court has an independent authority here in the  
21 sentencing structure, and the court is going to consider  
22 19-2515 regardless of what the State's position may be.

23 QUESTION: That was an opinion of the Supreme  
24 Court of Idaho you were quoting from?

25 GEN. ECHOHAWK: No, Mr. Chief Justice, that was

1 an actual proceeding where the --

2 QUESTION: This was an arraignment, wasn't it?

3 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, this, this language  
4 that I quote comes out of a, this was after conviction,  
5 just 5 days after the conviction --

6 QUESTION: In this case.

7 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Yes, in this case. Mr.  
8 Longeteig, the trial counsel for Bryan Lankford, was  
9 present. The prosecutor was present. They were  
10 discussing when to set the sentencing date. The  
11 defendant's counsel asked for the State to disclose what  
12 its position would be. The court says yes, I'll do that,  
13 but you have to understand, obviously there needs to be an  
14 inquiry into 19-2515, and regardless of whether the  
15 State --

16 QUESTION: Well, was the present counsel for the  
17 defendant counsel at that time?

18 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, Ms. Fisher was not  
19 counsel --

20 QUESTION: Was she in the room when this  
21 happened?

22 GEN. ECHOHAWK: She did not enter the case  
23 until --

24 QUESTION: Was the record of this colloquy that  
25 you describe provided to her at any time?

1 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, Ms. Fisher had  
2 available to her under court order the services of the  
3 trial attorney right up through sentencing --

4 QUESTION: So she could have asked him about it  
5 and found out by making the appropriate inquiry, but she  
6 didn't hear it said herself?

7 GEN. ECHOHAWK: No, Your Honor. The defendant  
8 was personally present.

9 QUESTION: And that's what you regard as the  
10 best example of advance notice?

11 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I think the --

12 QUESTION: The transcript, there was a  
13 transcript of the hearing, and --

14 GEN. ECHOHAWK: That's the transcript of the  
15 April 5 hearing.

16 QUESTION: -- I think we have it in the record  
17 here, too.

18 QUESTION: And he could have told her, I  
19 suppose, he could have volunteered to her, now bear in  
20 mind that the death penalty is at issue here because the  
21 judge told me that; and I was counsel for the defendant at  
22 the time he told me. He could have volunteered that to  
23 her, I assume?

24 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor --

25 QUESTION: Probably should have, if, if there

1 was any doubt about the point.

2 GEN. ECHOHAWK: He could have volunteered that  
3 information. Counsel --

4 QUESTION: This also was before the order  
5 requiring the prosecutor to take a position, wasn't it?

6 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Yes, Your Honor, that's correct.

7 QUESTION: May I ask something? Reading the  
8 trial judge's findings, is it clear from the record  
9 whether the judge thought this defendant or this  
10 defendant's brother did the actual killing?

11 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Well, Your Honor, I believe that  
12 the evidence showed that the person that actually struck  
13 the deadly blow was Mark Lankford, the brother of the  
14 petitioner.

15 QUESTION: The brother. But can you tell that  
16 from the judge's findings? The judge's findings are  
17 really quite ambiguous on who did the actual killing, as I  
18 read them.

19 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I believe that the  
20 judge, judge's findings would have identified that this  
21 was a common scheme to commit the murderous act.

22 QUESTION: No, but my question is can you tell  
23 from the judge's findings which person the judge thought  
24 actually did the killing?

25 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I believe that the



1 judge thought that the person that actually delivered the  
2 deadly blow was Mark Lankford, but that the --

3 QUESTION: How do, how do we know that? How do  
4 we know that? His findings don't reveal that, do they?

5 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Well, Your Honor --

6 QUESTION: And isn't it a fact that had he had  
7 the results of the polygraph examination, which apparently  
8 were part of the attempt to work out a plea bargain before  
9 this defendant testified at his brother's trial, those  
10 would have shown who did the actual killing?

11 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I don't think it was  
12 in dispute as to who struck the deadly blow. But the, the  
13 court made a finding that this defendant intended to kill.

14 QUESTION: But there is no -- you cannot tell  
15 from the judge's findings who did the actual killing, can  
16 you?

17 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I'd have to go back  
18 and read that specifically to see if there's, you know,  
19 one comment. But with regard to the, to the polygraph  
20 that counsel for petitioner says would be, would have been  
21 helpful, actually I believe that that was more damaging  
22 than helpful. There were essentially 10 questions that  
23 were asked through two polygraph examinations; and six of  
24 those the defendant was found to be deceptive.

25 QUESTION: That's right, but on the questions

1 that related to who did the killing and which were the  
2 basis for the prosecutor being willing to make a plea  
3 bargain, he was truthful on those. Is that not right?

4 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, where he failed is  
5 where he identified that he did not know that these people  
6 were going to be killed, and that where he passed was  
7 where he identified that his brother was the one that  
8 actually struck the blow.

9 QUESTION: Which is the fact that was material  
10 to the prosecution when it negotiated, when it negotiated  
11 the plea bargain that the judge refused.

12 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, clearly the  
13 prosecutor thought that Bryan Lankford was the less  
14 culpable of the two. I think it's important when we talk  
15 about what the judge was thinking to recognize that in  
16 Idaho there is a very specific procedure that can be  
17 followed if you want to bind the judge to a sentencing  
18 alternative. That's what we call Rule 11. And  
19 if -- counsel may have had a pretty good argument to make  
20 if at the time that she handled the sentencing proceeding  
21 she walked into the courtroom with a Rule 11 plea in hand  
22 that really does bind the judge. But in this case that  
23 was not the situation.

24 The judge, in fact, at the close of the  
25 sentencing argument noted that the death penalty was an

1 option, and that he was rejecting the prosecutor's  
2 recommendation. Now at that point the defense attorney  
3 objects because she said I want him to be sentenced today.  
4 If she really thought that it was a surprise, believe me,  
5 I believe she would have gone right through the ceiling  
6 and asked for more time, asked for a rehearing,  
7 reconsideration. That just didn't happen. I believe that  
8 it was really a matter of trial strategy on her part.

9 And looking at the facts in this case, the  
10 defendant was benefitting by that prosecutor's  
11 recommendation rather than being harmed. The benefit came  
12 because the prosecutor was very articulate in closing  
13 argument at sentencing identifying that in his opinion the  
14 defendant was the less culpable. But the judge is the one  
15 that has to make that ultimate decision; and under Idaho  
16 law he is required to follow a step by step procedure. He  
17 is required to hold a sentencing hearing. He is required  
18 to review the evidence that is submitted at trial. He had  
19 5 days worth of evidence that he had to consider. And he  
20 is also required to consider whatever mitigation or  
21 aggravation factors are presented.

22 In this case the State presented no additional  
23 aggravating factors. The defendant called seven  
24 mitigating witnesses. And I assert, Your Honors, that the  
25 evidence that came in at sentencing hearing applies

1 whether you're talking about a life term with no  
2 possibility of parole or a death sentence. The  
3 information that was presented to the court is mitigating,  
4 period. And the court considered that and made written  
5 findings. I think --

6 QUESTION: What significance, if any, should we  
7 put in the language quoted on page 45 of the opposing  
8 brief from Gibson which refers to the procedures which  
9 they are claiming should have been followed as being  
10 mandated in potential death penalty cases?

11 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Justice Souter, I believe that  
12 this Court should place no significant, significance to  
13 that language because that was not at issue.

14 QUESTION: What language we're talking about,  
15 please? Where would I find this language?

16 QUESTION: I'm sorry. I was quoting from page  
17 45 of the opposing brief, the -- there's a quotation from  
18 Gibson.

19 QUESTION: The red brief?

20 QUESTION: No, the blue brief.

21 QUESTION: Thank you.

22 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, that was not the  
23 issue in the case. The court simply made the statement  
24 that the mandated provisions under Idaho law were  
25 followed, and then went down and listed several that had



1     been, several of the procedures that had been followed by  
2     the court, including notification. But there is no place  
3     in the Idaho statute or no other case where it's  
4     identified that the State is required to give that  
5     notification. In fact, the first major supreme court case  
6     in Idaho to interpret 19-2515, State v. Osborn, held just  
7     the opposite; where the prosecutor did not make a  
8     recommendation for death, the death penalty was imposed,  
9     and the court considered whether or not there was some  
10    requirement that the State should notify the defendant.  
11    And the court found that there was no requirement.

12           QUESTION: General Echohawk, I don't, I don't  
13    understand. That language is not inconsistent with  
14    anything that you have told us anyway, right? If that  
15    language is accepted as entirely true, all it proves is  
16    that the State must make known its intent to seek the  
17    death penalty or not.

18           GEN. ECHOHAWK: That's correct.

19           QUESTION: It doesn't at all say that once the  
20    State does make known its intent not to seek the death  
21    penalty, the death penalty can't be imposed. So that was  
22    complied with here anyway, even if you accept that  
23    language as supplementing the statute. It was complied  
24    with in this case, wasn't it?

25           GEN. ECHOHAWK: Yes, Your Honor. And I believe

1 that the way that the Idaho sentencing laws for capital  
2 offenses are structured, the judge is placed in a position  
3 to make that decision to avoid inconsistencies. And to  
4 allow a prosecutor to bind the judge is a way that will  
5 probably lead to more inconsistencies in terms of what is  
6 handed down. The judge is the ultimate authority. The  
7 judge is given 10 aggravating factors; that you have to  
8 examine, you have to find at least one of those to be  
9 present before the court can impose a death penalty, and  
10 that that aggravating factor or factors, whichever are  
11 found, have to be weighed with the mitigating  
12 circumstances.

13 QUESTION: But just to be clear on the point,  
14 what you, what you are saying in effect is that when the  
15 court referred to a potential death penalty case it was  
16 referring to a case in which at any time capital  
17 sentencing was a possibility. It was not referring to  
18 these as conditions upon which a capital sentence, as  
19 necessary conditions upon which a capital sentence could  
20 be imposed. In other words, it was stating a description  
21 of a generic kind of case rather than setting out a  
22 procedural condition. Is that what you're telling us?

23 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Well, Your Honor, I believe that  
24 what a judge has to do is examine independently --

25 QUESTION: No, I realize that. I'm just going

1 back to the, to the colloquy that you and I, and Justice  
2 Scalia and I have had about the language from Gibson. And  
3 I just want to get clear on this that when Gibson refers  
4 to a potential death penalty case, you in effect are  
5 telling us that what Gibson is referring to is a case in  
6 which at any time the death penalty might have been or  
7 might indeed be a possibility. But it is not, the court  
8 was not by that language referring to the preceding  
9 procedures as conditions which must be satisfied before a  
10 death penalty can be imposed. Isn't that what you're  
11 saying?

12 GEN. ECHOHAWK: That's what I'm saying, Your  
13 Honor. Your Honor, I believe that it's important to note  
14 that at no time has the defendant in this case made any  
15 factual representation about what evidence would be  
16 available to specifically address the death penalty that  
17 was not presented --

18 QUESTION: Well, but counsel, your opponent did  
19 that today. She said that she would have argued that even  
20 though polygraph at testimony is not admissible in a  
21 normal trial or a normal sentencing hearing, she would  
22 have argued in view of our Lockett case and the  
23 requirement of all mitigating circumstances being  
24 admissible, she would have argued that under that rule it  
25 was admissible. She might not have prevailed, but she

1 said she would have made that argument.

2 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Well, Your Honor, I think the  
3 polygraph evidence would have presented an issue for the  
4 trial court to consider, but the fact is that she did not  
5 offer that proof.

6 QUESTION: Well, right. And she said the reason  
7 she didn't do it is because she thought it was  
8 inadmissible because she didn't think it was a death case.  
9 Whereas she would have made the different argument had she  
10 realized it was a death case. And you say, basically,  
11 well, she should have realized it. That's what, it kind  
12 of boils down to that, I think.

13 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I believe that my  
14 assertion today is that, that evidence would have made,  
15 she has made no showing that the evidence, the outcome  
16 would be any different from anything that she could have  
17 produced.

18 QUESTION: Well, it's pretty hard for her to  
19 make that showing. How does she know what the judge would  
20 have done? But it does seem to me rather strange that the  
21 judge, on the very point that would have been involved in  
22 that testimony, makes such an ambiguous statement of  
23 findings in his explanation of the death sentence.

24 QUESTION: Is your opponent saying that this  
25 wasn't a death case? I mean, if it wasn't -- if the



1 effect of not giving the notice that death was still at  
2 issue was not to make it a death case, then presumably she  
3 didn't even think that you had to go through the separate  
4 sentencing phase at all. Was there any indication of that  
5 in the record?

6 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Well, Your Honor, I think she  
7 was clearly --

8 QUESTION: I didn't know that we were arguing  
9 about whether this was a death case or not. Is that  
10 really what's at issue?

11 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I understand that  
12 the petitioner's argument is that once the prosecutor made  
13 the recommendation, that it became a nondeath case, that  
14 the prosecutor could bind the court unless the court came  
15 out and made some specific statement that I'm going to  
16 ignore what the prosecutor's recommendation is.

17 QUESTION: I didn't understand her brief to say  
18 that. I didn't understand her brief to say that. Because  
19 if that is the case, then, then there would follow the  
20 rule about the polygraph would change, but there would  
21 also follow a lot of other things, including the fact that  
22 you wouldn't have to have a special separate sentencing  
23 hearing anyway.

24 QUESTION: Well, is that true? I thought you  
25 had a separate sentencing hearing anyway. Even if it had

1 not been death in the wind, there still would have had to  
2 have been a separate sentencing hearing, wouldn't there?

3 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, death was in the  
4 wind all the way through --

5 QUESTION: No, but even if it hadn't been. Had  
6 it not been, just for, to take her assumption for a  
7 hypothetical, you still would have had this very same  
8 hearing, wouldn't you?

9 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, the petitioner knew  
10 that the judge --

11 QUESTION: Can't you answer my question? Even  
12 if the judge had agreed that he was not going to impose  
13 the death penalty, would he not have held the same hearing  
14 he did in fact hold?

15 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Yes.

16 QUESTION: General Echohawk, under Idaho law if  
17 the judge is debating a sentence, there is no possibility  
18 of death, does the defendant ordinarily, is the defendant  
19 ordinarily allowed to call a number of mitigating  
20 circumstance witnesses?

21 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Yes, Your Honor, in all cases,  
22 whether it be capital or noncapital, the defense can call  
23 mitigation witnesses.

24 QUESTION: Even in a robbery case, say where the  
25 maximum is 20 years?

1 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Yes, Your Honor.

2 QUESTION: At a sentencing hearing, the  
3 defendant can call witnesses?

4 GEN. ECHOHAWK: That's correct, Your Honor.

5 QUESTION: So there was nothing about this  
6 hearing, per se, that would indicate that it's a death  
7 penalty hearing? The same hearing would have been held  
8 even if it were just a question of what the sentence  
9 should be, anything from a determinate number of years to  
10 life?

11 GEN. ECHOHAWK: I think, Your Honor, it was very  
12 clear that this was a capital sentencing.

13 QUESTION: Well, but so far as all the evidence  
14 and all of the arguments, those same evidence and same  
15 arguments would routinely have been presented in Idaho  
16 even if death had not been one of the options?

17 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Yes, Your Honor. I believe that  
18 any, the problems that counsel for the petitioner  
basically speak to are greatly related to the fact that 19  
20 she did not become counsel until September 20, and then  
21 after she became cocounsel moved to discharge a trial  
22 counsel. And this is something that the defendant brought  
23 upon himself. The judge made it very clear from the  
24 beginning that he would have problems with continuing the  
25 hearing because witnesses were under subpoena, and the

1 case had already been, had been tried actually back in  
2 March, and this was an October sentencing.

3 I believe that to a great extent any problems  
4 that exist have to be laid at the doorstep of the  
5 defendant himself. Throughout this sentencing proceeding  
6 trial counsel was available. Trial counsel knew, and  
7 admitted it through testimony given at a motion for new  
8 trial, that the death penalty was at stake. And in fact  
9 during one question and answer period when Ms. Fisher  
10 questioned Mr. Longeteig on the point, the comment was  
11 made, Mr. Longeteig, did you understand that death was a  
12 possibility here, or an option, and he said yes, I read  
13 the statute.

14 And that's essentially what our position is,  
15 that in reading the statute for first degree murder and  
16 the punishment provisions, it's very clear that death was  
17 an option and that a sentencing judge would be called upon  
18 to follow the provisions of 19-2515. And that the  
19 prosecutor could not in any way alter the course of that  
20 proceeding by a recommendation. His recommendation was  
21 merely advisory. What you have here is a situation where  
22 the judge was required also to take the evidence that was  
23 produced at trial and apply it to the standards in  
24 19-2515, essentially providing, applying known facts to a  
25 known procedure in the capital sentencing process.



1 Thank you very much.

2 QUESTION: Before you sit down, General, when  
3 was the notice -- was the notice given to the court of  
4 the, of the sentence that the prosecution was seeking  
5 before or after the presentence investigation? What is  
6 the order of that? Did the presentence investigation  
7 precede or follow the prosecution's recommendation?

8 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I don't recall the  
9 date that the presentence investigation was filed. The,  
10 the court --

11 QUESTION: Well, the order is May 17, at page 22  
12 of the Appendix, and it sets the presentence investigation  
13 report to be filed on June 14.

14 GEN. ECHOHAWK: There was a subsequent order in  
15 early September dealing with notice, and the prosecutor  
16 actually filed his notice, or, of intent not to seek the  
17 death penalty, I believe that was on September 13.

18 QUESTION: So that was after the presentence  
19 investigation was completed and filed, then?

20 GEN. ECHOHAWK: I think perhaps you have both  
21 sides covered, both before and after.

22 QUESTION: Let me just ask the same question in  
23 another way. Did the presentence investigation report  
24 refer to the fact that during the interval, there was a  
25 fairly long continuance, as I remember it, that the

1 defendant had testified at his brother's trial pursuant to  
2 the prosecution's request? Was that in the presentence  
3 report?

4 GEN. ECHOHAWK: Your Honor, I believe there was  
5 an addendum to the presentence investigation that  
6 addressed that.

7 QUESTION: That addressed that cooperation,  
8 yeah.

9 QUESTION: Thank you, General Echohawk. Ms.  
10 Fisher, do you have rebuttal? You have 9 minutes.

11 REBUTTAL ARGUMENT OF JOAN MARIE FISHER

12 ON BEHALF OF THE PETITIONER

13 MS. FISHER: Thank you, Chief Justice. There is  
14 a few matters in which the State has spoken to that I  
15 would like to address. Number one is the April 5th  
16 hearing in which the defense requested notice. I think if  
17 you look at that transcript there is, there is a couple of  
18 things that you have to remember. First, the defense,  
19 when they requested it, said, whether or not the State  
20 seeks the death penalty will materially alter the manner  
21 in which we approach this, this case. Secondly, the  
22 prosecutor indicated his intent to let the defense know in  
23 an early manner so that the defense would have plenty of  
24 time. Now the court does, following that colloquy between  
25 the defense attorney and the trial, the prosecutor, does

1 say well, regardless of the notice there will have to be  
2 an inquiry under 2515.

3 However, I didn't have the transcript. I asked  
4 for the transcript. And Mr. Echohawk indicates that Mr.  
5 Longeteig was available to me; however, the record will  
6 reflect that the trial court had to order Mr. Longeteig to  
7 stay in the courtroom at my beck and call. The transcript  
8 of Mr. Longeteig's testimony at postconviction will  
9 reflect that he had one contact with me from the date of  
10 my appointment on September 20.

11 QUESTION: Well, Ms. Fisher, do you think you  
12 can just take the case stepping into, as counselor, as, be  
13 kind of a tabula rasa, and not be bound by anything that  
14 has gone before in the case?

15 MS. FISHER: Not be bound -- no, I do not, Chief  
16 Justice. However, what -- what had occurred in the case  
17 when I stepped in was an affirmative court ordered notice  
18 that the death penalty wasn't at issue. What had never  
19 been litigated --

20 QUESTION: How did you know that?

21 MS. FISHER: How did I know that? It was on  
22 file. It was filed as a formal pleading.

23 QUESTION: And, and it was entered, that order  
24 was entered, or that letter -- was it a letter or what?

25 MS. FISHER: No, it was a formal pleading

1 indicating that the State was not recommending the death  
2 penalty.

3 QUESTION: But that, that was filed because, as  
4 a result of this hearing --

5 MS. FISHER: Well, certainly the hearing --

6 QUESTION: -- when the judge, the judge says I  
7 don't know whether or not the statute calls for this, and  
8 the defense attorney says I don't either, but I'm asking  
9 for it anyway. And -- at that hearing, this pleading was  
10 filed as a result of that hearing?

11 MS. FISHER: It's reasonable to infer. The  
12 hearing takes place on April 5th. Certainly the court's  
13 order --

14 QUESTION: You just said that that transcript of  
15 that hearing was not available to you.

16 MS. FISHER: That's correct.

17 QUESTION: Well, did you ask for it?

18 MS. FISHER: Yes. I asked for it, the  
19 transcript of the trial and all prior proceedings. And I  
20 was denied.

21 QUESTION: You were denied?

22 MS. FISHER: Denied.

23 QUESTION: And what was the ground for the  
24 denial? You couldn't even get a transcript of the trial?

25 MS. FISHER: That's correct, Justice White. I



1 asked for the transcript. He said well, you've got the  
2 preliminary hearing transcript and you've got the  
3 transcript of your client, and you have Mr. Longeteig, who  
4 I am ordering to be at your beck and call, and that's all  
5 you need.

6 QUESTION: Um hum.

7 QUESTION: Didn't he also say that you had tapes  
8 of the hearings?

9 MS. FISHER: He -- on October 10 he said we will  
10 try to make available to you tapes of the trial. Those  
11 tapes were made available to me on October 11. Certainly,  
12 because I was trying to get ready because my motion for  
13 continuance of the sentencing had been denied, I was  
14 trying to get my witnesses ready for the sentencing, and I  
15 also had to represent Bryan Lankford at his codefendant's  
16 motion for new trial, so I was unable to review the tapes.

17 QUESTION: In any case, I take it from what you  
18 say that you would, you never did get a tape of the  
19 hearing that we're discussing here.

20 MS. FISHER: No. It was only the tape of the  
21 trial itself.

22 QUESTION: Where did we ever get a transcript of  
23 that hearing, do you suppose?

24 MS. FISHER: The transcript was developed during  
25 the postconviction and the appellate process in the Idaho

1 Supreme Court.

2 QUESTION: What do you mean developed? It was  
3 transcribed from --

4 MS. FISHER: Well, it was typewritten.

5 QUESTION: Typewritten from a tape?

6 MS. FISHER: I have, I have no idea, Justice  
7 White. I'm sure that there was a tape. That tape was not  
8 made available to me. The only tapes made available to me  
9 were the 5-day jury trial.

10 Mr. Echohawk makes remarks that my surprise was  
11 never litigated. This case has never been litigated on my  
12 actual knowledge. Certainly when I filed the  
13 postconviction, the State responded that this was a legal  
14 issue. It was a question of whether the statutory notice  
15 carried through and negated the effect of any affirmative  
16 action by the trial court and the prosecutor. The Idaho  
17 Supreme Court did not go on the issue of actual notice, or  
18 my actual knowledge. It has never been litigated because  
19 it has never been raised. The question is, did the  
20 constructive notice of the statute effectively pass  
21 through that affirmative trial court's order?

22 QUESTION: Well, now, it's not as though  
23 anything that was done by the prosecutor or the trial  
24 court contradicted the statute. I mean, it isn't as  
25 though -- you didn't receive any assurance, did you,

1 affirmative assurance that the death penalty was not at  
2 issue?

3 MS. FISHER: The court order says, says -- well,  
4 I suppose I took assurance from the court order and from  
5 the resulting notice. Certainly the trial court never  
6 said to me --

7 QUESTION: The court order said what? Said that  
8 the prosecution was not seeking the death penalty?

9 MS. FISHER: That's correct.

10 QUESTION: All right.

11 QUESTION: They ordered the --

12 MS. FISHER: They ordered the prosecutor to  
13 say --

14 QUESTION: They ordered the prosecutor to say,  
15 and then the prosecutor filed a pleading in response to  
16 that.

17 MS. FISHER: That's correct, Justice White.

18 QUESTION: So the court never said anything  
19 about, about whether the death penalty would be sought or  
20 not.

21 MS. FISHER: That's correct. And that's the  
22 bottom line here. All we, all that the trial court needed  
23 to do, having ordered a notice which appeared to have,  
24 which was certainly discretionary and within the power of  
25 the court to do under the general sentencing statute,

1 having ordered it, having received the formal pleading  
2 from the State, all the court had to do was somewhere give  
3 the defendant an opportunity to know that regardless of  
4 the State's order, regardless of the State's filing  
5 pursuant to the order, he was still considering the death  
6 penalty.

7 QUESTION: The -- I suppose that judge, had that  
8 judge tried a death case before?

9 MS. FISHER: These were his first two death  
10 cases. He had not.

11 QUESTION: He seemed to think that it was sort  
12 of a strange request. He didn't know whether the statute  
13 provided for it, and the pros -- and the defense attorney  
14 said he didn't either, but he was still asking for it. Is  
15 that the regular procedure in -- or, have there been many  
16 death cases --

17 MS. FISHER: There have been a number of first  
18 degree murder cases. There are currently 19 death, people  
19 sentenced to death in Idaho. It's not normal procedure  
20 for the State to affirmatively order the, I mean for the  
21 court to affirmatively order. It is the court taking the  
22 unusual action under its general discretionary power to  
23 order such notice as the court may require that changes  
24 the whole structure of this case. Had the State simply  
25 made no recommen -- or simply said nothing about the death



1 penalty one way or the other, then we'd be in an Osborn  
2 situation.

3 QUESTION: Is there something, from something  
4 you said before it sounded as though when you get to the  
5 penalty phase in a capital case, is there something like a  
6 pretrial order entered outlining the issues that are to be  
7 tried?

8 MS. FISHER: In a death penalty case?

9 QUESTION: Yeah.

10 MS. FISHER: Not generally. In this case the,  
11 the issues were defined by the court's order. And then  
12 when this --

13 QUESTION: Which order?

14 MS. FISHER: Only the court order regarding  
15 whether the State was seeking the death penalty. If they  
16 sought the death penalty, then to, you know, to define the  
17 aggra -- statutory aggravating factors. The diffi --

18 QUESTION: Ms. Fisher, could I ask you --

19 MS. FISHER: Yes.

20 QUESTION: What you're asking us to -- what you  
21 think the trial court had to say was not merely to clarify  
22 for you that legally he could impose the death penalty  
23 despite the State's recommendation, but as I understand  
24 what you're saying, you want him to say not merely I  
25 legally can, but I am considering the death penalty.

1 You --

2 MS. FISHER: That the death penalty is still, is  
3 still a consideration, yes, Justice.

4 QUESTION: A live consideration, not just that  
5 legally I may do it. You, you want him to affirmatively  
6 let counsel knowing that I am still thinking about that  
7 because I think it's a possibility here. That's what  
8 you're asking?

9 MS. FISHER: Yes. Yes.

10 QUESTION: Why did he have to do that? Isn't it  
11 enough if the law is clear?

12 MS. FISHER: The law is not clear. It was not  
13 clear in 1984.

14 QUESTION: Let's grant that. Why wouldn't it be  
15 enough for him to say, I want you to know, I'm not telling  
16 you what I'm thinking about because I haven't thought  
17 about it yet, I want to leave my mind open to all the  
18 arguments first. But I want you to know that I may  
19 legally impose the death penalty. Would that be enough?

20 MS. FISHER: That would have been enough.

21 QUESTION: Thank you, Ms. Fisher.

22 MS. FISHER: Thank you.

23 CHIEF JUSTICE REHNQUIST: The case is submitted.

24 (Whereupon, at 1:56 p.m., the case in the  
25 above-entitled matter was submitted.)

## CERTIFICATION

*Alderson Reporting Company, Inc., hereby certifies that  
the attached pages represents an accurate transcription of  
electronic sound recording of the oral argument before the  
Supreme Court of The United States in the Matter of:*

#88-7247 - BRYAN STUART LANKFORD, Petitioner V. IDAHO

-----  
*and that these attached pages constitutes the original transcript  
of the proceedings for the records of the court.*

BY *Roger Stuart Antel*  
(REPORTER)

RECEIVED  
SUPREME COURT, U.S.  
MARSHAL'S OFFICE

91 FEB 28 AM 0:43