

# **Texas Is About to Execute a Woman for Her Daughter's Death. But She May Well Be Innocent**

April 21, 2022

The clock is ticking. On April 27, the state of Texas is scheduled to execute by lethal injection 53 year-old [Melissa Lucio](#). In 2008, Ms. Lucio was convicted largely on the basis of a confession for the alleged murder of her two-year-old daughter, Mariah. Now her attorneys have filed a clemency petition to the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles. They point to evidence indicating that the child died from injuries resulting from an accident, not murder.

I did not work on this case and am not privy to the entire case file, so I am not in a position to argue for Ms. Lucio's actual innocence. But I am in a position to say this: The five-plus hours of police interrogation of this highly vulnerable woman, starting approximately two hours after her child's death and late into the night, were so psychologically coercive that the risk of eliciting a false confession was substantial.

I know what you're thinking: It is inconceivable that an innocent person would confess to a crime they did not commit—much less a murder, much less the murder of their own child. It's inconceivable until you are informed at two levels—the first pertaining to the reality in general of false confessions; the second pertaining specifically to the interrogation of Melissa Lucio.

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