

EDWARDS INTERVIEW

don't know if you could honestly accuse him of that. He may respond fairly and accurately by saying, "Well, no, the law gives me that authority and I am exercising that authority as I see fit."

PREJEAN: One of the interesting things happening in Louisiana is that since 1987 there have been only three new death sentences handed down by juries. Our state, it seems, on a practical level, not legislatively, is, in fact, shutting down the death penalty. What do you make of this?

EDWARDS: I realize that there has been a softening of attitude except in the most extraordinary crimes, especially now that you have separate trials to fix the penalty. A guy that's on trial in the first phase determining guilt or innocence does not want to present witnesses pleading for mercy because he's trying to get out, but once he's convicted and the jury sits to determine his sentence, he has the opportunity to go before them and say, "I did wrong, but I was a good guy, I went to Sunday school, I took care of my Mama..." You can introduce a great deal of evidence about his person and that is very helpful.

PREJEAN: When you have a good attorney. You know, don't you, Sam Dalton from New Orleans? (Edwards nods affirmatively). Well, Sam's been an attorney for many years and he says unequivocally that no matter what the crime, if you have a good attorney at the trial level, you will not get a death sentence. He says that's