Supporters, murdered Robert Harris out of vengeance, plain and simple. Reading of the execution in the papers, I was drawn to a picture of a pro-death protester, marching and chanting, carrying a sign asking for "an eye for an eye." Vengeance, though, is not justice.

When a man kills another in a fit of revenge or lust or rage, he is thrown in jail, over-eager prosecution or faulty defense is an unjust trial, they did not mean a lightning execution of an无辜者. Revenge, though, is not justice. American history is full of confessions are coerced, and evidence is misplaced. Innocent people are convicted, only to be released, if they are lucky, after serving 10 or 20 years in prison. In a world where the highest punishment is execution, a minimal failure rate in the justice system is hardly tolerable, especially if opportunities for appeal are widely available.

If we allow capital punishment, who has the right to say, when it should be imposed — when a wrong is so heinous that it can only be righted by execution. American history is full of instances when this very decision was twisted by exasperated politicians and racist judges to murder blacks and immigrants on shaky evidence for even the slightest transgressions. When the question is one of life and death, no one has the right to say that one man deserves to die and another doesn’t, or to, as the Supreme Court did in the case of one of the most noble traditions in American culture is the belief that no matter how vile a wartime aggressor, enemy prisoners of war must be treated as victims of captivity and liberty upon the cessation of hostilities. Unfortunately, though, the same noble, ethical standards America applies to even the most bloodthirsty foreign invaders it will not apply to its own citizens. No matter how we try to justify it, capital punishment will never be more than barbarism.