

Title

Fasting For Justice

Subtitle

Fighting for Freedom

Date

October, 7<sup>th</sup>, 2014

This is a play for the theatre

A brief paragraph about the play

How far would you be willing to go to gain Freedom if your life depended on it? This battle is one fought without common weapons of war or violence but with the strength of the will and the human spirit. Come along, watch and experience one man's fight against injustice. His life depends on it.

My address

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# Act 1

Scene 1: Setting: A Filthy one man prison cell on death row. In the cell there is a one piece stainless steel sink/Toilet. There is also an old decrepit television in the wall. A Table which is bolted to the wall by a concrete slab on top of which is a mattress. The prisoners appeals have been exhausted and the Governor has just signed his death warrant.

Prisoner: [Sitting on his bed with his head in his hands.] [Emotionally] Here I sit. Condemned to death by lethal injection. Yes, we are all set to die sometime, but to know the day, the hour, that the State which flaunts this ideal of Justice will kill a man whose innocent, deliberately, unjustly. Is unnerving. I'm burned out, exhausted, tired, [begins to get up off the bed and pace the cell] edgy, nervous, tense, uneasy, agitated and stressed out because death calmly awaits me, seeking to extinguish my existence from off the face of the earth and I'm helpless unable to do anything trapped and confined to this cell, Defenseless.

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For thirty years I've been on death row  
trusting in the Criminal Justice System in this  
Country to exonerate me. To declare my  
Innocence, For my name to be vindicated, Yet all  
the patience has been in vain. My composed lawyers  
quietly assured me after I lost trial, the  
penalty phase and was sentenced to death that  
I would succeed on appeal, when I was denied  
justice my lawyers told me we would prevail  
on the following appeal, as if their lives were  
in jeopardy. Lies all deceitful lies. Now, what  
can I do? [prisoner sits down on his bed again]  
IF I allow the authorities to murder me my life  
becomes a waste a total loss. No, I will not allow  
it, I cannot die a coward's death. It's martyrdom  
for the principles I believe in. So I'll fast till I die  
of starvation or until the media, public, and those  
in power realize they are about to execute a man  
whose not guilty of the heinous barbaric crimes  
with which I've been charged and convicted.

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First things first I'm going to refuse my tray the next time the orderly and the guard come around to serve chow and I will continue to refuse to eat every meal, breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Resist the hunger pains, Fight for my right to equity, Fairness and justice. For my life For a legacy that lives on long after death, Forever, invincible. And for those who come after. I know there is a long road ahead of me though death from starvation takes anywhere from 80 to a hundred and twenty-six days. Now let me draft a letter for the editor of every major newspaper in the country and here in this state as well. [Pulling out a piece of paper and a pen] Dear Editor Hi! [the prisoner speaks as he writes] How are you? I'm a prisoner sentenced to death and I'm writing you to day to explain to you the horrifying injustice that has befallen me.

Rocco Ranallo

Thirty years ago I was charged and convicted of a brutal kidnapping, rape, and triple murder of a 12 year old girl, her mother, and her police officer husband. The facts of the case are so gruesome, appalling, and nightmarish that I'd rather not recount them. What I would like to explain to you is to protest my innocence. I know your thinking yeah right but please I ask you to hear me out, because its with your help and the help of your investigative journalists that I'll walk out of here a free man plus just think it will be a great story and help you sell papers.

Now the unique facts of my case I want to share with you are that they have convicted the wrong man. Here's how, the victims in this case were my next door neighbors. The proximity of my home to theirs is how I became a suspect in this case. Another key fact is that I was set to become the next governor of the state according to the consensus of the state and all the polls. The problem arises in that the incumbent governor, his cronies, and his campaign contributors could not suffer to see me in office because of my moral upright character and integrity.

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They knew the moment I set foot in office I would uncover the corruption present in the states government, which I was purposed to do. Therefore in order to protect their substantial investment, their names and character, their honor, they knew they had to get rid of me somehow to ensure I wasn't elected to office, to discredit me, and to forever protect their names. Thus the plan was devised by the then Governor, his Cabinet, and the Chief of Police for the County where in I resided, to frame me with a ghastly evil crime. So they hit close to home literally. They knew that my family and the Victims family were very close. They saw how our families regularly frequented each other's homes for cookouts and get togethers and used it to their cruel advantage. They knew this would provide ample evidence in the form of my fingerprints at the Victims home. The Governor then ordered his henchmen, former convicted felons whom he had pardoned just for the purpose of murdering my neighbors at the most opportune time when I would be home alone asleep. Leaving me with absolutely no alibi. They had done some significant planning and knew my wife would be away at work and my son at school. They also knew that the police officer and his family would all be home together. Since they had all come down with a terrible Flu.

Rocco Ranallo

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It was at this most fitting time, when the circumstances were just right that they moved in and murdered and raped the mother and daughter while the father was forced to watch and then he was also murdered. These decadent politicians were thorough and wanted to ensure that the prosecutors case had absolutely no holes. They knew my fingerprints and DNA would be all over the home of my neighbor because of our friendship. However they did not stop there. Since the victims families bodies were not discovered until three days later. When I knocked on my neighbors door to find out why I had not heard from them. After nobody answered I found the door open so I casually walked in and discovered the carnage. Thats when I called the police. As if the circumstantial and physical evidence against me wasn't strong enough, the detectives in conducting their investigation found a lawn service that was cutting my neighbor across the streets yard. And the "employees" of this lawn service are none other than the governors henchman who all testified.

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They testified they observed me going into the residence acting suspiciously and carrying a gun. So you have it Mr. Editor an open and shut case. You probably asking yourself how can you help? Well you can help by trying to locate the governors henchman. They were all young at the time of trial early 80's their names are present in my court case. All of the other players in this collusion are dead. And it's only by God's Grace that I've been preserved all these years. I'm confident that if you speak to these individuals they will reveal to you the story I'm telling is true and can provide the evidence to exonerate me. In my heart I'm assured that truth will conquer the lies, overcome the evil, vanquish my name, and declare the victory over wickedness for time immemorial. Finally, to show you that my plea to you is sincere and that I'm telling the truth to the point where I'm ready to die for what I stand for. I start fasting today and will continue to fast until I meet face to face with death.

ROCCO RANALLO



Or until I'm released from this unconstitutional  
incarceration (the prisoner addresses the envelope and  
puts the letter in the envelope and seals the envelope.)

(A guard and another prisoner walk up to the  
cell door/bars of the death row prisoners cell with  
a tray of food)

Guard: [hits the cell door] Chow time. (turning to the  
prisoner orderly) give him his tray. [orderly nods and  
hands prisoner his tray.] [Guard turns to the death  
row inmate and says]

Guard: Just think you won't have to worry about  
eating here shortly, your as good as dead. hahaha

Prisoner: well your right I don't have to worry about eating  
but its sooner than you think. It starts right now. I refuse  
this tray, I don't want it and for that matter I don't want any  
tray. I'm going on a fast until death if necessary for truth, declaring  
once and for all my innocence, if it results in death then this  
world wasn't worthy of my presence.

Guard: makes no difference to me. dead is dead, you wont last  
long though, I bet that, come on orderly, [orderly follows]

Prisoner: [As the Guard walks away] That's what you think make  
sure you put that in your paperwork, (stage fades to black)

## Scene Two

Setting: Warden is sitting in a nice chair at a desk, on the desk is various pieces of paper scattered around. There is a phone which the warden is on, shoes propped up on the desk, talking to the guard. The following conversation ensues.

Guard: Yes, Mr Warden, I've got an issue down here on death row. I've been doing this for seventeen years Sir and I've never seen anything like it and it's worrying me, and that's why I'm bringing it right to you.

Warden: Well what is it already?

Guard: You, know that inmate, the one who is scheduled to die, the governor just signed his death warrant.

Warden: Yes, it still might be years before he's executed.

Guard: Yeah, well he's taken a vow to himself. He refuses to eat. He declares his righteousness being guiltless of any wrong doing and says he won't eat until he's let go.

Warden: Yeah right, he'll eat watch, give him a couple of days.

Guard: That's what I had thought Sir but unnn{{shly}} he's been fasting for 40 days...

Warden: {{angrily}} Forty days??? why didn't you contact me sooner?

Guard: {{timidly}} Sir honestly because I was sure that he would give up and I just keep thinking he'd eat.

Warden: I don't pay y'all to think, see all the problems I got now because you were thinking??? be ready I'm going to be there in 20 minutes when you serve lunch [hanging up the phone] In my 20 years as a warden never have I heard anything like this [phone rings] who could this be [picking up the phone] hello?

Reporter: Hi, is this the warden?

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Warden: Yes

Reporter: Good. I'm calling you in regards to a certain inmate at your facility who has written me a couple of letters. He's scheduled to be executed soon. Now in these letters he's told me he's innocent and because he's innocent he is fasting until justice is served in his case. The most recent letter from him says he's fasted for thirty days straight. I think this will make a great story so I want an interview with him.

Warden: No, I won't allow it.

Reporter: Excuse me sir, I wasn't asking permission, according to the law you must allow us an interview with this individual. I'd like to know at what time you can accommodate us. And if it's not soon enough we will have our lawyers calling you and your lawyers very soon. Just the fact you are refusing to allow us it is very suspicious. Should I be investigating you for a great story?

Warden: No, it's not that it's just, I need sometime I'll tell you what how does 30 minutes sound? because you have to clear security and all. You do know that this is the maximum section of the prison right?

Reporter: Yes I understand 30 minutes sounds great we will be there soon.

Warden: [hanging up the phone] and pound the desk) Now, I got these reporters banging down my door, the inmate protesting his innocence could it be?? well, it's time for me to go find out.  
(The warden gets up and leaves)

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## Scene Three

Setting: once again it's the deathrow prisoners cell with the door with the bars. The filthy cell with a one piece toilet and sink. The T.V. in the wall, a table, a concrete slab on top of which is a mattress, Prisoner in the cell

(Guard and warden walking up to the prisoners cell door) Warden: Hey inmate come to the door. (Prisoner walks up to the cell door) What's this I hear about you on a hunger strike, protesting your innocence? you need to quit all this Foolishness before I send in these guards to fough you up and it aint going to be nice, let me just say it will hurt a little.

Prisoner: It is only God whom I fear, your men and pain cannot scare me. It's liberty and freedom I desire. Give me Justice or I continue to fast, welcoming my envious destiny, expectantly with joy for the crown of rejoicing which awaits me in the life to come. These thirty years I've bravely withstood the most foul filthy expressions man could spew. My burdens have been enormous. The stress alone would have killed a lesser man. My honesty, My Integrity Compels me to Resistance against this greedy corrupt Capitalistic monster. It's brutality devouring flaunted ideals of Justice destroying its citizens. I stand a testimony a tragedy for all to view. As of right now history will tell a story of me which is evil. However through my fasting, this stroke of genius

Rocco Renaldo

I deliver a fatal blow to that story and take history's pen in my hand and courageously write the truth. (The reporters come on the scene. There are five reporters. They join the warden and the guard. And begin asking the prisoner questions the prisoner saw their entrance and stopped his monologue.)

Reporter 1: Hi, Mr Prisoner. Isn't it true you've been fasting 40 days now?

Prisoner: Yes

Reporter 2: And if we are unable to locate your witnesses are you still willing to die of starvation watching your body slowly wither away?

Prisoner: Cowardice abides not within me. I'll die as my hunger screams with a loud voice to all my impeccability. Not guilty.

Reporter 3: You've been fasting for 40 days, you do understand you have a long way to go before you die of starvation?

Prisoner: Yes, time is not an obstacle I face as I unveil the truth, rather it is like a faithful friend helping to unmask the governments lies on my quest for justice

Reporter 4: How has this administration here at the prison reacted to your hunger strike?

Prisoner: Very rudely I might add. They have responded with threats of violence. Ignorance is all. Which is the norm when dealing with government entities

Reporter 5: What is it you want from fasting?

Prisoner: I want my Freedom nothing else. To walk out of here a freeman.

Warden: OK thats enough; The operation of the prison must continue. Reporters you must go [Reporter's exit Stage] Warden to prisoner: your a deadman, all of this will amount to nothing. actually Im going to call the governor and see if we can't speed up this execution. watch you'll see. (Stage fades to Black)

## Act 2

Setting: The deathrow prisoners cell, The filthy cell with a one piece toilet/sink. The T.V. in the wall. A table, a concrete slab on top of which is a mattress. prisoner is in the cell. A hundred and twenty days have passed since the prisoner began his fast. The prisoner is alone in his cell visibly weaker, skinner

Prisoner: (wearily) Every waking moment is filled with pain, The agony is overwhelming. Can't hardly sleep at night for the hunger pains are so great they awaken me out of a dead sleep, Grasping on to life as I get closer to death. Death reaches through from its dungeon dragging, pulling me closer to an eternity. The horrific suffering I've endured, all for Justice, My Freedom, my Name. [Guard enters stage] Guard! you got some mail sucker. [slides the letter through the bars (exits stage)]

Prisoner: [picking up the letter opening it and reads] Dear Prisoner, we all would like to thank you for your patience in this very difficult situation. After investigating the leads you provided for us. we are happy to inform you that we have located your only surviving witness.

Rocco Ranallo

The other two are dead, Luckily for you, you contacted us when you did because this last witness is in the hospital staring death in the eyes. The day we went to speak to him, he did not look good but he was able to answer our questions and in so doing he signed and we have secured a notarized death bed confession to the crime. We had our staff attorney take the Confession to the Chief Judge. After speaking to the Judge we are happy to inform you our attorney was able to ensure you immediate release. Sincerely Reporters. (Standing up holding the letter in the air the prisoner exclaims)

Hallelujah!!! Oh how Sweet is the Savor of Victory, the Sound of liberty and Freedom harmoniously ringing for all to hear My release is pending, my heart is pounding. My Spirit filled with justice for my life. Yet what a travesty this has all been my neighbor and his family were denied Justice, Those who planned and committed these atrocious crimes escaped justice in this life.

Rocco Ranallo

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The End.