



The Exonerated

Jessica Blank , Erik Jensen

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What effect does it have on a person--a soul, a life--to have freedom and self-respect stripped away and then, ostensibly, returned years later after decades of incarceration? *The Exonerated* attempts to answer this question through the words of six innocent men and women who, after years in jail, emerged from death row to try to reclaim what was left of their lives.

Among them are Sunny Jacobs, a mother of two whose unwavering belief during sixteen years in jail that she would be released (despite the execution of her husband, who was also innocent, for the same crime) allowed her to dedicate herself to being a "living memorial" when she was freed. There is Kerry Max Cook, a Texan who was convicted of murdering a young woman even though she was found with another man's hair grasped in her fist--a man whom "Texas killed a thousand times, and just keeps on doing it" in his nightmares. And there is Delbert Tibbs, a black Chicago poet who speaks of his years on death row with anger and bitterness, yet also, as he says, "still sings." All their stories have been compiled and edited by Jessica Blank and Erik Jensen into *The Exonerated*, a play that is both a riveting work of theater and an exploration of the dark side of the American criminal justice system.

The Exonerated Details

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From Reader Review The Exonerated for online ebook

Seána Johansson-Keys says

Read this for my drama studies - I was thinking of doing a monologue from it but none of the monologues stood out to me. However, as a whole the play was haunting and eye opening. Its quick pace felt very smooth and the stories worked well together in the sense that the sudden switch in narrative was not jarring or confusing. I can't say it's the best play I've ever read but I definitely would recommend it, 4 stars.

Glynn Allen says

I was cast in this show while attending the University of Southern Indiana. I was cast as the character; David. The young man that was convicted at the age 18. This is a very powerful play that share the lives of six people that was wrongly accused. I recommend reading and going to see this show. Telling the story of these people was very difficult; because I became one with this character and all the emotions erupted from me. I never knew I could cry on spot; I wanted the audience to feel this man's pain and sorrow. I wanted each person to be thankful for the lives that they live. Once, he was free; he still felt apart of the prison life.

Gabriela says

This is going to stay with me. As it should.

Marc says

Based on true events, interesting to read the stories about corruption, racism, poor investigations, that put these people on death row, one for 22 years, when they were not even guilty of the crime they were convicted for!

Taylor says

Emotional.

Elsof says

Short, soulful, tragic play about people who were on death row, what they did(n't) do to get there, and what they live with now.

Charity says

After that, the main adjustment was just learning to feel again. You know, when you're in prison, you can't allow yourself to feel too much. So when you get out, you've gotta practice. I had to practice a bunch to be human again. To remind me.

Gabrielle says

The more testimonial plays I read, the less I like them. I think there's a reason drama was developed in the history of civilization. If there wasn't a demand for it, we would all watch Court TV and go exclusively to trials for our entertainment.

Gabrielle says

Play #2 of the 1-per-week marathon. It has some good monologues, but I didn't like it overall. It is about the prison system and the likelihood of minorities being convicted wrongly.

Tricia says

I read this in my political theater class and then I drove all the way up to Logan in one of the worst snow storms I'd ever experienced to see it performed. Worth it.

Peyton Smith says

This was a short read, but definitely worth it. My only disappointment was that I wanted to know more! I would love to see this play! I would love to read a novel about these individuals in more depth! Their stories were heartbreaking but are worth being told!

Stacey says

Fantastic though I imagine it's way better staged. Was hard to keep everyone straight, character wise.

Jeffrey says

Not bad for a homework assignment.

Mercedes says

Discusses the issues of the American justice system.

Kate Dee says

A fantastic play. It shocked and touched me and made me realise how lucky I am to live in a country where death penalty is not an option and how important it is to do everything in my power to make sure it stays that way.
