



The Exonerated: A Play

By 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.

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Editorial Review

Review

“[A]stark, spellbinding play [and] a profoundly moving excursion through the cracks in the justice system.”
?Peter Marks, *Washington Post*

“An artful and moving evening of documentary theater . . . The play is on the one hand a devastating memorial to injustice but it also pays handsome tribute to the resilience of human hearts and minds.”
?Charles Isherwood, *Variety*

“Both compelling and deeply moving... This documentary-style presentation relating the true stories of people exonerated of their crimes while serving on death row is a riveting theatrical experience.” ?Frank Scheck, *Hollywood Reporter*

“Intense and deeply affecting” ?Ben Brantley, *The New York Times*

About the Author

Jessica Blank and **Erik Jensen** are actors as well as playwrights. Married to each other, they live in New York

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