

A Statement from Death Row

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Once again, Pennsylvania's highest court has shown us the best justice that the F.O.P. can buy. Ignoring right reason, their own precedent and fundamental justice, they have returned to the stranglehold of death. In their echoes of the tortured logic of Judge Albert Sabo, they have reflected a striking fidelity to the D.A.'s office. If it is fair to have a tribunal who are in part admittedly paid by the F.O.P.—and at least one justice who can double as D.A. one day and a judge the next in the same case—then fairness is just as empty a word as “justice.” To paraphrase Judge Sabo, it is “just an emotional feeling.”

In recent months the Pennsylvania Supreme Court has upheld death sentences in cases where an impartial reading of transcripts or pleadings would make an honest affirmation all but impossible. They have ignored all evidence of innocence, overlooked clear instances of jury taint, and cast a dead eye on defense attorneys' ineffectiveness. What they have done in my case is par for the course. This is a political decision, paid for by the F.O.P. on the eve of the election. It is a Mischief Night gift from a court that has a talent for the macabre.

I am sorry that this court did not rule on the right side of history. But I am not surprised. Every time our nation has come to a fork in the road with regard to race, it has chosen to take the path of compromise and betrayal. On October 29 1998, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court committed a collective crime: it damned due process, strangled the fair trial, and raped justice.

Even after this legal *léger de main* [slight of hand] I remain innocent. A court cannot make an innocent man guilty. Any ruling founded on injustice is not justice. The righteous fight for life, liberty, and for justice can only continue.