

An Open Letter to Troy Davis following the Supreme Court Decision

By Gautam Narula

October 15, 2008

Dear Mr. Troy Davis,

When I came home from school yesterday, the first thing I did was ask my father if the U.S. Supreme Court had made a decision the case. When he said he didn't know, I immediately raced to my computer and checked on the internet. When I saw the decision, my heart seemed to have frozen; something didn't seem to be right- surely there must be some mistake. I went on to my email account, and to my horror my mother confirmed it in an email- the highest court in the land, the same court that had ruled on *Brown vs. Board of Education*, the same court that was to uphold justice in the first true democratic republic in the world, could not see that there was even the slightest chance that you were innocent, even the slightest chance that maybe Georgia was wrong. I immediately sent a message to my friend Sahil telling him the news. Even as I write this, I am still in shock. But don't think that I have given up. I submitted a letter to the editor of the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. I signed Amnesty International's new petition to the Georgia Board of Paroles; I have also told many of my friends, and two days ago I gave a speech on why the death penalty should be abolished. I haven't given up hope, because I know the truth- I know that you did not beat a homeless man, and you did not murder a police officer.

I have also been reading the books you sent me whenever I have the time. I do not know in what direction my spiritual journey will take me; whether it will lead to Christianity, like you, to Buddhism, like my namesake, Siddhartha Gautama, to Hinduism, like my ancestors, or perhaps to some other religion. In my world history class, we learned how the Persian emperor Cyrus the Great took the powerful city of Babylon without any bloodshed; I was amazed to find out that, according to the books that you gave me, the Bible predicted this event. I am still young and have much to learn, but the books you have sent me and the things you have told me will help me find the right path.

I just want you to remember not to despair, no matter how hopeless the situation is. You have empowered the minds of hundreds of thousands of people; you have changed me completely; less than two months ago, I was more or less unaware of the injustices in the world, of the travesties that exist within our very own country, of the struggles that every single Troy Davis around the world has to face. I am no longer content to sit and be ignorant of injustice, or apathetic, or to watch others fight it. I am longer content to be on the sidelines while there are lives to be saved and people to be helped. I am no longer content to be the person I used to be. I was not a bad person, but thanks to you, I am now a much better person. I know that you have impacted many others in the same way you have impacted me.

In spite of all that has happened, I still believe you will be saved. I don't believe that God, fate, destiny, or whatever one wants to call it would put you so close to death multiple times just for it to all end here. Not all the doors are closed, and as long as there is a possibility, I am not afraid to believe. I will take that fishing trip that you promised me, Mr. Davis. As a vegetarian, I'll just be watching though ;).

I remember that you told me that you were not afraid right before your execution because God had taken away all your fear, and He had lifted the burden off of you. Well, remember, should the unthinkable happen, the ones who did this to you will one day have to face the consequences of what they've done. The one who is the real killer will one day have to come to terms with what he has done. He is the real prisoner. He will have to live with the fact that he has hurt a great many people. As you said, they can imprison your body, but not your spirit. Similarly, his body may be free, but his spirit will never be.

"They" by Gautam Narula

They said no, they said he did the crime,

They said go, finish him off this time.

They locked him up, they put him away,

They said yup, we'll kill him one day.

When his family came, when they started to cry,

To them it was the same, they didn't bat an eye

September 23rd, it was supposed to be the end

But God had heard, he helped his friend.

October 14th, we're back to square one,

But they don't realize, they still haven't won.

As long as they kill, as long as people die,

No they never will, never will understand why.

They won't know, why he is still strong,

They'll say no, this must be wrong!

How can he be happy, how can he laugh as well?

He should be unhappy, locked in his cell!

But while they kill, and while they destroy,

They will never be half the man whose name is Troy.

Gautam Narula, 15