

As I lay here upon this gurney before you [Date] to be put to death by the State of Florida for the January 12, 1990 armed robbery and shooting death of Mr Ronald Willis of Yulle, Florida, ask yourself this, did he really do it? Was he the trigger man? Or did our system fail us again, and we set the wrong man free? So, are we about to execute another innocent man? Well thats a question only two people have the answer to, John David Hatch and myself. For this case had no eyewitnesses except myself and Hatch and there was no DNA. So it all came down to Hatch's word against mine to who pulled the trigger. So the queston is, are you killing an innocent man? Well thats a question you might never have the answer to. But then again the answer to your question, may arrive too late.

As you all know my name is Ronald Wayne Clark, Jr. and I'm 35 years old and I've spent over 1/3 of my life confined to a 9x6 cell here on Florida's Death Row and throughout the legal process, I've been provided with one after another inadequate attorney. Provided by the great State orf Florida, from my incompetent trial lawyer all the way through the appellate process.

Now I've seen the appeals process last 15-20 even 25 years and you want to talk cruel and unusual punishment. Well confining a man or woman to a 9x6 cage for 20 to 25 years with the sentence of death hanging over his or her head, if this is not cruel and unusual punishment, then cruel and unusual punishment does not exist in todays society. For being confined to suffer day after day, week after week, month after month, year in and year out until your captors are ready to take what remaining life you have left, from you. And yet you want to call yourselves a civilized society?! Well I think not! For what kind of civilized society straps their fellow man or woman to a chair, table or gurney and puts them to death as his or her fellow ctizens stand around and view this horrific case of premeditated murder? For this is nothing more than premeditated murder at the highest level, sought after and justified by the majority against the most poor and underpriveged in our society. Two perfect examples to prove my point is O.J. Simpson and actor Robert Blake for in neither case would the prosecutor seek the death penalty if found guilty. So where is equal justice? Or as our forefathers said "Justice for all". Its a shame when a man or womans life and or fate hangs in the balance of a dollar. And yet this is what our justice system has come to and I don't use the word justice system because I've seen no justice in this system !!

Sure its a given, America may have one of the best systems in the world. But one things for sure, its far from perfect. I know because I'm laying here strapped to this gurney about to be put to death while my co defendant, John David Hatch, walks the streets a free man after serving 11 years 2 months on a 25 year plea agreement for his testimony against me. It was his word against mine to who the trigger man was.

So this I know, when dealing with the death penalty and the taking of a human life, an irreversable act, we need more than just the bet, we need perfection and a perfect system is just not possible. For when human emotions are involved, mistakes will be made. Just look at Florida's average on mistakes and executions. From 1979-2002 Florida executed 54 men and women. Yet had to release 24 off of death row. So for every two executions one person goes free. Not a very good average I would say. And then it makes you wonder how many slipped through the cracks of a broken system. How many innocent men and women have died? Its a given that new technology in DNA is helping eliminate a lot of mistakes but unfortunately every case is not built around DNA or eye witness testimony. No most cases as in mine was built around circumstantial evidence.

Yet then again look at the 24 people that had to be set free such as Juan Melendez. Who the prosecutors said was beyond rehabilitation and convinced these 12 jurors to take this man's life and yet this very man is now living a normal productive life in society. Mistakes! Mistakes! Mistakes! Because society seeing only with blood red vengeance overlooks the whole picture. For its not revenge we need to seek, its justice! Seek and execute justice not people. We don't steal from the thief, rob the robber or rape the rapist. Then why must we try to murder the murderer! Violence breeds violence. Just look at todays society. But lets also look at the misuse of the death penalty and keep in mind that everything is designed to be used a certain way may not always be used in that way. For in most cases the death penalty is improperly used. Judges and prosecutors using it to further their political careers. Prosecutors using it to keep a man or woman from going to trial. Threatening them to take a plea bargain or they'll seek the death penalty. As they did in my case. Yet our forefathers guaranteed us in the Constitution to a trial by a jury of our peers. Yet the prosecutor tried to deny me of my Constitutional right. For before my trial a plea bargain of life in prison was offered. I refused, knowing Hatch was receiving 25 years and again it was his word against mine to who pulled the trigger.

I opted for trial, the prosecutor threatens me, if you take this to trial you will lose and we will get the death penalty. Now either this was or wasn't a death penalty case and if it was, then why was a plea bargain offered? So I opted for trial, thinking Justice would prevail. Not knowing the system as I do know, if so, I would have realized I stood no chance whatsoever. For I was assigned a state paid, inadequate attorney by the name of Henry Davis who had never handled a

capital case and shouldn't have handled mine. He was so incompetant to the point that he didn't ask for an investigator or co counsel. And yet again this was his first Capital case, and this same man that sat next to me during my trial saying how much he didn't believe in the death penalty, yes this same man, I see a few years later on the local news as Judge Henry Davis, sitting on the bench handling down a death sentence and yet this is the same man the courts assigned to my case to fight for my life. The deck was stacked and I couldn't see it because the jail psychiatrist had me so doped up on tranquilizers called Thorazine. So throughout my trial I was useless. I was being screwed all the way around the table and didn't even realize it. Yes the deck was stacked, and justice was denied.

Now I'm going to close this with one of my poems and what more appropriate name for a title than My Last Words.