



The Menendez Brothers' defense was like a Tapestry made from threads that took weeks to weave into a coherent story for the first-trial jurors.

No single thread tells the whole story.

Haters are fond of taking a thread and tugging at it, trying to unravel the whole Tapestry.

But...one thread's absence wouldn't be noticed in the overall pattern.

The Tapestry gave me, as a juror, and still does, Reasonable Doubt. Doubt that things happened as told by the prosecutors.

It was their Burden of Proof, after all. The prosecution's, not the defense's.

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Lyle and Erik never said, "We were abused."  
Sure, they described their abusive childhoods  
at great length.

And 50+ witnesses testified on their  
behalf.

But what they said was, "We were afraid."  
(Not just in general, but at  
the precise moment of killing.)

They also did not say, "We were right."  
(Right, that is, that their parents were  
preparing to kill them at that precise  
moment.)

What they said was, "We were wrong.  
We are sorry. We loved our parents.  
And we feared them."

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The question in court was never  
"Who did it?"  
It was, "Why did they do it?"

Were their parents planning to literally kill  
them at some point in time?  
Maybe not. We'll never know.

But, had the brothers been terrorized long  
enough to believe that this was a  
possibility?  
Absolutely.

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If one does not take the time to try to understand why they might have feared for their lives at that precise moment, then one cannot give them the benefit of a doubt.

It's natural to cling to the prosecution's "greedy rich boys" narrative.

But it's also wrong.

And...Erik is gay?...and that's what caused all the problems in the family? Um...after all the other theories you've thrown up against the wall, hoping one of them will stick...is that really your (uncorroborated) last-ditch parting shot during closing arguments, Mr. Prosecutor?

Really?

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The legal defense in the first trial was Imperfect Self Defense.

(The honest, but unreasonable, fear that one's life is in imminent danger.)

(Perfect Self Defense is not a crime.)

(The verdict for an Imperfect Self Defense killing is manslaughter.)

(The maximum sentence for manslaughter x2 is 22 years.)

The same judge, in the second trial, cruelly eliminated Imperfect Self Defense from consideration and did not allow the same evidence to be presented to the new jury. They had no choice but to render murder verdicts.

It's not the jurors' fault.

The Judge and the DA are to blame.

They were greedy for a "win".

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And the appeal? The one where the Justice, despite AGREEING that the second trial rulings had been unfair, still upheld the murder verdicts?

What happened there?

I have no words.

Things have changed in the world. More people understand now. Laws have changed for kids like the Menendez brothers.

(But not for the Menendez brothers.)

But Lyle and Erik have not changed at all except that they are older, wiser, and free. In prison. They are happier there than they ever were at home. And they have always been assets to their prison communities.

Still...enough is enough.

31 years is too long.

Set them free.

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