

MY NAME IS ROBERT RUARK



The Unspoken Sentence

Silenced in court, an Ohio man fights for clemency as his family and supporters break their silence about the injustice and its toll.

52 minutes | Australia | 2025 | Press@JusticeForRobert.com

In 2008, Robert J. Ruark was convicted of murder in Ohio and has since spent nearly half his life in prison. *My Name is Robert Ruark* — the debut feature documentary by Australian Si Paros — gives him the voice he was denied in court. Told through Robert's testimony and the stories of those who support him, the film reveals both the injustice of his conviction and the resilience of a man who continues to hope for freedom.

My Name is Robert Ruark brings audiences face to face with a man who has lived behind prison walls for nearly two decades — and who refuses to be defined by them.



In 2009, Robert J. Ruark was convicted of murder in Ohio after a trial where crucial testimony went unheard and the truth was distorted. With all appeals exhausted, his only hope lies in clemency — a rarely granted act of mercy from the Governor of Ohio.

His Voice at Last

Told primarily in Robert's own words, the film gives him the voice he was denied in court. Speaking directly to camera, he reflects on his arrest, years lost, and his transformation as a son, father, and man. His testimony is interwoven with the grief and resilience of family members, alongside expert insight on systemic injustice in America.

From Prison Walls to Family Homes

Shot entirely in Ohio, the film moves between the stark confines of prison and the intimate spaces of his loved ones' homes. It captures silence, resilience, and humanity that shines despite the number assigned to him.

Made on a micro-budget of \$12,000 with seasoned collaborators, *My Name is Robert Ruark* is urgent and deeply personal. It challenges audiences not to look away — and not to forget Robert's name.



More Than True Crime

This is not just a case study — it is a meditation on justice, punishment, and mercy. It asks: *What happens when a system built to protect instead produces lives lived in limbo?*

Meet Robert Ruark

Life Before Prison

Raised in Ohio, Robert was guardian-figure of his siblings and close to his family. At 14, he entered a long-term relationship with Sheri, and together they had two daughters and two sons. Though prison separated them, Robert's devotion to his children has remained constant.

The Man He Is Today

Nearly twenty years inside have shaped Robert into a reflective, compassionate man. He now mentors peers, trains dogs, and tutors fellow students while completing the final semester of his bachelor's degree. His story is one of endurance, transformation, and hope for a future lived in freedom.

More Than a Number

Robert is more than the case that defined him. He is a son, a father of four, a brother, and a man who has carried nearly two decades of incarceration with resilience, hope, and love for his family.



A Dedicated Father

Robert's children were raised with the support of extended family while he served his life sentence. Despite the distance, he has stayed actively present in their lives through visits, phone calls, and messaging. His children know him as a steady, loving father whose commitment has never wavered.



Why His Story Matters

Robert's humanity is at the heart of this film. To know his name is to see more than a number — it is to see the father, son, and brother who has endured loss and hardship, but whose compassion and commitment to family remain unbroken.

What the critics say



Rev Dr Richard Leonard SJ, Jesuit priest, author, educator, & film critic

Director of the Australian Catholic Office for Film & Broadcasting for 22 years, member of the International Catholic Film Critics Association (ICFCA), and juror at major festivals including Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Hong Kong, Warsaw, Montréal, Brisbane, and Melbourne.

“The rule of law is based on what a reasonable adult would do, say and understand. Robert Ruark has been wrongfully convicted. **No reasonable adult can watch *Si Paros*’ deeply moving film and conclude that justice has been done** for the victim, Chad Wolford, and the man who has already served 17 years of his 31-year sentence. We are all the poorer when the system fails an individual so systematically. Benjamin Franklin said, ‘Justice will not be served until those who are unaffected are as outraged as those who are.’ **This film shows why we should all be very affected at the Ruark case.**”



Rev Dr Peter Malone MSC, Catholic priest, film critic & author

Former Director, Australian Catholic Film Office; past President of OCIC (now SIGNIS); former Head of the SIGNIS Cinema/Film Desk.

“Many audiences enjoy True Crime programs. **Here is a film with a difference**, a prisoner of 17 years who received a severe sentence, more than justice demanded. Robert Ruark has an opportunity here to tell his story, not only of the shooting occasion, reconstructed with visuals and reconstructions, but explaining what happened, especially with his inadequate legal defence. Several lawyers are interviewed with details of the application of the law. And, interviews with Ruark’s mother and sympathetic friends. **Fans of John Grisham will realise that this is his territory:** innocent legal victims, reprehensible behaviour by lawyers, harsh decisions by judges. This is part of an appeal for clemency.”

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I never set out to become a filmmaker. I am a teacher from a remote Aboriginal community in Australia. But when I encountered Robert's case, I felt compelled to act. His story was more than a legal tragedy — it was a silence.

Testimony was unheard, a family fractured, and a man left voiceless as he was sentenced to life.



“Too often stories of crime and punishment strip people of their humanity, reducing them to numbers, headlines, or stereotypes.”

My Name is Robert Ruark grew out of years of listening and accompanying, often from over 14,000 miles away. What began as research and correspondence, slowly developed into a film — not only about one man's wrongful imprisonment, but about all the people that are left to carry the unspoken sentence alongside him.

From the beginning, I wanted to make a documentary that resisted sensationalism. Too often stories of crime and punishment strip people of their humanity, reducing them to numbers, headlines, or stereotypes. Instead, I chose a restrained, human-centered approach: letting Robert's own words guide the story, weaving in family memories, and situating their voices within the broader failures of justice in Ohio. The camera listens more than it intrudes; it seeks testimony, not spectacle.

As a teacher and advocate, I have long been committed to amplifying voices pushed to the margins. Living and working in communities where resilience is born from neglect and systemic disadvantage, has shaped how I see stories like Robert's. I know the dignity that persists even when systems fail. That perspective guided how I approached this film: with compassion, patience, and care.

What I hope audiences take away is not just outrage at injustice, but empathy for those whose lives are too easily dismissed. This is Robert's story, told with dignity, but it is also a story about us — about how we see one another, about what we choose to remember, and about whether we can imagine a justice that includes mercy.

CREATIVE TEAM



Director/Producer:

Si Paros

“Just a few minutes with Robert and you no longer see a prisoner, but a man filled with heart and humanity.”

Editor:

Sean Courtney Lewis

“Robert’s continued incarceration is a profound injustice - the law has changed to protect people like him, yet he’s still behind bars. His story needs to be heard by those with the power to grant clemency.”



Supervising Editor:

Peter Carrodus ASE

“Robert’s is a story that needs to be heard, his journey continues.”



Director of Photography:

Matthew Petrunak

“This is more than a film, it’s a life .”

FACT SHEET

Title: My Name is Robert Ruark

Runtime: 52 minutes

Genre: Documentary / Social Justice / Criminal Justice Reform

Country: Australia/USA

Year: 2025

Language: English

Budget: \$12,000

Premiere Status: World Premiere



CREDITS

Director/Producer: Si Paros

Editor: Sean Courtney Lewis

Supervising Editor: Peter Carrodus ASE

Writers: M Ray, N Mills and J Smith

Director of Photography: Matthew Petrunak

Additional Cinematographers: Emma Dixon, Joshua Strausbaugh, Julio Gonzalez-Charcape

Sound Recordist: Matthew James Mikita

Production Assistant: Katie Bugenstein

Music: Original song by Steve Masters



Film Stills



“Love ought to show itself more in deeds than in words.”

– St. Ignatius of Loyola



CONTACT

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