

ROE is a Must-See Event, No Matter What Side You Are On

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Dismay. Anger. Depression. Confusion. These were some of the emotions we all had when the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, the 50-year-old precedent cementing the right to abortion in the United States. Although this right has been well-established, few, if anybody, have been aware of the complicated twists and turns that made it a precedent in the first place. Until now.

Lisa Loomer's meticulously researched docu-drama presents *Roe* as an argument for choice while defending a woman's right to an abortion through the story of Norma McCorvey (Kate Middleton), the original "Jane Roe." Loomer evenly tells the twin trajectories of McCorvey's life journey, set against the life-long legal fight that attorney Sarah Weddington (Christine Hall) waged to keep *Roe v. Wade* in place.

The production clearly shows the forces at play even at the outset of *Roe v. Wade*, now ended in this Supreme Court's controversial reversal. Briskly directed by Vanessa Stalling, the script is an almost cinematic presentation aided by an electric performance from Middleton as the

original Jane Roe, along with a kaleidoscopic cast of theatrical stalwarts playing a number of parts each.

For *Roe*, the Fountain's producing partners devised an interesting performance billed as a "hyper-staged reading," but with the feeling that we in the audience are witnessing an old-style radio documentary. Audience members wear headsets to abet the sound quality as well as allow for the excellent sound track by Mikail Fiksel. The cast of characters surrounding McCorvey and Weddington carry us from the confines of the music stands and standing mics on the outdoor stage, thus enacting a "theatre of the mind." The effect enriches the actors' performances beyond the normal confines of the live stage, while still enveloping audiences in the interactivity of their presence.

McCorvey's unfortunate life and her need for affirmation made her a "persuadable," as director Stalling writes in her notes. From her agreement to the legal challenge of Roe ("I never said no to a fight yet"), to her eventual religious conversion and appearance at the National Memorial for the Unborn, McCorvey was consistent in one thing: her thirst for love. Although just as fierce, Weddington's fight was more doggedly consistent. Put together, in *Roe*, Loomer has managed to engage us in both of their intertwining stories.

ROE, continues at the Fountain's Outdoor Stage, with a special performance on Thursday, July 7th at 8 pm; Fridays through Sundays at 8 pm through July 10th. Tickets from \$20. For reservations and information call 323-663-1525.

THE FOUNTAIN THEATRE REQUIRES PROOF OF VACCINATION FOR ALL PATRONS.
