



0. Jacobo the Prisoner - Story Preface

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One morning in 1977, twenty people broke into Jacobo's home in Buenos Aires. They cut the phone lines, demanded his car keys and handcuffed him. They threw a blanket over his head and forced him to lie on the floor of his car.

He realized he was under arrest by the military.

Jacobo found himself in prison, in a cell so small he had to sleep with his knees underneath him. His toilet was a hole in the floor. He was constantly blindfolded, and he spoke to his jailers through a small crack in the cell door. They told him he was being held for questioning—and the questioning lasted more than a year.

Jacobo endured beatings, electric shocks, dark confinement, cold baths in winter and was frequently threatened with death. He was not allowed to see his family. During his imprisonment, his wife became an outspoken activist for his release. She even wrote to United States officials to see if they could help her.

Jacobo's brother campaigned endlessly for his release—even though he was putting his life in danger doing so. In the process, he lost his business and soon he, too, was imprisoned.

Finally, after a year-and-a-half, the Argentine Supreme Court ordered that Jacobo be released, but the military refused to do so. In 1979, Jacobo's story began to draw international attention.

The United States Congress made official inquiries on his behalf. The Vatican started putting pressure on the military. Because of all the unwanted publicity, Jacobo was released but was kept under house arrest for the next eighteen months.

Then, one day, it was like the start of the same nightmare all over again. Men came to his home, demanded he go with them. But instead of prison, they took him to the airport and deported him to Israel. The men were not the military—they were the local police.

Jacobo later learned that just fifteen minutes later, the military showed up to kill him, and he realized that he had barely escaped with his life.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Jacobo-the-Prisoner-Jacobo-Timerman-The-Conscience-of-a-Nation>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Jacobo-the-Prisoner-Jacobo-Timerman-The-Conscience-of-a-Nation>

Media Stream



"I am Nothing"

Silvia Pisani

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