

Director's Note

ROE tells the story of the two women behind the Roe v Wade Supreme Court case: Sarah Weddington, the lawyer who argued the case before the Supreme Court when she was just 26 years old, and Norma McCorvey, the plaintiff in the case known as Jane Roe.

But the show is about much more than just the case. To me, what is most concerning about the story you'll see unfold in this production is this notion: if people are in a vulnerable position, if they feel unloved, not of value to their country, if they don't have access to power and feel unsafe, they can be easily persuaded or manipulated by those who seem to have their best interests in mind, but who in actuality do not.

Some research shows that Donald Trump won against Hillary Clinton, in part, by winning over people identified as "persuadables" in three states.

Rather than engaging with the complexity of an issue, people are at risk of being persuaded by absolutes—by turning something like gay rights, critical race theory, or access to abortion into all-or-nothing wedge issues. This political approach exists only to persuade, manipulate, and divide.

I think you'll come to know Norma McCorvey as a vulnerable individual. She was poor, a lesbian, unhoused at times, and felt unloved by her country. And it's through this vulnerability that she was so easily persuaded by anyone she thought might be fighting on her behalf. She's one of those persuadables.

What I hope for most is that audiences will leave the show wondering about what their responsibility is towards engagement vs division. I also think people are pissed and scared, and in the same manner they flocked to the film *Contagion* at the top of the pandemic searching for answers, I think they will come to our show. But, ultimately I hope people leave compelled to vote and to resist— to exercise their right to inform how our government will impact our bodies, our lives, and the lives of those around us.

— Vanessa Stalling