

## MEET THE EDITORS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF  
Alexandra Martinakova

MANAGING EDITOR  
Gina Lorusso

MARKETING DIRECTOR  
Emily Adorno

CREATIVE DIRECTOR  
Tyler Mignault

NEWS EDITOR  
Ava Highland

OPINION EDITOR  
Lillian Curtin

SPORTS EDITOR  
Claire Frankland

ASSOCIATE SPORTS EDITOR  
Michael Petitto

DESIGN EDITOR  
Katerina Parizkova

ASSOCIATE DESIGN EDITOR  
Emily Katz

SOCIAL MEDIA EDITORS  
Elisabeth McMahon  
Quinn O'Neill

COPY EDITORS  
Vivian Gage  
Neve Wilson

The views expressed in The Chronicle's opinion section are those of the respective authors. They do not reflect the views of The Chronicle as an organization.

Sign up for our weekly newsletter by emailing Alexandra Martinakova at [amartinakova@quinnipiac.edu](mailto:amartinakova@quinnipiac.edu)

THE CHRONICLE is distributed around all three university campuses every Wednesday. Single copies are free. Newspaper theft is a crime. Please report suspicious activity to university security (203-582-6200). For additional copies, contact the student media office for rates.

ADVERTISING inquiries can be sent to [thequchronicle@gmail.com](mailto:thequchronicle@gmail.com). Inquiries must be made a week prior to publication. SEND TIPS, including news tips, corrections or suggestions to [Alexandra.Martinakova@thequchronicle@gmail.com](mailto:Alexandra.Martinakova@thequchronicle@gmail.com) WITH CONCERNS, contact The Chronicle's advisor Vincent Contrucci, at [vincent.contrucci@quinnipiac.edu](mailto:vincent.contrucci@quinnipiac.edu)


LETTERS TO THE EDITOR should be between 150 and 300 words and must be approved by the editor-in-chief before going to print. The Chronicle reserves the right to edit all material, including advertising, based on content, grammar and space requirements. Send letters to [thequchronicle@gmail.com](mailto:thequchronicle@gmail.com). The opinions expressed in this paper are those of the writers and not necessarily those of The Chronicle.


## SEE WHAT'S HAPPENING ON QUCHRONICLE.COM

### JOIN US

Staff Meetings on Tuesdays in SB 262 at 9:15 p.m.

### CONNECT

 @quchronicle/@quchronsports

 @quchronicle/@quchronsports

 @quchronicle

 @quchronicle

# School of Communications justice and law speaker series hosts a screening of 'Free Fernando!'

By **NATHAN ROJAS**  
Staff Writer

As part of the justice and law speaker series, Quinnipiac University held a screening Monday night of the documentary "Free Fernando!": A True Story of an Innocent Man's Three Decade Quest for Freedom" which details the story of an innocent man wrongly incarcerated for 18 years.

Sponsored by the College of Arts and Sciences' Intellectual and Culture Events fund and hosted by the Criminal Justice program, students were able to witness the story of Fernando Bermudez, who was incarcerated for a crime he did not commit.

Bermudez wanted to create this film, not only to share his story, but also to show the effects that such an experience can have on an individual.

"This film... it needs to be out there in the world, for the world to see and for him to be heard," Marc Wishengrad, filmmaker and director of "Free Fernando!" said.

On Feb. 6, 1992, Bermudez, 21 at the time, was convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to 23 years to life in prison.

Witnesses wrongly identified Bermudez, stating that they were coerced into misidentifying him as the shooter.

During his time in prison, Bermudez fought for his freedom.

"My family fought so hard," Bermudez said. "My family scrambled up some money...they took a loan. We hired an attorney."

Despite the evidence in favor of his innocence, the courts refused to schedule subsequent hearings, preventing Bermudez from proving himself.

"I just felt if I told the truth, it would be as simple as going home," Bermudez said.

It wasn't until Nov. 12, 2009, that Bermudez was exonerated and released from prison.

"A struggle, a battle, an outcome like mine is one that was hard fought through the intervention of other people," Bermudez said.

After the screening, attending students and faculty were able to ask Bermudez and Wishengrad questions.

Many were curious about Bermudez's thoughts on the justice system, after it had failed him for so long.

While Bermudez acknowledges this fact, he does not want to break his children's faith in it.

"I took them many places just to expose them to what I hope will be an influence that they can know about social justice," he said.

After his release from prison, Bermudez had trouble readapting to normal life.

"I realized that after the happy ending of get-



TYLER MIGNAULT/CHRONICLE

Quinnipiac University hosted a screening on Nov. 10 of the documentary "Free Fernando!" about Fernando Bermudez, a man who was wrongly incarcerated for 18 years.

ting out, that it was more difficult than I imagined... the institutionalization is something that has to be fought against," Bermudez said.

Even now, Wishengrad believes that Bermudez is still adapting, "still trying to free Fernando," despite having been released 16 years ago.

Students were also interested in the psychological effects of Bermudez's incarceration.

"You have to have psychological help. You need therapy," he said.

Additionally, they were curious about what he had done to seek this help.

"In terms of the type of social health that people in my situation receive upon their release... we're not given that," Bermudez said.

Because of this, Bermudez has found alternative solutions to repairing his mental health.

"It's really a matter of just being free again and doing things that I feel could help my mental health," he said.

These reasons also served as a motivator for Wishengrad, in producing the documentary.

"I still have to tell the whole story... to see

him in the world, to see the effect of incarceration and PTSD," Wishengrad said.

Wishengrad believes that through Bermudez, audiences are able to understand what happens to a person when they've been incarcerated.

Despite his record being cleared, Bermudez struggled to find work, with many of his applications being denied.

"It's a matter of still being accepted into society after having been incarcerated so long," Bermudez said.

From his time in prison, Bermudez has "learned to appreciate freedom."

"Despite the circumstances that one finds himself in, you still have the freedom to choose your attitude within those circumstances," Bermudez said.

According to experts, roughly 5% of incarcerated criminals are innocent, Bermudez said.

"What about a human life destroyed, being wrongfully executed? What accountability is there for that," Bermudez said. "Progress is being made, but we're still far from correcting the problem."

**"I realized that after the happy ending of getting out, that it was more difficult than I imagined."**

**- Fernando Bermudez**



TYLER MIGNAULT/CHRONICLE

Students in attendance at the documentary screening participated in a Q&A session with Fernando Bermudez and the filmmaker Marc Wishengrad.