

Excerpt from
The Cross Examination of Oliver Finney

There must a mistake. The room started spinning as soon as the Patient heard the words. *Inoperable brain cancer. Frontal lobe.* He gripped the arms of the chair and began the denial process. The doctor was wrong, his judgment blurred by a subconscious bias against the Patient. Men the Patient's age do not get brain cancer. Especially men who run three times a week and drink one glass of red wine every evening.

The Patient would get a second and third opinion. The top oncologists at the best hospitals in the country, all singing from the same song sheet. *We're sorry, there's nothing we can do. Chemo might slow the spread of the disease, but you probably have less than a year.* They ticked off symptoms like a parade of horrors: behavioral changes, memory loss, reduced cognitive function, vision loss, partial paralysis.

The Patient worked quickly through the stages of acceptance. Denial and anger came first. But anger eventually gave way to grief and then ultimately resignation—all within a span of four weeks. Yet he wasn't prepared for the last stage, and he couldn't shake the irony of it.

Remorse. Nearly a billion dollars in net assets that he couldn't take with him. Today he would trade all of his wealth for one additional year. All the eighty-hour weeks, jetting around the country, the dog-eat-dog world he faced every day, the enemies he had made—everything he did to build the net wealth to retire early and enjoy life.

He started getting his affairs in order. He signed a living will and durable power of attorney, spurred by the knowledge that he might lose his sanity before he drew his last breath. He changed his last will and testament a dozen times but eventually lost his enthusiasm for

THE CROSS EXAMINATION OF OLIVER FINNEY

disinheriting the estranged children of his first and second wives.

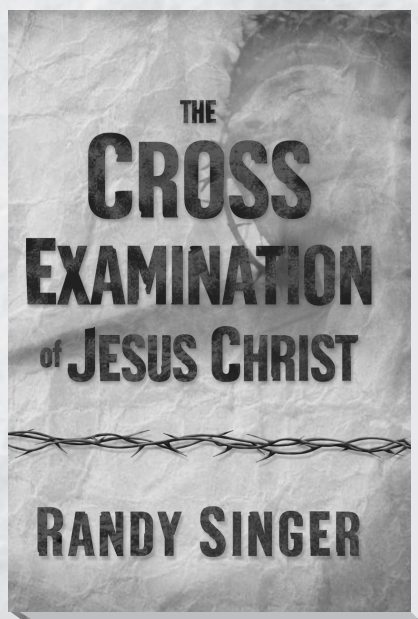
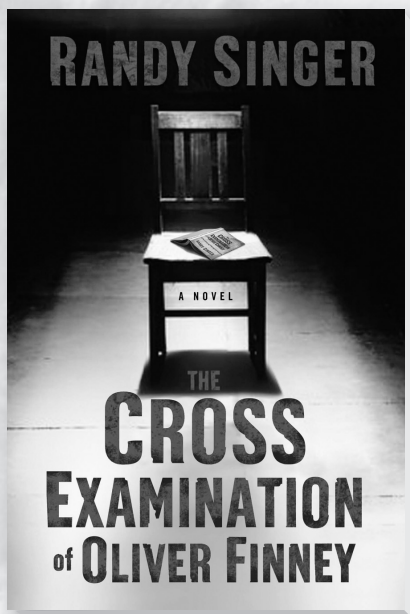
The one thing he couldn't prepare for preoccupied his thoughts, day and night, night and day. He wasn't ready to face whatever lurked on the other side of death. He tried praying to some vague notion of God but just felt silly. What kind of God would listen to a man who had spent his whole life denying that God existed? Yet the thought of stepping into the darkness of death without solving life's greatest mystery scared the Patient most of all. If he were God, he would judge his own life harshly. Sure, he had accumulated vast amounts of wealth, but what *good* had he done? Whom had he really helped? Who would say that life on earth was better because they had known him?

The sad and honest truth kept him awake at night and haunted his daytime thoughts. Maybe there was still time. A lot could be done in twelve months. But even if he wanted to curry favor with God, how could he do that? He still didn't really believe that God existed. And if God did exist, which of the gods worshiped on earth was the true God?

It hit him while watching *Survivor*, nearly four weeks after the initial diagnosis. Life's greatest reality show! It seemed like such a deliciously good idea that it was either a stroke of genius or the brain cancer deluding him ahead of schedule. Powerful advocates for each of the world's major religions would be chosen as contestants. Their faith would be put to the ultimate test on a remote island. They would be forced into the trial of their lives, defending their faith against all challenges. The winner's god would gain a whole raft of new adherents, including the Patient. He would donate millions to the right causes. The ratings for the show would be spectacular.

The losers' gods would be exposed as impotent—powerless frauds in the face of death.

TWO BOOKS UNITED BY ONE INCREDIBLE TRUTH



To decipher the clues in Randy Singer's suspense thriller, *The Cross Examination of Oliver Finney*, you must discover the key hidden deep in the nonfiction apologetic, *The Cross Examination of Jesus Christ*. It's a double-shot of provocative evangelism—unlock the mystery!

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