

FROM GIVE ME A SECOND TO GIVE ME A MINUTE: Sanctity of Time in an Accelerated City

Fawaz Folakunmi Okunola
University of Calgary / Calgary / Canada
Fawaz.okunola@ucalgary.ca

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Introduction

While watching the 1957 classic *Twelve Angry Men*, a particular scene stuck out to me. During the deliberation, one juror kept repeating “give me a minute.” In the moment, I did not think much of it, but after a rewatch, I realized I had not heard anyone say “give me a minute” in a while, I’ve always heard “give me a second” instead. Elsewhere in the same room, a different juror was running on his own private clock: he kept pushing to wrap up the deliberation because he had tickets to a ballgame that evening, and every delay put his night at risk. My Gen Z assumed it was solely because he did not want to lose his money. Still, after further deliberation, I realized this was probably the only chance he would ever get to see this particular game, and it made me consider how much the value of time had changed in the 69 years since the film’s release.

I keep coming back to that scene because nothing feels irreplaceable to me, the way that ballgame was irreplaceable to him. Games get replayed, moments get archived, whatever I miss I can usually find again with another tap. And yet, somehow, having more access to more things than any generation before me, my patience has only gotten shorter.

A generation accustomed to curated feeds, endless swiping and infinite scrolls has condensed its language of waiting; “give me a minute” has gradually become “give me a second.” Sacred architecture, in contrast, has traditionally relied on an opposing temporal logic, emphasizing procession, threshold, ascent, gradual revelation and eventual dwelling. This raises a further question: can places designed to facilitate patience still produce sacred encounters for individuals conditioned by acceleration? Or is a new form of architecture of instantaneous sacredness emerging, one that is apprehended in a glance rather than after extended duration?

That question already has a partial answer, because time has become a sacred commodity in today’s world, with an infinite number of things competing for it. Time that once had to be spent making a journey to a sacred place can now be saved with tools like prayer apps, which are only becoming more common. That raises the real question underneath all of this: should we keep protecting slow, effortful conditions like the Bruder Klaus Chapel, where meaning only arrives after a journey, anticipation, threshold, darkness, revelation? Or is sacred space quietly being reorganized into something closer to a big-box church, spectacle achieved through scale and media rather than earned through experience?

A prayer app is, in a way, the opposite of that ballpark seat. It exists precisely so no one ever has to feel what that man felt again, the pull of a moment that might not come back. Somewhere between “give me a minute” and “give me a second,” we may have traded that feeling away entirely.

References

Twelve Angry Men. Directed by Sidney Lumet. Orion-Nova Productions, 1957.

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