

FIGHT CLUB & FREEMASONRY



**A TALK
DAGO RODRIGUEZ, PM**



INTRODUCTION

If you're a typical guy, then watching *Fight Club* gets you stirred up. As revolting as the senseless violence of it is, it makes you wonder what would, or could happen, if people really did do something to shake up their ordinary lives.

Maybe that's one more reason why men all across the Country are still becoming Freemasons. It is a secret society. And it does promise real personal change to the individual. Why is that appealing? Sure we want change. Each of us wants to better ourselves. That's a no-brainer.

What we also want as Freemasons is to be a part of something bigger than ourselves that can make some real changes in the world. We all read *Secret Teachings of All Ages* by Manly P Hall. And each of us has spent countless hours reading books and blogs and pouring over information about Masonry on YouTube. We know that Freemasonry, at least from our Lodges, isn't really controlling the world. It's under fire out there, taking hits from religious groups and those who are either uneducated about the Craft, ignorant of its actualities, or just uninitiated. Still, as Masons, we want to stand for something, take part in something. We want to matter.

Freemasons today are looking for their Boston Tea Party. At least many of the new Brothers are. We're not Ruffians in the dark sense of the word. We're Ruffians in the sense that we know we have a lot to learn. We know we aren't always patient enough. We do know the difference between right and wrong. We just want to DO something, stand FOR something and WITH others like ourselves.

[Anonymous Author(s) <http://burningtaper.blogspot.com/2008/05/freemasonry-as-fight-club.html> Published March 2008.]

THE STORY

To better understand the talk it is recommended you read or watch *Fight Club*. Since the initial release of *Fight Club: A Novel* in 1996, its post modernist stance on capitalism, consumerism, and male anxiety are put to the test in the nihilistic story by author Chuck Palahniuk. The story of *Fight Club* is about an unassertive, defeated man who discovers that he has an alter-ego, a sociopathic anarchist/terrorist, named Tyler Durden, who is plotting the destruction of society, and he must silence the destructive element of his personality before calamitous bombing schemes occur nationwide. The book was turned into a controversial movie directed by David Fincher, starring Edward Norton, Brad Pitt and Helen Bonham-Carter. The film was released in 1999.

THE TALK

Secrecy. Mischief. Brotherhood. Mayhem. Initiation.

Is this Freemasonry or the misunderstood post modernist novel/film *Fight Club*? It's actually both. At the 2019 SPML Masonic Con weekend in Los Angeles, a panel discussion was held celebrating the 20-year release of the cult classic film *Fight Club* and the symbolic parallels it shares with Freemasonry. The Masonic convention celebrated by screening the film and I was invited to be part of the discussion. The informative 45-minute discussion did not feel long enough, leaving a lot more to be desired, proving that the film connects to our present-day Masonic culture strongly and positively. So much so, that it gave me the confidence to create a talk surrounding this very theme.

The relevance of a study of this nature is pressing and important. Isolation. Social disillusionment. Division. Consumerism. Masculine anxiety. Are all topics many men that come through our West Gate are grappling with. Ironically, this film hits on all of them. There is an apparent urgency within men to explore these topics, possibly because our fathers failed us as role models—not on purpose, but because they didn't know better; or possibly because our role models sadly come down to what the media decides to force down our throats.

Now more than ever, Freemasonry can assist in answering the call to these issues by the virtues, principles, and tools it presents its seekers. If more new Masons that enter lodges could be taught by seasoned Masons how to correctly apply these tools and principles, then perhaps that inner fight of growth and prosperity wouldn't be as bloody as the basement scenes in *Fight Club*. A true brotherhood of civility, confidence, and harmony can be created through the bonds men can form in these lodges.

My question then becomes, how does the dual nature of masculinity get defined within our fraternity and how does the film's post-modernist and nihilistic approach parallel our present day Masonic lodges? We'll explore this question and several symbolic parallels between the film and the Craft when pop-culture and the Masonry collide in this unique and exciting talk: *Fight Club & Freemasonry*.



THE SPEAKER

Bro. Dago Rodriguez is the current Lodge Master of the Southern California Research Lodge, which produces the award winning *Fraternal Review* Magazine. He has served as Managing Editor of the publication for the past six years. He was born and raised in Orange County, California and graduated from Cal State University Northridge in Radio Television Film Studies and later received his Master of Fine Art degree from the American Film Institute.



Brother Rodriguez is a twice Past Master of South Pasadena Masonic Lodge No. 290 F&AM located in Los Angeles, California. He heads the candidate educational program and is the co-chairman of the Illumination Lecture Series at his lodge. He serves on two Grand Lodge committees: California Freemason Magazine and Masonic Education. He is a founding member of The Masonic Legacy Society, a national group of Masons who develop educational materials for Freemasons. He is a 32nd Degree Mason from both the Guthrie, Oklahoma and Pasadena Valleys. In 2017, his lodge brothers voted him Mason of the Year and he's also a two time Hiram Award recipient. In 2019, he spearheaded the reinvention of the first West Coast Masonic-Con weekend at his lodge in South Pasadena, California.



READ THE ISSUE

This talk coincides with the April 2020 release of Southern California Research Lodge's award-winning publication *Fraternal Review: Fight Club and Freemasonry*. Subscribe or download the issue at www.TheResearchLodge.com.



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Talk is open to all. Equipment Requirements: Apple Laptop with Keynote software, HDMI accessible projector, sound for slide show presentation and a mic.