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PUNISHMENT

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# CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

By

MARILYN CAMPBELL and CURT COLUMBUS

Based on the novel

by

FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

Developed in collaboration

with

MICHAEL HALBERSTAM



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“*Crime and Punishment* was originally produced by  
Writers’ Theatre, Glencoe, Illinois,  
Michael Halberstam, Artistic Director.”

*Crime and Punishment* was commissioned by Writers' Theatre and had its world premiere on May 13, 2003, in Glencoe, Illinois, with the following cast:

Raskolnikov . . . . . SCOTT PARKINSON  
Porfiry Petrovich. . . . . JOHN JUDD  
Sonia . . . . . SUSAN BENNETT

The production was commissioned and directed by artistic director, Michael Halberstam; costumes by Rachel Anne Healy; set design by Heather Graff and Richard Peterson; lighting by Joel Moritz; sound by Josh Schmidt; properties by Pam Parker; movement by Shade Murray; and stage managed by David Castellanos.

# CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

A Full-length Play  
For 2 Men and 1 Woman

## CHARACTERS

RASKOLNIKOV

PORFIRY

SONIA

NOTE: The actors playing Porfiry and Sonia will also play all other roles where indicated in the script.





# CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

SCENE: *Lights up on a small space, many levels. The space is surrounded by windows and has doors on the upstage wall. A desk, a small cot, and two chairs. This could be a cramped apartment with miserly furnishings, or an interrogation room in a police station. Harsh white light. PORFIRY enters through one of the upstage doors. He is looking through files. His tone with RASKOLNIKOV is always calm and polite.*

PORFIRY. Do you believe in Lazarus, rising from the dead?

RASKOLNIKOV (*beat*). What?

PORFIRY. Do you believe the story of Lazarus? Do you believe he rose from the dead? Do you believe a man can be resurrected?

RASKOLNIKOV. You mean really? Rise from the dead? Yes. I guess I do.

PORFIRY. And do you believe in God?

RASKOLNIKOV (*silence*). Yes. Does it matter?

PORFIRY. It might. (*Slight pause.*)

RASKOLNIKOV. Look, Inspector, am I being held officially? I want to know what the charges are.

PORFIRY. No, no, nothing like that. (*Looks over some papers.*) You're required to make a formal statement. That

you heard about the incident, the murder. That you want those of us in charge of the case to know that certain items which had been in the old woman's possession belong to you. And you want to redeem them. I don't understand, why would we hold you? For what reason?

RASKOLNIKOV. I...I don't know. It's just that I'm a little broke right now, which makes me... I have so many debts. I'm going to claim the stuff when I have the money, I mean, the things are worth about five rubles in all, but my sister gave me the ring, and my father gave the watch to me, and I don't have anything else to remember him by...

PORFIRY (*interrupts*). Your things, the ring and the watch, are wrapped up together. Your name was written very clearly on the paper, together with the date when you left them. They're right here. We had a list of everyone who had left items, and you're the only one who hadn't come forward.

RASKOLNIKOV. I was sick.

PORFIRY. You still look pale.

RASKOLNIKOV. I'm not pale. I'm perfectly fine!

PORFIRY. My apologies. I'm just glad you finally came forward. (*He smiles. A pause, while PORFIRY looks through some papers.*) I'm sorry, are you in a hurry?

RASKOLNIKOV. No. Not at all.

PORFIRY. If you have the time, would you mind if I asked you a few questions? For the investigation. I don't have any tea, or I'd offer you some. Please forgive me. I just want to ask you a couple of questions. We don't really have any hard evidence. Please, it could be very helpful. (*RASKOLNIKOV nods.*) I'd like you to

tell me your whereabouts during the days prior to the murder.

RASKOLNIKOV. What does that have to do with anything?

PORFIRY. Dear boy. Let me explain. I like to think that the art of investigation can be very, how do I put it, free form. You never know what's going to lead you to an answer. That's why I'm asking. Now. You visited the old woman shortly before she was killed, right?

RASKOLNIKOV. Three days before. I went to visit the old pawnbroker woman three days before she was murdered.

PORFIRY. It says here that you live in her neighborhood. (*RASKOLNIKOV nods.*) Nice place to live?

RASKOLNIKOV. No. No, it is not "nice."

PORFIRY. Petersburg has become quite a different place in the last few years. My rooms are so expensive. I understand.

RASKOLNIKOV. Do you, Inspector? Your "rooms." Do you want to know how I live? My *room* is extremely small. It's under the stairs to an upper floor, so the ceilings are low. So low that I can't really stand up straight. And there is only one small window, so there's not much light. The building is old, I hear noises all night long. In the summer it is unbearably hot, in the winter it is unbearably cold, so no, my room is not "nice" at all.

PORFIRY (*beat*). I see. You must have suffered particularly this summer. The heat. Terrible.

RASKOLNIKOV. Yes. Terrible. (*PORFIRY disappears.*) And there is that special stench that fills the air of the city at this time of year. If you don't have enough money to rent a summer house, you get used to it filling

up your nostrils every day at dawn. This stench is everywhere, pouring out of the bars, alcohol mixed with vomit, rising up from the streets, dust and brick and shit. They throw powdered lime everywhere to keep down the stench from the horseshit. The human shit. And I find myself swimming through this sea of smells in my own particular misery, dressed in the most ridiculous rags. Holes in my shoes, stains on my shirts. Yellow, human stains. All worn out. All faded. All hope and color turned a dull, shiny grey.

*(A knock at one of the upstage doors. SONIA enters.)*

SONIA. Mr. Raskolnikov. I'm...

RASKOLNIKOV. Sonia. Yes, I know who you are. I saw you when we brought Marmeladov, I mean when we brought your father, when we brought him upstairs yesterday. I'm sorry about what happened to him. There was nothing anyone could have done to save his life.

SONIA. I've come because my stepmother Katerina wanted me to speak to you.

RASKOLNIKOV. About your father? Please sit.

SONIA. I...I...I've come for only a minute. Forgive me for disturbing you...

RASKOLNIKOV. Please sit down. I want to talk to you. Are you in a hurry? *(SONIA shakes her head.)* Please, won't you stay, just two minutes. *(Silence.)* Your father told me about you. I've wanted to meet you for a long time now...

SONIA *(interrupts)*. Katerina asked me to thank you very much for helping us yesterday. If it hadn't been for you, we wouldn't have been able to bury Father.

RASKOLNIKOV. What will you do now? With your step-mother and the children?

SONIA. The coffin will be plain, of course...everything will be plain, so it won't cost much. We won't waste your money. (*Beat.*) I will continue to work. And give them everything that I can.

RASKOLNIKOV. You'll continue to sell yourself? (*She turns away, pause.*) Your father told me everything.

SONIA. I will continue to work. Because I have to give them what I can. (*She looks around the room and finally at RASKOLNIKOV.*)

RASKOLNIKOV. What? Why are you looking at me like that?

SONIA. Your room. It's just so...

RASKOLNIKOV. So, now you're going to judge me because of how I live. (*Smiles.*) A whore is passing judgment on me...it's fascinating.

SONIA. You gave us all the money you had yesterday. Everything you had. I can see that now. (*She starts to leave.*)

RASKOLNIKOV. No, Sonia. Please don't go, I'm sorry. (*She is going.*) God grants peace to the dead, doesn't He, Sonia? But the living...just keep on living. God grants *us* nothing. That's right, isn't it?

*(Focus shifts quickly back to PORFIRY.)*

PORFIRY. You must have suffered particularly this summer. The heat. Terrible. Perhaps this is why you were so ill recently. The room, your general condition. It sounds awful.

RASKOLNIKOV. Yes. Perhaps.

PORFIRY. So. It's not far from your apartment to the old woman's?

RASKOLNIKOV. Seven hundred and thirty steps.

PORFIRY. Excuse me?

RASKOLNIKOV. Uh, I have a habit. Of counting things. It's exactly seven hundred and thirty steps from my apartment to her apartment. I know that for a fact. That's all.

PORFIRY. I see.

RASKOLNIKOV. I needed money, and she was always willing to lend it. Even though she charged outrageous interest. But I needed the money.

PORFIRY. Can you tell me exactly what happened when you went to see the old pawnbroker? (*There is a knock at the upstage door.*) Can you tell me exactly what happened when you went to see the old pawnbroker?

*(There is a knock at the upstage door. RASKOLNIKOV goes to that door, there is third knock, which becomes his knock. The door opens a little crack to reveal two bright eyes.)*

SONIA [as ALYONA IVANOVA]. Who's there?

RASKOLNIKOV. Raskolnikov. The student, I was here last month.

ALYONA IVANOVA. I remember you very well.

RASKOLNIKOV. I'm here again for the same reason, Miss Alyona.

ALYONA IVANOVA. What can I do for you?

RASKOLNIKOV. I need money. I've brought something for you.

ALYONA IVANOVA. But the time is up on the last item you left here. The month was up day before yesterday. I should have sold it by now.

RASKOLNIKOV. I'll bring you the interest for another month. Please don't sell it!

ALYONA IVANOVA. How am I supposed to stay in business? I'm not sure whether I can wait to sell that ring.

RASKOLNIKOV. How much will you give me for this watch? (*He hands her a watch.*)

ALYONA IVANOVA (*scrutinizes it*). You come with such junk, it's scarcely worth anything at all. I gave you two rubles for your ring last month and I could have bought it new for a ruble and a half.

RASKOLNIKOV. Give me four rubles for it, Miss Alyona. It was my father's. I'll be getting money soon.

ALYONA IVANOVA. A ruble and a half, and you have to pay some of the interest in advance.

RASKOLNIKOV. A ruble and a half! That's all?

ALYONA IVANOVA. Suit yourself (*Tries to hand him back the watch.*)

RASKOLNIKOV. No. Never mind. Take it.

ALYONA IVANOVA. Fine. (*Pulls out a pouch from around her neck, begins to count out money.*) That's ten kopecks interest a month per ruble, which would be fifteen kopecks deducted from your ruble and a half for a month in advance. And for the two rubles, already on account for the ring, at the same rate, another twenty kopecks, which comes to thirty-five kopecks deducted from your ruble and a half, which leaves a ruble fifteen kopecks due to you for your watch. Here.

RASKOLNIKOV. You're very good at that.

ALYONA IVANOVA. Thank you.



RASKOLNIKOV. I may be bringing you something else tomorrow or the next day, Miss Alyona—it's very valuable—a silver cigarette case. Soon as I get it back from my friend.

ALYONA IVANOVA. We can discuss that when the time comes.

RASKOLNIKOV. Well, then. Goodbye... Oh, by the way. I haven't seen your sister, Miss Lizaveta, in a long time. Is she ever around? You always seem to be at home alone.

ALYONA IVANOVA. That's none of your business. Why do you care?

RASKOLNIKOV. No reason, I'm just asking. You're so suspicious. Goodbye.

*(The door closes. PORFIRY reappears at the front of the stage.)*

RASKOLNIKOV *(to himself)*. God grants peace to the dead, doesn't He?

PORFIRY. You asked about her sister?

RASKOLNIKOV. Hm?

PORFIRY. You said that you asked about her sister as you left?

RASKOLNIKOV. I did. I've always liked Miss Lizaveta. She's a sweet and generous soul.

PORFIRY. Was. She was. Whoever brutally murdered Miss Alyona also axed her sister to death as well.

RASKOLNIKOV. Yes. I know. It makes me sick.

PORFIRY *(appraising him)*. You know, you are a sensitive man. A rare individual in my experience. Most people I meet these days don't seem to care, do they? I hear it

all the time, "I don't want to get involved." But they are. They are involved, simply by being alive.

RASKOLNIKOV. I suppose.

PORFIRY. Hang on a minute. I've just remembered where I've seen your name. Raskolnikov. I think I read an article you wrote in one of the magazines a while back. Must have been a couple of months ago. Ah, yes, I remember now. It was published in the *Periodical Review*.

RASKOLNIKOV. Not something I wrote. In the *Periodical Review*?

PORFIRY. Yes, I'm certain of it.

RASKOLNIKOV. No, I wrote one article when I left the university, but that had to be six months ago. And I sent it to the *Weekly Review*.

PORFIRY. The *Periodical* and the *Weekly* merged. Didn't you know?

RASKOLNIKOV. No.

PORFIRY. You could get paid for that. You're a strange young man. You lead such a solitary life. These things concern you directly, and you don't have any idea about them. If you were published in the *Review*, you must be studying to be a lawyer.

RASKOLNIKOV. I was studying to be lawyer. Was.

PORFIRY. Very provocative, that article, very canny. I forget the title, but I loved it when I read it.

RASKOLNIKOV. If I remember correctly, that was the one in which I analyzed the psychology of a criminal. Before and after he has committed a crime.

PORFIRY. Exactly. You also maintained that the perpetration of a crime is always accompanied by some kind of illness. Very, very original. But it wasn't that idea that I

found most interesting. It was the idea at the end of the article. I don't think it was fully formed, you simply suggested it. Let me see if I remember correctly. You hold that there are certain people who have the right to commit crimes, and that the law does not apply to them. You divide all men into two categories: "ordinary" and "extraordinary." Ordinary men have to live in submission and abide by the laws of society. However, extraordinary men have a right to commit any crime and to transgress the law in any way, just because they are extraordinary. Was that it?

RASKOLNIKOV. Not quite. Close, but not quite.

PORFIRY. Enlighten me. I'm fascinated.

RASKOLNIKOV. The difference is that I wasn't suggesting that extraordinary people are always bound to commit crimes. I simply meant that an extraordinary man has the right, not an official right, mind you, but an inner right to decide for himself when he must overstep... certain boundaries. And then he may do so only when it is necessary for the practical fulfillment of his plans. Plans which might be of benefit to the whole of humanity.

PORFIRY. Pardon me... Criminals are a "benefit" to humanity?

RASKOLNIKOV. No, you see, I maintain in my article that all great leaders of men are, without exception, criminals. Take Napoleon, for example. In order to create a new set of laws for his empire, he had to transgress the ancient ones. He didn't stop short of bloodshed either, if that bloodshed was necessary to his cause. Because bloodshed gives them strength. It's remarkable, in fact, that the vast majority of great men

were also responsible for terrible carnage in their day. Even men who are only a little out of ordinary must be criminals by their very nature. Otherwise, they never rise above the masses, and they can't stand being part of the masses. They shouldn't be made to remain "ordinary" or humanity will never move forward. What would you think, Inspector, if Sir Isaac Newton's discoveries could only have become known to the world by sacrificing a life, or even ten lives, or a hundred? Wouldn't Newton have the right, even the duty to dispose of those people? Not anybody he wanted, mind you, just those who stood directly in the way of his progress. You see? If that kind of a person must step over a corpse or wade through blood for the sake of his ideas, he must find sanction for these actions in his conscience.

I do acknowledge that the categories of "ordinary" and "extraordinary" are somewhat arbitrary classifications. But Nature herself divides men into these two categories; in other words, ordinary men who are the raw material that serves to reproduce humankind, and extraordinary men who have the gift to give utterance to a new word. The first preserve the world and people it, the second move the world forward and lead it to its goal. All of them have an equal right to exist—and *vive la guerre eternelle*—until our Savior comes again!