

# STILL LIFE

## THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

A play by Phil Lewis

**This play requires permission to perform and a performance fee**

### SHORTENED **SAMPLE** VERSION

For full version please contact:

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*Approx. 8 minutes.*

#### **CAST:**

**RITA:** 50+

#### **SET:**

Single chair and spotlight.

# THE JUSTICE SYSTEM

((OPENING MUSIC.

LIGHTS UP ON A SINGLE CHAIR ON STAGE.

RITA ENTERS AND TAKES A SEAT.

SHE APPEARS FRAIL AND SLOW IN HER ACTIONS. SHE CARRIES A MOBILE PHONE AND A LARGE TUMBLER FULL OF VODKA AND TONIC, WHICH SHE DRINKS FROM OCCASSIONALLY, THROUGHOUT THE MONOLOGUE)

**RITA:** Just finished talking to Doreen. The last one on the list.

(RITA PUTS THE PHONE ON THE GROUND, OR SMALL TABLE BESIDE HER, LEAVING HER HANDS FREE TO DRINK FROM THE GLASS)

It's taken me over a week to get around to them all. But it's done now.

They say if you can count five friends you can trust, you're doing well. Well, I can't find one.

However there are ten people, not involved with Bernie's business, who I would've liked to keep in contact with. I guess I let them slip away because I was just too embarrassed to have to keep explaining his absence for them to ever become 'close' friends.

Bernie was my husband. Married twenty eight years until he died a year ago. They still hound me, even though he's gone. He died at home, just. He was out of prison a month, that's all. They watched and studied his every move when he was out. Mine too. The Police, that is.

I'd like to say with some conviction that they hounded him to his death. But that wouldn't be true. Prison killed him. As with most people with a free spirit, confined in four walls gets them in the end. In that way the system certainly works. Had he lived, I doubt if he would ever pulled another job.

I've spent most of my married life without him, because he was in prison so many times. I've spent hours waiting to visit him in prison. The loneliness, desperation and embarrassment of just sitting and waiting at her majesty's pleasure. What a waste of time - for everyone that is.

I used to help him plan the robberies and in one instance drove the getaway car.

He was caught and convicted every time. That makes him a special kind of idiot, doesn't it? What does it make me though?

It was too much for our son, he up and left ten years ago. Not heard from him since. Bernie tried to find him, though his contacts. Nothing.

The police never found one of Bernie's hauls, which he successfully hid away and I've lived off for years. There's still hundreds of thousands left in a secret offshore account. But I've no one to leave it to.

Last week, I hired a detective to try to find my son. If successful he will inherit – if not, five years after my death it goes to charity. I refuse to let the government get a penny.

The police still keep an eye on me and have hounded me for years. That's the reason I've developed a deep resentment for authority.

The other day I was driven past a speed trap on a bypass. Six police cars and a radar trap. Now that's six policemen that could be out catching real criminals, like my husband, granted. Instead of hanging around trying to create new criminals. Easy, unsuspecting targets.

If I stole a pen from a bank they'd consider it a bank robbery.

They say you can get ill, just by stress, don't they. Well I've had a stressful life - so I suppose it's no surprise that I got ill. Really ill.

Recently, my home was broken into and burgled. At first I thought it was a police search disguised as vandals, but the mess made was clearly drug addicts, vandals..... someone.

It really upset me.

For all my years I've supported my husband's profession and the criminal classes, believing it was a way of life, not always chosen, but having to steal to survive – was in some way a noble cause!

I finally realised that the criminal way of life is not acceptable to the majority of ordinary, struggling people. Experiencing it first hand I realise, although Bernie was a bank robber, we always justified that it was only the bank that suffered. Large organisations could stand the loss. The faceless corporate entities suffered, not individuals.

But in cases like large money robbery, everyone pays eventually. Insurances go up, fees to be paid by the public increase, costs increase across the board. The large corporations rarely lose out. They just pass the cost down the line.

It takes a thief to catch a thief, they say. Now a robber has robbed a robber. I guess justice has been served on me.

I've been told I've only a few weeks left to live. What do they know! More than me, I suppose. So I decided to contact ten people I haven't spoken to for ages. None of the old crowd, Bernie's circle of misfits. Just people I met on the way through life. Some of them befriended me when Bernie was...away a lot.

We had a good old chat, until I told them the reason for the call. It would all go quiet. People do not know what to say to someone who's about to die, do they? I laughed it off, but I give them the real reason for the call.

EDITED