

MURDERERS**A One-Act Play by Patricia Prewitt**

(6.3.13)

CAST: Girl (aka Prewitt), Prison Psychologist, eight assorted female inmates, one guard.

SETTING: Desk, two chairs, small waste basket. When scene opens, psychologist is at desk perusing a file.

SHRINK: *[looks up as Prewitt enters]* Well, Mrs. Prewitt, how are you today?

PREWITT: *[politely]* Fine, thank you.

SHRINK: That's not what I hear. I understand you are depressed and cry most of the time. *[pause]* Do you want to talk about it?

PREWITT: I, uh, don't know... *[hesitates]*

SHRINK: Yes...Please go on.

PREWITT: *[pause, then unloads quickly]* My husband was murdered in the bed beside me. The man raped me. *[breath]* Our five children and I were left to deal with accusations, interrogations, harassments, and sheer terror. I was charged with Bill's murder and in an incredibly unfair, short trial was convicted of capital murder. I didn't know enough to take a plea bargain. How can you plead guilty when you're not guilty? And here I am. In prison for *[short pause]* forever. I had to leave my traumatized children in the care of my traumatized parents. On top of that, every time I eat, my stomach knots up and stabs like I've just eaten a fresh pack of double-edged razor blades. *[pause and deep breath]* I think I have a pretty doggone good reason for being blue.

SHRINK: Hm... Well, Mrs. Prewitt, *[pause]* you do seem to have, uh, a valid reason for your, uh, emotional state. *[exits slowly]*

PREWITT: *[stand, to audience]* If he thinks I'm delusional, what can he do about it? If he believes me, he can't do anything either.

In time I learned to cry privately. The shower is a great place, but red swollen eyes still give you away, and our allotted shower time is not adequate for a long "pity party". Ya gotta cry while soaping up and rinsing. Someone is always standing outside the curtain waiting for the shower. But the old "soap on the eyes" excuse for red eyes still works...occasionally.

Another "new girl" issue I struggled with when I first came to prison

was that I hated to be called a murderer. That's an awful label whether it's true or not.

GUARD: *[walks up]* What're you in for, Prewitt?

PREWITT: I was convicted of murder, but I'm innocent.

GUARD: Yeh, that's what they all say.

PREWITT: I'm telling the truth. I'm not a murderer. I couldn't kill anyone.

GUARD: Yeh, sure. Ain't no guilty girls in here. *[laughs & exits]*

PREWITT: *[to audience]* But he's wrong. The prisoners I know tell the naked truth about their crimes.

PISTOL-PACKING INMATE: *[enters, bitter]* I crouched behind his car and waited for him to come out of her apartment. The "love nest" he was paying for--with our money. You should have seen the look on his face when I popped up with his pistol in my hand. Pointed right at his heart. You coulda bought him for a nickle! He sure changed his tune. *[imitates his pleading]* "No, Blanche, no, please don't shoot!" Begging like the dog he was. He sure looked surprised when I pulled the trigger.

PREWITT: Are you sorry? Sorry you killed him?

PISTOL-PACKING INMATE *[elderly]*: Not on your life. I'd do it again in a heartbeat. That cheatin' bastard made my life miserable. He deserved what he got. And get this: with his money, I got a hot-shot attorney and will be outta here in a couple of years. *[smug smile]* No, Sweetie, it was well worth it! *[exits]*

BOASTFUL BOOSTER INMATE: *[interrupts]* On one of my better "shopping excursions", I stole three mink coats at once. Three. Full length. From Alaskan Fur. On the Country Club Plaza? Right under their snotty-ass noses. The trick is to dress the part and act rich-bitch snooty to blend in. They never knew what hit em.

PREWITT: How do you get any coats out of a store--much less three?

BOASTFUL BOOSTER INMATE: I wear a boosting girdle. Ya know? Low around my knees and just fold the furs inside out and slam them under my skirt into the crotch of my girdle. Now you see it, now you don't! I've taken whole hams outta Schnuck's. I'm great at stealing...as long as I'm not using. But I can't keep away from heroin. Ya know? See these? *[proudly shows blue scar on neck]* Tracks. I've OD'd four times! Four.

YOUNG MOTHER INMATE: [*Enters, dazed and childlike hugging herself*] My baby. She wouldn't quit crying. I held the pillow over her face for just a little while. Just to stop it. She wouldn't quit crying. [*exits chanting*] She wouldn't stop... I never meant to...

JOY RIDER INMATE [*a kid*]: [*interrupts excitedly*] I love to steal cars and just drive. I got clean into Texas once. I can jump start a car fast as a jack rabbit. My granddaddy taught me. Besides you'd be surprised how many people leave their keys in the ignition or under the floor mat. I love those magnet things stuck in the wheel well. This is the first time they actually sent me to prison. I'm just 16. I never thought they'd send me here. But I just gotta do 90 days. I can do that standing on my head, then I'll be joy riding again. Watch out Joplin, here I come! [*giggles*]

PREWITT: See what I mean? Unadulterated honesty.

MENTOR INMATE: [*enters forcefully*] Shut the fuck up with your fancy fifteen-dollar words!

PREWITT: But...

MENTOR INMATE: [*interrupts*] Hey, Friendly Bob! Keep your motherfuckin mouth SHUT! If these fuckers figure out what a stupid rube you are, they will take full advantage of you. They'll take your kindness for weakness. Let em think you're not only capable of murder but actually did it and can do it again--today. Ya gotta "front". You know. Act tough. Quit chit-chatting like these is yo motherfuckin sorority sisters! This prison is the armpit of society--and you ain't nothin but a long greasy pit hair! Don't ya forget it!

PREWITT: Theresa, I know you have my best interests at heart, and I really appreciate you looking out for me, but I sure don't think I'll be successful at a "tough gal" ruse. You've got the whole biker chick thing going on, but I....

MENTOR INMATE: [*mocking*] Golly gee, Mary Elizabeth. Good fuckin night, John Boy. [*sternly*] Get with the program!

PREWITT: [*to audience*] Theresa should have written "How to Survive Prison, for Dummies", although there is probably not a huge market for that particular handbook. We dumb "Waltons" are few and far between in here.

MENTOR INMATE: Like I said, bitch, that smart-ass mouth of yours is gonna to land you in a world of hurt!

GUARD: [*enters and points*] Hey, Prewitt, ya can't line your trash can

with a grocery bag. It's contraband.

PREWITT: What?

GUARD: You heard me. Get that paper sack outta that trash can. It's a fire hazard.

PREWITT: *[debates]* How can it be a fire hazard? Isn't a trash can designed to hold trash? Like old letters? And letters are written on paper, so when you throw away paper trash, in the trash can, it becomes paper in the trash can. This brown paper bag is paper and....

GUARD: *[interrupts]* I SAID IT'S A FIRE HAZARD! GET IT OUT!

PREWITT: *[pulls sack out of trash can, balls it up, and tosses it back in trash can.]* Is that better?

GUARD: Yeh.

PREWITT: It's no longer flammable now? *[hard look from guard]* It changed molecular structure when wadded? *[guard takes a menacing step forward]*

MENTOR INMATE: *[interrupts]* Thanks, Boss. We got it. Won't happen again. *[smiles and he walks off, Theresa grabs Patty]* What the fuck?

PREWITT: That makes no sense at all...

MENTOR INMATE: *[interrupts]* Bitch, can you just shut your mother-fuckin mouth? Un-fuckin-believable.

PREWITT: *[to audience]* And so Theresa tutored me.

GUARD: *[enters]* Hey, Prewitt, whattaya in for?

PREWITT: *[glances at Theresa then answers]* A long time. *[guard smirks and exits]*

MENTOR INMATE: *[satisfied with thumbs up or high fives]* Fuck-an-aye!

[Former Teacher Inmate, Foreign Inmate and Myopic Inmate enter and listen.]

PREWITT: I also quit worrying that people have the wrong idea about me. It doesn't matter that I'm not good for this murder. Guilt or innocence is of no consequence inside. Right or wrong, I'm a murderer because I was convicted of murder.

FORMER TEACHER INMATE: You're sure right about that. I was a first

grade teacher. My first year. Had a couple of drinks at a Christmas party and drove home. An oncoming car jumped the median and hit me head on. He was drunk, and the breathalyzer deemed me to be just over the legal limit, too. But the drunk driver died, and that put me in here for manslaughter. I'll never be able to teach again. And I'm now lumped in with the likes of serial killers like Ted Bundy. *[exits quickly]*

FOREIGN INMATE: I met my husband when he was in the army. Paul was so handsome in his uniform, and I jumped at the chance to marry him and go to America. It was my dream, but he used me as his slave and beat me. Made me lose my baby. *[pain-filled pause]* That night he was killing me. I felt my life slipping away as he kept kicking me with those army boots. I didn't want to die. *[pause]* They told me I stabbed him over 30 times, but I don't remember... I just wanted to stop him. I wanted him to love me. I wanted to live an American life--like on the television. Happy. I didn't mean to kill him. I just wanted to stop him from hurting me. *[exits slowly]*

MYOPIC INMATE: We'd been fighting and drinking. I jumped in the car to get away from him. Didn't have my glasses on. Don't even know why because I can't see shit without 'em. He jumped right out in front of my car trying to stop me, but it was my best friend that I hit. Maurice died right there in front of the house. It was awful. I loved him. We grew up together. *[turns and exits sadly]*

PREWITT: I love my sisters in here. My sweet murderers.

MENTOR INMATE: *[enters]* There you go with that pussy-ass bleeding-heart sorority sister shit again. Are you ever gonna to toughen up? I won't be here for-fuckin-ever to watch your lily-white ass! *[grabs her and exits]*

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