



*A Playlab Indie Publication*



# WRETCH

by Angus Cerini

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## Introduction

*Wretch* is a response to my experiences working as an artist with young men in a juvenile justice facility. It explores this world through the relationship between a mother and her son.

The thing that struck me most about these young men was the level of their remorse and regret. So much greater than the outrage we throw at them or the penalty meted out by a judge. In facing their mums — that one person who knows them best — they truly must face what it is they have done. In this private world, that only they share, there can be no hiding and no escape.

In *Wretch* this relationship is focused on a single visit the mother makes to the prison — but it draws on their entire history together. This meeting becomes a blame game of love, and the drama that unfolds illuminates a world so very different to the kind we all know, yet in many ways so very similar.

So *Wretch* to me is about love. About the love a mum has for her son and the love he has for her. About the love they struggle to hold onto in the face of everything this world throws at them. For me it is about my love of humanity and my hopes for it. It is also finally and ultimately about my love for theatre and the transformative power of art. How to turn something awful or difficult into something we might actually enjoy.

Angus Cerini.

## Acknowledgements

The development and original production of *Wretch* was supported by Arts Victoria and the City of Melbourne, and was also assisted through Hothouse Theatre's A Month in the Country residential program, funded jointly by Albury City and the Myer Foundation.

# First Production Details

First presented by Angus Cerini and Doubletap at LaMama in Melbourne in 2009.

CO-DIRECTORS	Susie Dee and Angus Cerini.
PERFORMERS	Susie Dee and Angus Cerini.
SET DESIGN	Marg Horwell
SOUND COMPOSITION & MUSIC	Kelly Ryall
LIGHTING DESIGN	Richard Vabre.

## Production Photos



From Left: Susie Dee & Angus Cerini. LaMama, 2009.  
Photographer: Ponch Hawkes



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LaMama, 2009.  
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# Wretch

## 1.

ABE                      Belongings in locker?

BEE                      Yes.

ABE                      Key please.

BEE                      Thanks for that, keeping my stuff safe.

ABE                      Nothing hidden up your arse?

BEE                      Nah, up me other hole but.

ABE                      We're not allowed to search up there.

BEE                      I might enjoy it.

ABE                      You would. Leopard never changes its spots.

BEE                      Is that right?

ABE                      Too right.

BEE                      Where's your shoelaces?

ABE                      Took em off me. Risk of topping myself.

BEE                      You would have done it now, for sure?

ABE                      Nah, no remorse.

BEE                      That's not what they reckon?

ABE                      What you bring me?

BEE                      Carton of fags.

ABE Anything else?

BEE If you're lucky I might give you a kiss goodbye.

ABE Oh you wish, hag.

BEE Don't talk to your mother like that.

ABE Where's me fags?

2.

BEE

Them doctor he say ratshit. Him say choppy choppy, off she blows, setting sail, all gone, nothing now will save you love, Mrs Mrs. All over bar the shouting, all gone to ratshit. Him in there small room know nothing lest I tell him. And the furry armed men and the rightful girls sensible shoes know nothing if nothing I say.

Tit gone dead, all through under the arms and into the soul of the crooked spinster, crooked little baby killer, lest I say a word and spoil the game, he will never know, kill him like I am doomed.

Smile into the vase, look at all them flowers ...

3.

BEE                    They still doing those cups of tea?

ABE                    Yeah.

BEE                    Bikkies?

ABE                    Yeah, suppose.

BEE                    Was that your mum?

ABE                    Yeah.

BEE                    Is that the one with the cancer?

ABE                    Yeah.

BEE                    So she only got one tit?

ABE                    Yeah.

BEE                    What's she got, padding in there?

ABE                    Yeah, spose, don't know.

BEE                    Big boobs.

ABE                    Yeah.

4.

ABE

And how you tell her what you done just this night just been. Weighing on the mind, all them strokes of midnight not a wink of sleep, just the sinking in, these hands sinking him, not fighting back, not breathing by the end, this night just been.

And in me little room with the shower head glinting over at me and me little TV up there in the wall and that little bit of glass in the door and in me bed all alone thinking about what I done.

Go and kill a guy what gone and done what he done.

5.

BEE                                   How much money they giving you?

ABE                                   Much more than pocket money.

BEE                                   I said how much money?

ABE                                   Me pimp me old mum, make some cash, you reckon any old drunk will go for a rub off in the trees?

BEE                                   I reckon.

ABE                                   I can smell your mess from here!

BEE                                   I had you out of that hole and this is the love a mother gets, all spat out and laughed at. Stitches and dreams they all disappeared and alive hardly, this little sprite gasping for air. The father effed off with his workmate, they jumped in the ute, honey off to the mines, you pregnant fat hog.

ABE                                   You never had no man as good as a husband as good enough to leave.

BEE                                   I might have.

ABE                                   You never did.

BEE                                   I could have once, maybe I could have.

ABE                                   Twenty cents he pays, not even that, twenty cents for wrapping your lips around his meat, and I follow him, hey mum, follow him and slash his balls off, stare him down, against the crown, follow me leader man, nice suit, schwack.

BEE                                   Dead.

ABE                                   As a doorknob.

BEE                                   Give mummy one of them fags.

ABE                                   Shut your hole.