



**Nietzsche. Black. White.
Impropriety. Ambiguity.**

The costumes of *Never the Sinner* presented themselves in an interesting fashion: while the play is set in the 1920s and is an historical courtroom drama, the form in which it is written begs for a design aesthetic that skirts around the edges of historical propriety and sneaks

outside the realms of realistic assumptions. Logan's play is written in a distinctly Brechtian fashion—in other words, it calls to mind the theories of the German playwright Bertolt Brecht, who claimed that theatre should, "...make the familiar strange." Theatre should be especially political and should be used as a channel to incite not only catharsis in an audience but a necessity to step outside of themselves and examine the society in which they are living.

With the costumes in this production, I have attempted to invoke the feel and silhouette of the 1920s while maintaining the assumption that there is something *wrong* or *off* with the characters—that outside of the realm of the courtroom and sort of modern Roman Coliseum is the world created by Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb, and that world blurs the lines between truth and lies; it is a world where there is not black or white but only grey. What became interesting to me was to study the play of this between us, the audience, and Leopold and Loeb: to us it is as I have mentioned, that the courtroom is a world of fact and the other a world of fantasy; yet to Leopold and Loeb it is sometimes just the opposite. To them, the courtroom becomes a realm where nothing connects, where things are in various shades of grey, while their private world is one where deals are hashed and promises given, where trusts are born and broken.

Aside from that mentioned above, there is also the world of the four Reporters—four characters who are less real people and seem more often to take the form of a Greek Chorus: they know all, they inform, and they move the story. They are changeling

characters; they play many roles and alter form easily. They support the story without truly being a part of it. I have tried to represent this in their costumes by providing them with, again, a traditional silhouette that then bleeds into the realm of the surreal. Each character has a base costume that shifts and alters itself to suit whichever character they are portraying next.



At the end of it all, the point was, of course, to give you the audience and the actors an aesthetic that would truthfully represent the world and atmosphere being presented by the playwright. It is my hope that I have successfully achieved this goal.

-Caroline V. Stine