



### Cast:

Ruth Ellis:	Lucy Hayton
Jack Gale:	John Fenner
Doris Judd:	Karen Brooks
Sylvia Shaw:	Deb Relton-Elves
Vicki Martin:	Nicol Cortese

### Crew:

Director:	Doreen Belton
Assistant Director:	Harry Leonard
Designer:	Pete Bagley
Props:	Les Rahilly, Nikki Gabriel, Frances Kendall, Steph Othen, George Rippon, Alex Martis
Wardrobe:	Pam Coleman, Maureen Liggins
Lighting Design:	Karl Stafford
Sound Design:	Dave Cornish, Clair Henrywood
Prompt:	Jonathan Rees
Stage Manager:	Pete Kendall

### Review: The crime of passion that oozes 1950s atmosphere. ★★★★★

The true story of Ruth Ellis, the last woman to be hanged in Britain, is brought to the stage of the Criterion Theatre by a hugely talented cast of five, who together recreate the sleazy world of clubland in 1955.

In France this crime of passion would never have resulted in the death penalty.

And in the UK worse crimes had been committed without resorting to the hangman's noose...in Ruth's case her executioner was the legendary Albert Pierrepoint who went on to describe her as: "the bravest woman I ever hanged."

Real life Ruth was a mother who had a bit part in a 1951 film, *Lady Godiva Rides Again*. She knew Stephen Ward, the society osteopath soon to be implicated in the Profumo affair and her hostess work brought her into contact with the glamorous racing driver set, including her lover, David Blakely.

Lucy Hayton plays peroxidized Ruth with a clenched, edgy brittleness that still shows us the vulnerability beneath. Her character contrasts well with the bounce and confidence of new hostess Vicki, not yet in possession of all the answers, but less used, and of an altogether tougher disposition.

You feel Vicki would not have fallen hopelessly into a destructive love affair....but Ruth couldn't help herself.

I liked the world-weary poise of Sylvia, played by Deb Relton-Elves as the woman who did have all the answers, matched by the compassion of club cleaner Doris (Karen Brooks).

As the lone male, John Fenner sets the atmosphere as he narrates the story from the police's point of view, probing Ruth for the truth while suggesting that she could have given herself a better case to put before the jury.

A tight, thought-provoking play, beautifully controlled by director Doreen Belton who is ably assisted by some terrific period clothes and hairstyles.

Barbara Goulden











At the Magdala, Hampstead

