

"CALL NORTHSIDE 777"

Screenplay

by

Jay Dratler

September 13, 1947

Received from Stenographic Dept.

1 SCRIPT

REVISED
SHOOTING FINAL

Title _____ "CALL NORTHSIDE 777" _____

Signed _____

BY _____

TIME _____

DATE _____

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Revised Shooting Final
September 13, 1947

"CALL NORTHSIDE 777"

FADE IN

1- MAIN TITLES AND CREDITS

2

over which comes appropriate music. As titles and credits FADE, we

DISSOLVE TO:

3

TITLE

reading as follows:

The events and characters depicted in this photoplay are not fictional, and any similarity with actual persons, either living or dead, is intentional.

DISSOLVE TO: -

4

STOCK SHOTS - CHICAGO FIRE - (FROM "OLD CHICAGO")

Over these SHOTS comes the VOICE of the narrator:

NARRATOR'S VOICE

In the year 1871, a cow kicked over a lamp and started the great fire that destroyed Chicago. But, out of the ashes of that catastrophe sprang a new Chicago --

5

STOCK SHOTS - CHICAGO SKY LINE - SKYSCRAPERS - FACTORIES - ETC.

Over the SHOT comes the narrator's VOICE:

NARRATOR'S VOICE

-- a Chicago of brick and brawn, concrete and guts, with a short history of violence beating in its pulse.

6

SHOTS OF CHICAGO NEWSPAPER BUILDINGS

NARRATOR'S VOICE

That history is on the record, and that record is kept by the newspapermen who have made Chicago's papers great.

7

SHOTS OF CHICAGO IN LATE 1932

These include shots of typical scenes in that period: gangland warefare scenes, interspersed with shots of flop-houses, men gathered outside employment agencies and men sleeping under newspapers on park benches, and perhaps a shot of someone selling apples on a street corner - in all of them, the characteristically brutal gusts of wind for which Chicago is known. The narrator's VOICE continues:

NARRATOR'S VOICE

No period in Chicago's history was more violent than the years of the depression. The rise and fall of the bootlegging empires was written in blood and bullets. In 1932 there were 365 murders in Chicago - one for each day of the year - eight policemen were shot down in the line of duty. One of the most cold-blooded of these murders occurred on December 9th, 1932, on South Ashland Avenue, in a place operated by a woman named Wanda Skutnik...

(NOTE: The above is broken to cover the above-mentioned SHOTS and atmospheric SHOTS of southside speakeasies. The final portion of the narration comes over a:)

8

CLOSE SHOT - EXT. WANDA SKUTNIK'S PLACE

We are CLOSE on a sign on the window which reads:

"WANDA SKUTNIK
Groceries and Delicatessen"

CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see it is a bitterly cold, windy day. Passersby are muffled in their overcoats and braced into the stiff wind. Traces of snow are seen swirling on doorsteps and at the curb. A wagon is stopping; the horse's head is lowered in the sharp cold wind. It is loaded with sacks of coal. On its side is lettered:

"JAN GRUSKA
COAL AND ICE"

GRUSKA, a man of about forty, is dismounting.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Wanda Skutnik's store in the Polish district was the front for a speakeasy.

WIPE TO:

9 INT. BACK ROOM - WANDA'S PLACE - DAY

Along one side runs a makeshift bar. In b.g. empty barrels and bottles. In the center of the room is a rough deal table, and in the back there is a potbellied stove with a wood and coal box beside it. At the center table BORIS, a big, burly gorilla of a man with huge black mustachios, is finishing his drink. WANDA SKUTNIK, the proprietress, a once attractive but now blowsy woman of about thirty-five or six, is near the stove, putting a few pieces of coal into it. Boris looks at her with dog-like devotion.

BORIS

(heavily)

You look nice, Wanda.

Wanda looks up, pleased, and walks over to the bar.

WANDA

You say nice things, Boris.

BORIS

(softly)

Nice...

Wanda grins at him. Now the door to the alley opens and Gruska comes in, carrying a bag of coal. He dumps the coal into the box near the potbellied stove, stamps his feet and turns to look at Wanda.

GRUSKA

It's cold out. A man could freeze.

Wanda looks at him wryly - produces a bottle and glass and brings them over to the table.

WANDA

Help yourself.

Gruska grins, sits down and starts pouring a drink. He nods at Boris, who nods back quietly and rises.

BORIS

I go now.

Wanda holds out her hand and he drops a coin into it.

WANDA

See you tonight?

BORIS

(nodding slowly)

Tonight...

(CONTINUED)

9 (Cont.)

Boris goes out the alley door, and Wanda walks over to the icebox and takes out of it a small paper bag, in which she keeps her money. She takes a bill out of it and goes toward Gruska. Off scene we hear the SOUND of the front door BELL.

WANDA

Got change for a twenty?

GRUSKA

(shrugs)

That's all right. Pay me next time.

Wanda puts the bag back in the icebox as POLICEMAN JOHN W. BUNDY enters. He's a big man, grey at the temples, and he's now beating his hands together to restore circulation.

BUNDY

Wanda, you're looking at a man with a cold coming on.

Bundy walks to the potbellied stove. Wanda picks up the bottle and a glass, pours some in as she approaches Bundy, and hands him the drink as he sits down before the fire.

WANDA

For a cold - this is good.

BUNDY

Thanks.

Gruska remains seated at the table. Bundy is now facing the stove, with his back to the door leading to the store. Outside, we HEAR the store door open, and the BELL ring. Wanda, who has just turned around after handing the drink to Bundy, is facing the glass partition in the door that leads to the store.

10 MED. FULL SHOT - ANGLING PAST WANDA AS SHE LOOKS TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE STORE

We can see two huge forms of two men outlined against the daylighted windows of the store. They are big and menacing; but we cannot see their faces or distinguish anything about them.

11 MED. FULL SHOT - REVERSE ANGLE

Wanda looks apprehensive and puzzled, and slowly puts the bottle of liquor down on a table.

12 MED. FULL SHOT - ANOTHER ANGLE - SHOOTING FROM BEHIND
BUNDY

The swinging door is thrust open, and we see the lower half of the two men - and now their guns are visible. Wanda still does not see them distinctly; but she gasps in fear when she sees the guns. She quickly dashes into the closet. One of the men starts toward the ice-box to get the money. Then, together, both men are aware of the blue-coated figure of Bundy, just as he turns around. Gruska flings himself aside, and hides behind a table for protection. Bundy reaches for his gun just as the two men start shooting. Bundy is hit, but lunges for one of the men and grapples with him. Suddenly another couple of shots are fired and Bundy staggers backward. As he falls, we HEAR rather than see the two men rushing off, because the door to the front store swings closed as Bundy crashes to the floor -- and we can HEAR the footsteps of the two men, the door BELL, and the SLAM of the front door.

13 FULL SHOT - EXT. WANDA'S PLACE - DAY

The two men come walking rapidly out of the store to their car. They do not have their guns in their hands. Their faces are averted as WILLIAM DECKER, a mailman, approaches. He looks curiously after them. Then a gun drops from under the coat of one of the men, right at Decker's feet. The man stoops quickly and scoops it up. Decker looks at him, stunned. Then the man gets into the car and it drives off. Decker turns quickly into Wanda's place.

14 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. WANDA'S PLACE - THE REAR PART

Gruska bends over Bundy and slowly the closet door opens and Wanda peers out.

WANDA

(frightened)

Did they go?

Just then Decker, the mailman, opens the door from the front and looks in, in horror. Gruska looks up suddenly.

GRUSKA

The police! Call the police!
Quick!

WANDA

(in Polish)

Bose Moj -- !

DISSOLVE TO:

15 A SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Another policeman murdered -- that made eight for that year! Chicago had enough - the pressure was on - find the killer!

These shots are to be superimposed over running newspaper scareheads:

- A) HEADLINE - DRAGNET OUT FOR COP KILLER
SCENE - Large company of policemen hurrying out of Police Station.
- B) HEADLINE - SKID ROW ROUNDUP - SOUTH STATE STREET
SCENE - Ext. row of cafes. Large crowd gathered looking into cafe, and scatter as cops come out with a fighting man.
- C) HEADLINE - MASS ARRESTS IN MANHUNT
SCENE - Lineup.
- D) HEADLINE - SPEAKEASIES RAIDED
SCENE - Police arresting customers. Crowd watching as men are dragged to the wagon.
- E) HEADLINE - ROAD BLOCKS PAY OFF - BRIDGE - NIGHT
SCENE - Night road block. Police at open back end of car, questioning a suspect.

As the headline fades out, the narrator's VOICE continues over the questioning scene:

NARRATOR'S VOICE

This cornered, frightened bootlegger gave the tip that pointed suspicion towards a man named Tomek Zaleska...

DISSOLVE TO:

16 FULL SHOT (FROM ABOVE) - THE WIECEK HOUSE

It is on a corner. Suddenly we can see police cars piling into the two streets from all directions. Ten or twenty men surround the house. It is a dismal little wooden frame house with perhaps four families living in it. It seems pitifully small to be attacked by such great numbers, but the policemen, some armed with sub-machine guns, others with side arms, deploy behind doorways and approach cautiously, as if they are in the process of arresting a dangerous criminal.

(CONTINUED)

16 (Cont.)

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Tomek Zaleska couldn't be found, but two weeks later, a tip from another source revealed that Tomek had spent the night of the murder with his friend, Frank Wiecek. The police closed in on the home of Helen and Frank Wiecek.

17 FULL SHOT - EXT. WIECEK HOUSE

Frank and Helen are led out, guarded by a cordon of police. Over the shot comes the VOICE of the narrator:

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Helen and Frank Wiecek were taken into custody for questioning.

18 INT. POLICE STATION - QUESTIONING ROOM

Officers surround Frank, firing questions at him. He answers some. SHOT through a door or window so we don't hear them. CAMERA MOVING IN.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Frank Wiecek admitted that Tomek had spent the night of the murder at his home - but insisted he knew nothing of the crime.

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

19 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. QUESTIONING ROOM

The officers are questioning Frank.

1ST COP

Why did Tomek want to sleep at your house?

FRANK

He said he was having trouble with his old man, and was afraid to go home.

Another cop looks at an official card in his hand.

2ND COP

When did you last check with the probation officer?

FRANK

Last Friday.

(CONTINUED)

19 (Cont.)

2ND COP

(glancing at card)

You sure it wasn't Thursday?

FRANK

No. I know it was Friday because that was the day my wife told me she was going to have a baby.

2ND COP

You went to the probation officer on Thursday, not Friday.

(shows him card)

Here's your card.

Frank stares at the card in bewilderment.

1ST COP

You're confused, son. Try to be a little more accurate. Now, what were you doing at 3:30 on December 9th?

FRANK

I was home, with my wife. I remember I was helping her shell walnuts for a cake she was making.

1ST COP

You were wrong about the day you saw the probation officer. Maybe you're wrong about being home shelling walnuts for your wife on December 9th!

FRANK

Well, I made a mistake about the probation officer. But I know I'm right about the other thing.

The cop takes a typewritten statement from another officer.

1ST COP

This statement was signed by your wife an hour ago.

(reads)

"My husband was home with me on the 9th of December. I remember this because he was helping me pit dates for a cake."

(putting down paper)

You sure it was walnuts?

(CONTINUED)

19 (Cont. 1)

FRANK

(dazed)

I - I don't know... I'm sure she
must be mistaken...

DISSOLVE TO:

20 FULL SHOT - INT. POLICE STATION - DESK

Helen is released. She exits alone.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

His wife, Helen, was released.

21 FULL SHOT - INT. JAIL

as Frank is placed in a cell.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

But because of Frank's confused
testimony on insignificant points,
and his minor police record, he
was held as a suspect.

22 FULL SHOT - EXT. CRIMINAL COURTS BLDG. - CHICAGO

A car drives up and a man gets out and enters the
building.

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Eventually, Tomek Zaleska,
protesting his innocence,
surrendered to the police.

DISSOLVE TO:

23 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. QUESTIONING ROOM

Officers are grilling Tomek the way they did Frank.
It's been going on for some time.

1ST COP

You knew we were looking for you!
You knew we picked up your good
friends, Helen and Frank Wiecek!
Then why didn't you give yourself
up - if you were innocent, as you
claim?

(CONTINUED)

23 (Cont.)

TOMEK

I - I was scared. Sometimes, I used to hang around Wanda's place - and when I heard they were picking up everybody she knew - well - I figured nobody would miss me, and I just beat it....

(then)

I know now I made a mistake.

(pleadingly)

But I came in on my own hook, didn't I?

2ND COP

When you went to Wiecek's house that night - what reason did you give for wanting to sleep there?

TOMEK

I don't think I gave any reason. I used to spend the night there once in a while.

2ND COP

(looking at paper in hand)

You didn't give them any reason?

TOMEK

No. I just asked them to let me stay there, and they did.

2ND COP

And you're sure you gave them no reason?

TOMEK

No.

The second cop looks at the first cop skeptically and shows him the paper as we

DISSOLVE TO:

24 FULL SHOT - INT. COURTROOM - DAY - CRIMINAL COURTS BLDG.

Wiecek and Zaleska on trial. Wanda Skutnik is on the witness stand. Narrator's VOICE comes over:

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Frank Wiecek and Tomek Zaleska were indicted and swiftly brought to trial.

25 MED. SHOT - WITNESS STAND

The prosecutor is questioning Wanda Skutnik.

PROSECUTOR

I will ask you, Mrs. Skutnik, if you see in this courtroom the two men who murdered Policeman John Bundy?

Wanda, nervous, apprehensive, lifts her eyes and stares offscene.

WANDA

(pointing)

Yes. Him, and him.

26 WIDER ANGLE

The prosecutor turns to the defendants' table where Frank and Tomek sit with their attorneys, who are none too impressive in appearance.

PROSECUTOR

Had you ever seen either of these men prior to the time of the shooting?

WANDA

Sure. Tomek used to come around my place all the time. The other fellow I never saw before.

PROSECUTOR

Then the first time you saw Frank Wiecek was the night of the murder?

WANDA

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

And the next time you saw him was when you picked him out of the police line-up?

Wiecek reacts, shaking his head desperately.

WANDA

Yes.

PROSECUTOR

That's all, Your Honor. The people rest.

DISSOLVE TO:

27 INSERT - PRISON PHOTOS

of Frank and Tomek, front and profile, with their numbers prominently displayed. OVER SHOT comes the narrators VOICE:

NARRATOR'S VOICE

Frank Wiecek and Tomek Zaleska received a sentence of 99 years in Stateville Penitentiary. This was in November of 1933. Frank and Tomek went to prison. The case was forgotten for eleven years, -- forgotten until October 10, 1944, when a small advertisement appeared in the classified advertising section of the Chicago Times --

DISSOLVE TO:

28 INSERT

of a classified ad page of the CHICAGO TIMES dated October 10, 1944. We see the name of the paper and the date prominently. We move down to:

"PERSONAL NOTICES

\$5,000 reward for killers of Officer Bundy, on December 9, 1932. Call Northside 777, 12-7 P.M. Ask for Tillie Wiecek."

A man's hand COMES INTO SCENE and draws a thick blue pencil circle around it.

29 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. TIMES NEWS ROOM - NIGHT

BRIAN KELLY, the city editor, is just putting down the item. He is a quiet, chunky, very wise, soft-spoken man of about 40. One of the characteristics about him is that he smokes a brand of cigarettes with a hard cardboard tip. He doesn't use an ash tray but absently pulls the cigarette out of his mouth by clamping five fingers right around it and then stands it up on his desk, so that little clusters of half-burned cigarettes are always sticking up like tiny monuments on his desk. In the b.g. we can see the other reporters busy at their desks and copy-boys walking around. Still frowning at the item, Kelly reaches for a cigarette, studies the item again.

KELLY

Boy.....

A copy-boy, who was just going by, turns toward him.

(CONTINUED)

29 (Cont.)

KELLY

Get me the file on John W. Bundy.
A cop killed in 1932.

The boy starts off.

KELLY

(calling after him)
And get McNeal.

The boy goes on his way. CAMERA FOLLOWS him to McNeal's desk. MCNEAL is an earnest, lanky man who, at the moment, is busy typing out a story. The boy walks by and taps him on the shoulder but McNeal goes right on writing.

BOY

Kelly wants you.

McNeal nods and the boy goes off to the file room. McNeal is just finishing his story. He starts rising, still hitting the keys as he's standing up, looking down at the paper. Then he stops, one hand reaches out for two pages of copy lying on his desk and while he still reads the sheet in the typewriter, he taps one more letter. He starts moving, walks around the edge of the desk and pulls the last sheet out of the typewriter as he goes by.

McNeal puts the three sheets in order and as he reaches Kelly's desk, he spikes the story on a spindle. Kelly throws some copy into a basket, picks up the clipping and hands it to McNeal.

KELLY

Check this.

McNeal nods without answering. He glances at the clipping a moment, studying it. Kelly goes right on with his work, reading copy that has been handed to him.

MCNEAL

What do you make of it?

KELLY

I want to know why it's worth \$5,000
to somebody to find out who killed a
cop eleven years ago.

MCNEAL

(grimly)

In 1932, it was open season on cops.
On the Northside they were shooting
'em in pairs, like a brace of ducks.

(CONTINUED)

29 (Cont. 1)

Just then the copy-boy comes back.

BOY

(handing Kelly two
or three clippings)

This is all I could find on that cop
killed in 1932 - that Bundy guy -
Mr. Kelly.

MCNEAL

(to Kelly, drily)

See what I mean? He didn't rate much.

KELLY

Well, it won't hurt to check it.
(sarcastically)

Maybe you'll get your name in the
papers.

Kelly takes the cigarette out of his mouth and stands
it up on the end of his desk, like all the other burned-
out stubs. McNeal looks thoughtfully at the item again.

MCNEAL

This is sucker-bait. Every grifter
and mooch in town will be out after
that five grand. They'll frame their
brothers to get it.

(thoughtfully)

Maybe this is a frame. It has a lot
of angles.

Kelly looks up at him with a sudden grin.

KELLY

See what I mean? It just takes you
longer to catch on.

McNeal concedes the point reluctantly.

MCNEAL

Well, I was just thinking about it.

McNeal starts away. Kelly goes back to his work.
CAMERA MOVES ALONG with McNeal, back to his desk. He
sits down and picks up the phone. CAMERA MOVES IN.

MCNEAL

(into phone)

Give me Northside 777. Yeah....
right.

(CONTINUED)

29 (Cont. 2)

With his free hand, McNeal holds up the circled item and looks at it thoughtfully, wonderingly.

MCNEAL

(continuing;
into phone)

Hello? ... Is this Northside 777?
I want to talk to Tillie Wiecek....
Yeah....

(a pause)

Where can I find her...? Yeah, I
know it's after seven, thought you
might know.....

(repeating an address)

Where? 179....right.....thank you.

He hangs up, and we

DISSOLVE TO:

30 FULL SHOT - EXT. OFFICE BLDG. - NIGHT

The street is deserted and there are only one or two
office windows lit. We

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

31 FULL SHOT - INT. CORRIDOR OFFICE BLDG. - NIGHT

We are SHOOTING the entire length of a long, long
marble corridor in an office building. Far down the
corridor, we can discern a lonely, solitary figure,
that of an old woman, down on her hands and knees,
scrubbing the floor with a sponge and soap, from a
bucket of water which she continually pushes in front
of her. OVER SHOT we HEAR the slow methodic footsteps
of one man (hard heels on his shoes) echoing hollowly
through the corridors. The footsteps advance toward
the old woman. The woman is TILLIE WIECEK.

MCNEAL'S VOICE

I'm looking for Tillie Wiecek.

TILLIE

(noncommittally)

What you want?

CAMERA PULLS BACK. McNeal shows her the ad.

MCNEAL

I called Northside 777, and they said
I'd find her here.

(CONTINUED)

31 (Cont.)

TILLIE

I'm Tillie.

MCNEAL

Did you run this ad?

She wipes her hands on her apron and somewhat apologetically takes the clipping, looks at it and nods.

TILLIE

That's from me.

(anxiously)

You know something?

MCNEAL

(shakes his head)

No....I'm a reporter from the Chicago Times.

(then)

We'd like to know why you are so interested in finding the killers of this cop?

TILLIE

(getting up)

Frank Wiecek....is my son. I, his mother. My son is in prison for killing him. He didn't do it...My friends tell me if I offer big money, maybe somebody will tell who kill this policeman.

The expression on McNeal's face changes. He's beginning to get the general idea. He's got a story.

MCNEAL

You mean your son is in prison for killing the cop? Is that right?

TILLIE

(excitedly)

Yes, but he don't do it. My Frank is a good boy,...he don't do this thing,

MCNEAL

(pointedly)

About this five thousand dollars.... Where did you get it?

McNeal's attitude has crushed Tillie's hopes, and her expression changes.

(CONTINUED)

31 (Cont. 1)

TILLIE

(puzzled)

That is important?

MCNEAL

Yes, it's very important. Where he got it--or where you got it--might have a lot to do with the case. He might have had it hidden away or maybe you got it from some mob that's trying to spring him.

TILLIE

No!.....No, it's mine! I work...I scrub floors! Eleven years I save every penny. I never miss a day's work. I earn it -- every penny!

MCNEAL

(appalled)

Eleven years. That's a long time.

TILLIE

(majestically)

You just say it. My boy he live it. You believe me, mister. You don't know Frank. But me, I'm his mother, I know....

MCNEAL

You mean you've got some new evidence? Something that wasn't brought out at the trial?

TILLIE

No. That's why I try to buy new evidence.

MCNEAL

(gently)

You're going to be wasting your money. You'll be cheated out of it.

TILLIE

No, not me.

MCNEAL

Look, lady -- he's in for 99 years. If you want to make good use of that money, send him cigarettes and candy and try to keep him happy.

(CONTINUED)

31 (Cont. 2)

Tillie sees that he is about to go and she puts a restraining hand on his arm.

TILLIE

You very kind, but I not use my money for candy or cigarettes... If you not able to help, I get Frank out someday, somehow.

(a pause)

I dream of this day.

MCNEAL

(cynically)

Five thousand dollars is a lot for a dream.

TILLIE

Yes, eleven year I dream and I work. First I try three thousand dollar...
(hopelessly)

Nothing... Now I try five thousand dollars.

MCNEAL

(softly)

And suppose nothing happens?

Tillie seems to draw up and grow larger and more magnificent.

TILLIE

(grimly)

Then I work eleven more years. I get ten thousand dollars, but my boy someday he get out.

McNeal looks at her admiringly.

MCNEAL

I've got to hand it to you, Mrs. Wiecek. You've got real courage.

TILLIE

(her eyes lighting up)

You help me?

MCNEAL

Well, I'm afraid I can't do that.

(Tillie's face falls
in disappointment)

I'm just a reporter. I just write the story.... But....good luck to you.....

He turns and starts slowly away.

32 CLOSE SHOT - TILLIE

as she turns her head and looks after him. Again we HEAR the sharp, clear sound of his footsteps, but this time receding down the corridor like the sound of hope, leaving her forever. Finally they stop. Tillie sighs, and drops to her knees, resuming her scrubbing.

33 CLOSE SHOT - MCNEAL

standing at the elevator....looks back down the corridor. At the far end, from his angle, we see the pathetic, crouched figure on hands and knees scrubbing the floor. McNeal, with his finger about to push the elevator button, pauses. Then he shakes his head and shrugs. He presses the button and turns his back on Tillie, and we

DISSOLVE TO:

34 CLOSE SHOT - INT. TIMES' NEWS ROOM - MCNEAL'S HANDS

His hands are on his typewriter, pecking out his story. We see part of it. It reads:

"In the pre-dawn hours when you're traveling through the loop on your way home from a party, you've seen her, or others like her. They're elderly women, most of them, and they're weary, all of them...."

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

35 INT. TIMES' NEWS ROOM - NIGHT - INSERT -"TIMES" HEADLINE

The headline reads:

"SLAVES TO SAVE \$5000; OFFERS IT TO
CLEAR HER SON

by P. J. McNeal"

CAMERA PULLS BACK - Kelly is reading, HEARS McNeal come in a side door and as he approaches his own desk, Kelly beckons to him.

KELLY

Good yarn on that scrub woman. It's got size.

(correcting copy)

It's too good for a one-day story. Go up to Stateville and interview her son.

(CONTINUED)

35 (Cont.)

McNeal makes an effort to control himself.

MCNEAL

(firmly)

Now, wait a minute. I didn't play up that angle just to glorify a cop-killer.

KELLY

(calmly)

You got proof he is a cop-killer?

MCNEAL

They didn't give him 99 years for playing hooky. He had a record; he was on probation when he shot the cop!

KELLY

(softly)

Yeah. I know. I looked it up, too. He was public enemy number one. He and a couple of other kids broke into a grocery store.

(ironically)

He got two bucks -- and a record.

MCNEAL

Maybe so, but in this case an eye-witness identified him as one of the killers. His trial was reviewed by the Supreme Court -- and his conviction upheld!

KELLY

(shrugging)

So what? It can't hurt to go up there and see what the guy has to say - can it?

Mac walks to the water cooler, takes a cup, and fills up. Kelly glances over and continues talking.

KELLY

(with emotion)

Let's put it this way, Mac -- maybe I'm interested for personal reasons -- because my mother did the same thing. She scrubbed floors on hands and knees for more than eleven years -- to send me through school.

(CONTINUED)

35 (Cont. 1)

Mac turns around and eyes Kelly, who is now looking down at his copy. McNeal slowly turns and comes back to the desk. His expression has changed.

MCNEAL

I'll go up to the pen in the morning.
How about expenses?

Kelly doesn't look up but pulls a little voucher from the front of his desk and signs it.

KELLY

Here's a voucher. Take it to the cashier.

Mac starts off and Kelly doesn't even look up. But Mac stops and turns around.

MCNEAL

Kelly....

KELLY

(looking up)
Yeah?

MCNEAL

I happen to know your mother had a small annuity. She never scrubbed a floor in her life--and you never got out of the fifth grade.

Kelly looks sheepish.

MCNEAL

But I figure if you pull such a corny gag -- you want me to go pretty badly -- so I'm going.

(then as he turns
to leave)

But I don't want you to think you got away with it.

KELLY

(as Mac starts off;
calling after him)
Keep the expenses down, Mac.

Kelly smiles wryly as he watches McNeal stomp out of the news room, and we

DISSOLVE TO:

36 FULL SHOT - INT. MCNEAL'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

It's a conservative, neat apartment. McNeal enters, throws his newspaper on a chair, and starts taking his coat off.

LAURA'S VOICE

(offscene)

Who is it?!

MCNEAL

The milkman.

He sits down in an armchair and starts pulling off one of his shoes. LAURA comes in. He kisses her and, over her shoulder, notices a bridge table covered with hundreds of pieces of a jig-saw puzzle.

MCNEAL

What's this -- another one?

LAURA

Yes -- isn't it a beauty?! Five hundred pieces.

McNeal looks at her chidingly. Laura takes his coat.

LAURA

You're early tonight! What happened?

MCNEAL

I have to get up at 8:30 and go out to Stateville to see that scrub-woman's boy.

(he sits down heavily)

Got something to eat?

LAURA

(turning to kitchen)

I have it waiting for you.

She goes into the kitchen. McNeal takes off his other shoe, glancing idly at the jig-saw puzzle. We can HEAR Laura moving dishes in the kitchen.

MCNEAL

I don't know how an intelligent woman can spend so much time on these things.

LAURA'S VOICE

I noticed you worked on the last one.

Laura appears at the kitchen door, looking at him accusingly as she approaches with a sandwich and a bottle of

(CONTINUED)

36 (Cont.)

beer. McNeal is still looking at the puzzle as she puts his food down on a clear space on the bridge table. Laura picks up his newspaper, glancing at the heads.

37 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. MCNEAL LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

During the ensuing scene, McNeal from time to time, against his will, tries to fit a few puzzle pieces together while he's eating. He does it almost automatically.

LAURA

You know...that was a wonderful yarn you wrote about that Polish mother. It had a lot of feeling.

(putting down paper)

What a magnificent thing that old lady did.

MCNEAL

(fitting in a piece of puzzle)

Yeah. Everybody's touched. Especially Kelly.

The piece doesn't fit. Laura reaches over, turns it around, and fits it properly into the puzzle.

LAURA

I was, too. It makes you feel warm.

MCNEAL

(sarcastically)

I hit it hard. But don't start believing it. I read the file on the case. This kid killed a cop and he got what was coming to him.

Now, both of them are absorbedly searching for missing pieces of the puzzle.

MCNEAL

You got a branch for this tree, somewhere?

LAURA

This thing?

She hands it over, and he starts to fit it into the picture.

LAURA

I wasn't thinking about the boy -- I was thinking about his mother.

(CONTINUED)

37 (Cont.)

MCNEAL

I know.... I know. I hammered out a sob story and now everyone's blubbering all over me.

LAURA

(thoughtfully)

You know what it is? It catches your imagination...nobody knows whether she's right or not -- but she's worked so hard, she's had such faith, that I think that I.... I want her to be right.

MCNEAL

(hopelessly)

Darling, I love you. Wouldn't you scrub floors for me if I brained Kelly with a large chunk of lead type?

Laura hesitates, shrugs her shoulders and makes a face.

LAURA

(pretending to have her doubts)

Oh, I don't know....

For a moment McNeal, who is tired, looks a bit huffy. Then he gives her a tired smile and tries to fit a bit of puzzle in.

LAURA

Mickey...why don't you....

He looks up, then back at the puzzle, turns the piece around and triumphantly fits it in.

MCNEAL

I knew that was right!

LAURA

(softly)

Mickey....

MCNEAL

Okay, okay.... I'm going out to see the guy.

(he looks back at his newspaper)

Women are suckers for sentimentality. I guess that's how I got you -- all I had to do was dangle an orange blossom in front of you.

(CONTINUED)

37 (Cont.1)

LAURA

(smugly)

Oh, it took more than that...Mister
McNeal.

McNeal looks up at her, raises his eyebrows, and she takes a piece of the puzzle out of his hand, puts it on the opposite end of the puzzle and victoriously makes it fit. McNeal frowns, as we

DISSOLVE TO:

38 EXT. STATEVILLE PENITENTIARY - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

DISSOLVE TO:

39 INSERT: SIGN ON STONE WALL

It reads:

"STATEVILLE PENITENTIARY"

DISSOLVE TO:

40 INSERT: DOOR

On which there is a sign that reads:

"WARDEN"

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

41 FULL SHOT - INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - DAY

The WARDEN is seated at his desk.

MCNEAL

What kind of a guy is he?

WARDEN

(noncommittally)

I like him.

The door is thrown open by a trusty and Frank Wiecek walks in. He has a beaten and regimented look. He comes over to the Warden's desk.

WARDEN

Frank, this is McNeal of the Chicago
Times. He wants to interview you.

Frank looks surprised, but not yet hopeful.

(CONTINUED)

41 (Cont.)

WARDEN

You don't have to consent to this interview or answer any questions if you don't want to.

FRANK

(quickly, eagerly)

But I do want to. Sure I want to!

The Warden turns to McNeal.

WARDEN

Okay, he's yours.
(to Frank)

Sit down.

Frank sits down awkwardly and nervously.

42

MED. THREE SHOT - INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - MCNEAL, WARDEN AND FRANK

McNeal lazily pulls out his notebook and pencil.

MCNEAL

The Times has taken an interest in your case. I came to ask you some questions.

Frank looks up in timid disbelief. This has come after eleven years and is a complete shock to him.

FRANK

Yes, sir.

MCNEAL

I'd like more of your story. Your side of it. I need an angle, something to hit the public with. Understand?

FRANK

(eagerly)

Yes, sir.

MCNEAL

Now -- you knew about the ad your mother put in the papers -- about the five thousand dollar reward?

Frank nods.

MCNEAL

Did you know she was scrubbing floors to get that money?

(CONTINUED)

42 (Cont.)

FRANK

Yes, sir, I did. All she lives for
is to get me out -- and I guess
that's all I got to live for, too.

McNeal eyes him intently, and then makes a note.

MCNEAL

That's a great angle to play up.
Your faith in your mother -- and
her faith in you.

43 MED. TWO SHOT - INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - FRANK AND MCNEAL

MCNEAL

(soberly)

You know -- if you're guilty, you're
letting her slave her life away for
nothing.

FRANK

(proudly)

She knows I'm not guilty.

McNeal looks at him skeptically.

MCNEAL

I read the news clips -- and the
transcript of the trial.

(drily)

They don't white-wash you -- the
way I see it.

FRANK

(nodding solemnly,
agrees with this)

But you read only what convicted me.
All the true facts didn't come out.
Even Judge Moulton said I wasn't
guilty.

MCNEAL

(surprised)

The Judge who gave you 99 years??!

FRANK

The jury said we were guilty -- he
had to. But in his chambers, he
said he knew we were innocent.

MCNEAL

(avidly)

When was this?

(CONTINUED)

43 (Cont.)

FRANK

After he sentenced us, he....

MCNEAL

(losing interest;
knowingly)

Oh, after... Well, maybe we'd better
duck that. What else?

FRANK

(somewhat bitterly)

My lawyer was a drunk. He didn't
even let me on the stand, because
he was afraid I'd get the chair.

MCNEAL

(noncommittal)

Go on.

44 MED. CLOSE SHOT - FRANK

There is a faraway look in his eyes, as if he were re-
living what he's thinking about.

FRANK

When they question you hour after
hour, you're bound to get mixed up
on a lot of little things the way
I did. The cops didn't even lis-
ten to me on the important things.
They had to have a conviction - so
they went ahead and got it.

MCNEAL'S VOICE

That's another good angle. Rail-
roaded!

FRANK

They took me from one police sta-
tion to another, every few hours -
taking me around the Horn, they
call it - so my lawyer couldn't get
me out.

(then remembering
something excitedly)

Then this Wanda Skutnik - the first
two times she saw me, she said I
wasn't the man; then, all of a sud-
den, she said I was!

45 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - MCNEAL, FRANK
AND WARDEN

MCNEAL
Finger woman! We'll play that up
too.

FRANK
(hopelessly)
I was home with my wife when the
policeman was killed.

McNeal picks up his ears at this.

MCNEAL
(interested)
Does your wife visit you regularly?

FRANK
(dully)
My wife?
(he shrugs)
Yes -- but we're divorced.

McNeal looks disappointed.

MCNEAL
Well, maybe we'd better duck that
angle too.

FRANK
(puzzled)
You duck so many things -- you don't
believe me...do you?

MCNEAL
(patiently)
Look - I talked to your mother.
She's a fine old lady. She be-
lieves you.
(then)
But I need proof.

FRANK
(dully)
I got no proof.

MCNEAL
Yeah, I know.
(then, going on)
Well, here's what we'll do - we'll
play up the mother angle, and this
finger woman - and maybe police
and political corruption too.

(CONTINUED)

45 (Cont.)

FRANK

I didn't say that.

MCNEAL

(forcefully)

What difference does it make? It's a good angle - and it's probably true anyway. You don't want a wishy-washy story. This has to have sock! Mass appeal! That's the only way we can help you - get sympathy - and public support.

(then, softly)

You leave it to me.

Frank looks at him.

FRANK

Thank you, Mr. McNeal.

McNeal feels a little uncomfortable.

WARDEN

(quietly)

That's all, Frank.

Frank nods and starts towards the door. On his way there, he looks back piteously at McNeal, pleading for help and faith. Then he goes out, with the Warden and McNeal looking after him.

MCNEAL

Are there any guilty men up here?

WARDEN

Not if you hear them tell it.

MCNEAL

(sighing uncomfortably)

They sure make a hard pitch, don't they?

WARDEN

(drily)

99 years is a long time.

MCNEAL

Maybe he'd have been better off if he got the chair.

As he starts out, we

DISSOLVE TO:

46 INSERT: HEADLINE....CHICAGO TIMES

The headline reads:

"'NOT GUILTY' SAYS WIECEK:
PLACES FAITH IN MOTHER

By P. J. McNeal

'I am not guilty of the murder of
Policeman Bundy. I am placing my
entire faith in my mother's con-
fidence in me.' This was the state-
ment today of Frank Wiecek, who is
serving 99 years in Stateville
Penitentiary....."

DISSOLVE TO:

47 INT. TIMES' BUILDING - SWITCHBOARD

(Superimposed under the small printing of the Wiecek in-
terview and his panning down the page to his picture.)

Switchboard operators answering calls.

1ST GIRL

Mr. McNeal is busy but I'll tell
him you called to say you liked
the story.

2ND GIRL

Yes, the 'Times' is going to con-
tinue with the Wiecek case.

48 INT. TIMES' BUILDING - MAIL ROOM

Boys sorting out mail. Every fourth or fifth letter is
thrown into a bag as the boys sorting mumble either the
name McNeal or Kelly.

49 FULL SHOT - INT. TIMES' NEWSROOM - NIGHT

McNeal is at his desk, which has a large stack of mail
on it. He is just hanging up the phone. He evidently
opened about 15 or 20 of them, is looking at another as
Kelly comes up behind him and puts a hand on his shoulder.

KELLY

Nice work, Mac. What are you going
to use for a follow-up?

Mac looks up skeptically.

(CONTINUED)

49 (Cont.)

MCNEAL

Follow-up?

KELLY

Yeah, it's snowballing and they want more of it.

MCNEAL

(scathingly)

You want to give me a raise -- or do I just get the five thousand from Wiecek's mother?

KELLY

(stiffens a bit)

Look, Mac -- I just work here, like you. I get my orders, too.

MCNEAL

Orders from whom -- the circulation department? We're selling lots of papers -- we also might be selling this dead cop short.

(then, sharply)

Maybe he had a mother who scrubbed floors, too!

Kelly takes his hand off of Mac's shoulder and walks quietly toward his own desk, McNeal looks after him a moment and then with determination gets up and follows him. As Kelly sits down, McNeal comes over to join him.

50 MED. FULL SHOT - AT KELLY'S DESK

as McNeal walks over.

MCNEAL

I'll tell you another thing -- remember what Wiecek said about the judge promising him a new trial?

Kelly blue-pencils a few lines of a story and puts it in the tray. He nods.

MCNEAL

Well, the judge died three weeks after the case was closed. He's been dead now for eleven years.

(then)

That Wiecek guy is pretty sharp -- giving me a lead he knew I could never check.

(CONTINUED)

50 (Cont.)

KELLY

Then why don't you try a different lead? Do you know we're getting an average of twenty phone calls an hour from readers?!

MCNEAL

Yeah -- and every time the phone rings, you keep seeing a big juicy headline -- "Chicago Times Clears Innocent Man!"

KELLY

Why not?

MCNEAL

Why not?!

(derisively)

Your threads are loose! There isn't a chance of it!

KELLY

Look, Mac -- if you're so sure the guy is guilty and there's nothing more to the story, then end it! Write a finish piece, and kill it!

McNeal is jubilant.

MCNEAL

I'll take that deal. I'll interview his wife! She believed in him so much she got a divorce!

(starting away)

And you can put that on your fat rotary press, Mr. Kelly! That ought to kill it for keeps!

DISSOLVE TO:

51 EXT. HELEN'S HOUSE - FULL SHOT - DAY

It is on a typical Chicago street. Some boys are playing football. CAMERA PANS from them to a car with a press sign on the windshield. McNeal and photographer are standing at the front door of a small house.

52 OUTSIDE HELEN'S - FRONT DOOR

McNeal pushes the buzzer. After a moment the door opens and Helen appears in the doorway.

MCNEAL

I'm looking for Helen Rayska.

HELEN

Yes...?

MCNEAL

I'm McNeal, of the Times. I'm doing a series on the Wiecek case.

HELEN

(warmly)

Oh, yes. I read them. Please come in.

McNeal nods his thanks, and he and Spitzer enter.

53 FULL SHOT - INT. RAYSKA APARTMENT - DAY

It is furnished pitifully - with neo-Grand Rapids and Louis the Fourteenth Street. A boy's baseball bat and equipment are standing in the corner. Spitzer puts his photographic equipment down and looks around. Helen sits down nervously on the edge of the couch and McNeal takes the arm of a chair.

(NOTE: Throughout this scene the photographer moves in and out of CAMERA RANGE taking his shots. From time to time, McNeal signals, by a one-hand gesture like an umpire calling a safe play, that the photographer should take his shots from an unflattering, low, cheese cake angle.)

MCNEAL

(settling himself)

I got your married name from your former mother-in-law, Tillie Wiecek.

HELEN

I haven't seen her since the divorce. I guess she doesn't feel very kindly towards me.

(CONTINUED)

53 (Cont.)

HELEN (Cont.)

(earnestly)
Do you think there's a chance Frank
will get out?

MCNEAL

(quietly)
Do you want him to?

HELEN

(amazed)
Sure, I want him to!

MCNEAL

(casually)
Would you be waiting for him?

HELEN

(hesitates; softly)
No - I wouldn't - I'm married again.
(then)
But I'd be glad for Frank - because
he's a fine man - and because he's
innocent! He was at home with me
when the policeman was killed.

MCNEAL

Yeh. I know. You were baking a
cake.

(she looks at
him sharply)

You loved him. Then - I mean?

HELEN

(looking away)
I did. Very much.

MCNEAL

(cynically, writ-
ing it down)
But the lonely nights were too much
for you? You couldn't go on that
way? Isn't that it?

HELEN

No! That's what Tillie might think.
(softly)
I loved him. I would have stuck to
him. But Frank wanted me to get
the divorce.

(CONTINUED)

53 (Cont. 1)

MCNEAL

(sarcastically)

Did he pick out your new husband
for you too?

HELEN

It's the truth!

MCNEAL

(softly)

Okay. Okay. Skip it.

(then)

Did you contribute to the reward
money - or did Tillie earn it all
by herself?

HELEN

(helplessly)

I couldn't help. I haven't any-
thing.

Mac looks around the house and looks at her silk stock-
ings.

HELEN

(self-consciously)

My husband, Mr. Rayska, takes care
of me and my boy, Frank's boy. I
can't ask more than that. He's a
good man - and he loves me and he
loves the boy. We're lucky.

MCNEAL

Yeah - you seem to have come out of
it all right.

Helen freezes and Spitzer takes the shot.

HELEN

Mr. McNeal, I told you the truth
about the divorce. Frank wanted
it.

MCNEAL

It'll be hard to make anybody be-
lieve it. 'Frank's wife says he's
innocent - and she showed her faith
by divorcing him.'

(CONTINUED)

53 (Cont. 2)

HELEN

(stoutly)

That's the way it was! I went up to see him that day - wanting to make him keep up hope - wanting to cheer him up. He looked depressed - the way you do when you're terribly worried.

And then we

SLOWLY DISSOLVE TO:

54 FULL SHOT - INT. VISITORS' ROOM - STATEVILLE PEN - DAY

Several prisoners are conversing through the glass partition. Helen is sitting opposite Frank. CAMERA MOVES IN on them.

HELEN

How've you really been?

FRANK

Fine. How've you been?

HELEN

Fine.

FRANK

How's Ma?

HELEN

Fine.

FRANK

And how's the boy?

HELEN

Oh, he's fine.

Frank looks at her a moment and shakes his head.

FRANK

(softly)

Always fine. Everything's fine - because we got nothing to say no more.

HELEN

Frank, darling, please.....

(CONTINUED)

54 (Cont.)

FRANK

I know. So many things you don't say. You don't talk about the outside because I'm in here. You don't want to remind me.

(sadly)

But I remind myself. I think about lots of things.

(then, plaintively)

Helen, tell me...how's the boy doing in school?

HELEN

(miserably)

He's doing very well, Frank.

FRANK

But what about the other boys? Kids can hurt him bad....

HELEN

(guiltily)

They're only kids, Frank. They don't know what they're saying.

FRANK

(nodding)

Yes, I know. Son of a jailbird -- a cop-killer's son.

Helen looks away from him.

HELEN

It's nothing, Frank. I was thinking about moving to a new neighborhood anyway. He'll go to a new school.

FRANK

(shakes his head)

It's no good -- a new school is no good.

(then, grimly)

A new name -- that's what would be good.

HELEN

(appalled)

Frank!

FRANK

(grimly)

I'm just like dead, Helen. In about 30 years I can be paroled -- if I'm lucky. 30 years.

(CONTINUED)

54 (Cont. 1)

FRANK (Cont.)

(with grim purpose
he goes on)

You've got to divorce me, Helen.

HELEN

(pitifully)

Frank, you can't mean that.

FRANK

(grimly)

Yes. Love is not for us no more,
Helen. It's finished.

(then)

Now we think of the boy. Only the
boy.

CAMERA MOVES IN ON HIM.

FRANK

(continuing)

My boy must live for me. It is
like me living again -- outside...
what else I got?

(passionately)

But if he is not free -- if they
call him the son of a jailbird --
then it's no good because then my
son is in jail too...then I cannot
even dream.(grimly he shakes
his head from side
to side)That's why you must get this divorce,
Helen. My boy needs a father -- and
a new name...and a new chance!

HELEN

But I couldn't do that! I just
couldn't....

DISSOLVE TO:

55 FULL SHOT - INT. HELEN'S APARTMENT - DAY

McNeal is listening to Helen as she tells her story.

HELEN

And for over a year I wouldn't do
it, Mr. McNeal. But he kept begging
me and begging me.

(CONTINUED)

55 (Cont.)

HELEN(Cont.)

(simply)

Then I met Mr. Rayska. He loved me
-- and he was fond of little Frank.
He understood everything about us.

McNeal rises thoughtfully.

MCNEAL

What about the kid - does he know?

Helen points to a photograph of Frank on the table.

HELEN

Yes; he knows. But now everyone
calls his father....Uncle Frank.
We've made a point of that.

McNeal nods understandingly. Then we HEAR the sound of
a key in the lock. The door is thrown open, and MR.
RAYSKA comes in with FRANK, JR. Mr. Rayska is quite an
ordinary looking man -- but he is extremely kind and
gentle and sincere in appearance. He is very obviously
a good man. Little Frank is all boy - corduroy pants,
a beanie hat, and a slightly dirty face.

FRANK, JR.

(running in)

Look, Ma.....brand new.

(showing the ball)

RAYSKA

(explaining to Helen)

He lost the other one.

Then both Frank, Jr. and Mr. Rayska become aware of
McNeal and Spitzer.

HELEN

This is Mr. McNeal of the newspaper.

(then to McNeal)

And this is my husband, Mr. Rayska.

The men shake hands.

HELEN

This is my boy, Frank.

Frank, Jr., shakes hands with McNeal who looks knowingly
at Helen.

(CONTINUED)

55. (Cont. 1)

MCNEAL

(to Helen)

Mind if we take a few pictures of
you and the boy?

HELEN

Of course not. Come over here,
Frank.

Helen and the boy sit down in an armchair and Spitzer starts taking shots of them while McNeal is looking rather suspiciously from Rayska to Helen. And we can see a strange thought springing into his mind.

MCNEAL

(casually; to
Rayska)

Mind if I ask you a question?

RAYSKA

Certainly not.

MCNEAL

(very casually)

Were you in Chicago in December, 1932?

RAYSKA

(looks puzzled, then
nods slowly)

Yes. Why?

MCNEAL

(still very innocently)

Did you know Helen then?

Helen's face fills with shock and anger. She is suddenly aware of the implication of McNeal's question.

HELEN

(furiously)

What do you mean -- asking such a
question?

MCNEAL

(to Rayska)

Any objections to answering?

RAYSKA

(shakes his head slowly)

No. No objections.

(to Helen)

He must ask everything, dear. I
know that.

(CONTINUED)

55 (Cont. 2)

RAYSKA (Cont.)

(then, to McNeal)

I did not meet Helen till long after she was divorced. This can be proved by our friends.

MCNEAL

(apologetically)

Sorry. I have to figure all the angles. No offense.

Little Frank has turned very belligerent and angry.

FRANK JR.

What's he asking questions for anyway? What's the big idea?

MCNEAL

(hesitantly)

It's about your Uncle Frank.

The boy stands up defiantly and walks over to his father's picture which is on the table near McNeal.

FRANK JR.

(belligerently)

He's not my uncle -- he's my father.

McNeal looks at him a second and pats him lightly on the shoulder and turns, beckoning to Spitzer, and they go out together as we

DISSOLVE TO:

56 FULL SHOT - EXT. TIMES BLDG. - DAY

A number of trucks are backed against the loading platform: the display ads on their sides are all the same:

"DIVORCED WIFE BELIEVES WIECEK INNOCENT

By P. J. McNeal

'Frank could not have committed the murder,' says ex-wife."

CAMERA PANS UP to window, where we see Kelly leaning out and looking down at the truck ads.

57 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. TIMES' NEWSROOM - DAY

SHOOTING toward window and Kelly's back. Kelly turns from window very pleased with himself - an inch line turned into a smash story.

58 FULL SHOT - INT. TIMES NEWSROOM - DAY

As Kelly looks toward McNeal's desk, and sees that it's empty; he walks toward his own desk and sits down.

59 FULL SHOT - INT. TIMES NEWSROOM - DAY - ANOTHER ANGLE

As Kelly begins to work on some copy, he looks up again at McNeal's empty desk. Then, just as he's about to get back to his work, something catches his eyes, and he sees McNeal coming in. Kelly catches his eye, and McNeal comes over, pulling a piece of paper out of his pocket.

MCNEAL

Seen this item about the warehouse fire?

(he hands over the item)

Might be a fire-bug. Or an arson ring.

KELLY

Think there's something in it?

He hands the item back.

MCNEAL

(noncommittal)

Might be.

KELLY

(turning back to work)

Go after it.

McNeal can scarcely believe his ears.

MCNEAL

Is that an assignment?

KELLY

(without looking up)

Sure.

McNeal starts away, clutching the item happily.

KELLY

(still without looking up)

Oh, Mac....

Mac stops, turning warily.

(CONTINUED)

59 (Cont.)

MCNEAL

Yeah?

KELLY

I know there's nothing more to the Wiecek case..... It's all washed up. But before you tackle that warehouse yarn....

McNeal comes close now, his face showing his exasperation.

KELLY

I got a phone call from the warden this morning. Wiecek wants to see you again.

MCNEAL

What for?

KELLY

(drily)
Maybe he wants to confess.

MCNEAL

But I was just up there! Don't I get time off for good behavior?

KELLY

(wryly)
Wiecek's been in there for 11 years, Mac.

McNeal turns away.

MCNEAL

(over his shoulder)
And that cop's been buried longer than that.....

He goes out with Kelly looking after him, and we

DISSOLVE TO:

60 FULL SHOT - INT. WARDEN'S OFFICE - STATEVILLE PRISON -
DAY

The Warden is behind his desk. McNeal is in a chair, idly playing with a couple of slugs of type, making a clacking noise with them in his hand. The door opens and Frank Wiecek comes in.

MCNEAL

(affably)

Hello, Wiecek.

Frank, with his face impassive, comes slowly forward toward McNeal and stops directly in front of him.

FRANK

(with an effort)

Mr. McNeal, I sent for you to tell you I don't want you to write any more about me or my family --

(then)

I read your writings. I've seen the pictures of my mother, and my wife, and my boy.

(bitterly)

We poured out our hearts to you unashamed and

MCNEAL

(interrupting)

You want help, don't you? It's the only way to get people interested in the case - nobody will read the two line add - half million people are following the story. Someone might know the killers and get in touch with us.

FRANK

(raging)

Who do you think you're kidding? I don't want that kind of help! I'll stay here a thousand years -- but you must not write anymore about my mother and my wife and my boy!

(contemptuously)

My mother is doing this for me! Not to sell your papers!

McNeal shifts guiltily in his chair.

MCNEAL

Now, wait a minute, Wiecek.

(CONTINUED)

60 (Cont.)

FRANK

I made my wife divorce me -- so my boy has a new name... Now you have put his picture in the paper... You have spoiled everything for him.

MCNEAL

(off balance)

I thought I was doing a good job.

FRANK

No! This is writing without heart and without truth! Before, I thought maybe some crook lawyer would try to get the five thousand dollars from my mother -- but this I never figured.

(he turns now)

Yes. I say it! I'll stay here -- but you leave alone my family. You leave alone my wife and my boy.

He opens the door, visibly shaken, and goes out, and the Warden and McNeal watch him close the door. McNeal is a bit uncomfortable and a bit embarrassed.

MCNEAL

(taken aback)

What do you make of that?

The Warden shrugs indifferently.

WARDEN

I've read all you've written and I think you pitched some pretty low curves.

MCNEAL

(belligerently)

It was a story. I wrote it the way I saw it.

The Warden shrugs again. McNeal looks at him and feels the indictment in the Warden's eyes.

MCNEAL

Okay. Okay -- everybody goes soft on this thing.

The Warden seems to have lost interest in the entire interview and he is fussing with some papers on his desk.

(CONTINUED)

60 (Cont. 1)

WARDEN

As I once told you, up here every man claims to be innocent. But the prisoners are the harshest judges of themselves and they believe we only have two men who don't belong here.....

(then)

...Tomek Zaleska and Frank Wiecek.

McNeal looks at him and then makes a quick decision.

MCNEAL

Okay. Okay. Do you mind if I try something? I'd like to talk to Tomek.

The Warden looks up, nods, and rises. As they go toward the door we

WIPE TO:

61 INT. STATEVILLE PRISON - ZALESKA'S CELL

As guard opens the door for McNeal and Warden. Looking curiously from the Warden to McNeal, Zaleska stands there, pathetic, sad-faced, and somewhat resentful.

WARDEN

(quietly)

This is Mr. McNeal, of the Times.

ZALESKA

Hello.

62 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. ZALESKA'S CELL - DAY

McNeal turns hesitantly to the Warden.

MCNEAL

Would it be stretching the rules too far if I talked to him alone?

The Warden hesitates.

WARDEN

No. Go right ahead.

The Warden steps outside, not far away, and we continue to see him through the glass door of the cell; but he is out of earshot. McNeal moves closer to Zaleska, his voice low.

(CONTINUED)

62 (Cont.)

MCNEAL

Look, Tomek--the 'Times' wants this Bundy case cleared up, one way or another. We don't think Frank was in it with you.

(persuasively)

If you confess, and name the man who was really with you that night, the 'Times' will see that you get a parole for turning State's evidence, and the chances are you'll get out in six or seven years.

(then)

What've you got to lose? You're in for life now. Tell us the truth!

63 MED. SHOT - ANGLING PAST MCNEAL TO ZALESKA

Zaleska gulps, and then turns and looks out the window. He looks out with heartbreaking longing--the window drawing him like a powerful magnet. Slowly, Zaleska inches toward it, looking out where freedom lies. Then, he turns around, his face bitter.

ZALESKA

Sure! I could have said I did it--and maybe have a chance of getting out, like you say. But if I confessed--who would I name as my partner? Joe Doakes? I couldn't make it stick for one minute!

(then)

That's the trouble with being innocent! You don't know what really happened.

(low)

I didn't do it. Me and Frank had nothin' to do with it!

He composes himself and sits down on the lower bunk.

64 MED. FULL SHOT - OUTSIDE ZALESKA'S CELL

As McNeal frowns, comes out of the cell, and takes a backward look at Zaleska. The Warden moves up and they walk off together.

WARDEN

Well?

McNeal shakes his head negatively, still frowning.

(CONTINUED)

64 (Cont.)

MCNEAL

(grimly)

You must run a nice jail. This guy
doesn't want to get out either.

(then, determinedly)

But I'm going to nail this down, if
I never write another story!

(then)

You think Frank would talk to me
again?

WARDEN

(nodding)

I imagine he would. I'll take you
to the hospital. He works there.

As they move past the guard and around the corner, we

DISSOLVE TO:

65 FULL SHOT - INT. STATEVILLE PRISON - HOSPITAL WARD

Frank is working with a sterilizer, putting instruments
into it. He looks up as the Warden and McNeal walk in.
But then he turns back to his work and pays absolutely
no attention to them.

WARDEN

Frank, Mr. McNeal wants to talk to
you again.

Frank doesn't even turn around. He continues working at
the sterilizer. McNeal is in an awkward position, but
he makes his play.

MCNEAL

Look, Frank, I've decided to go on
with your case, and I'll slant the
story your way, but I want you to
know I still don't think you're
innocent. But from here on I'm
willing to dig - and get the facts!

Now for the first time, Wiecek turns around and looks at
him with dawning hope.

MCNEAL

But remember -- the first time I
catch you lying -- I'll blast you
so hard you won't even get your
parole when your 33 years are up.
Is that a deal?

(CONTINUED)

65 (Cont.)

FRANK
(nodding slowly)
I got nothing to be afraid of. Yes,
I make this deal.

MCNEAL
(taking out his
notebook and
pencil)
Okay. Now start talking.

66 MED. SHOT - HOSPITAL WARD - ANOTHER ANGLE

In the background we can see the Warden looking on with full approval. Wiecek's face shows no emotion but a grim determination to give McNeal all the facts.

MCNEAL
Was there any witness when Judge Moulton told you he'd try to get you another trial?

FRANK
(thoughtfully)
There was the bailiff.

MCNEAL
What was his name?

FRANK
(shaking his head)
I don't know.

MCNEAL
(grimly)
I'll find out.
(then)
What was the name of your lawyer?

FRANK
His name was Underwood. But he is disbarred now.

MCNEAL
(disgustedly)
That's great. A dead judge and a disbarred lawyer.
(then)
What else?

(CONTINUED)

66 (Cont.)

FRANK

There was Wanda Skutnik. It was her and her alone, that put me where I am! She identified me. But the other two witnesses -- Gruska and the mailman -- they said 'no'.

McNeal nods.

FRANK

(continuing)

Then there was a police captain. He was the one who got Wanda Skutnik to say I was the man. He stood right alongside of her when she picked me out. She was afraid of him.

MCNEAL

What was his name?

FRANK

I never found out. He wasn't at the trial.

McNeal looks disgusted.

MCNEAL

Where can I find this Skutnik dame?

FRANK

I don't know.

MCNEAL

That's nice material.

FRANK

(pleadingly)

It's all I got. But it's the truth.
I swear it!

McNeal looks at him thoughtfully.

MCNEAL

Are you willing to take a lie detector test?

Frank looks him right in the eye.

FRANK

Mr. McNeal -- for 11 years I've been waiting for a chance at that box.

(CONTINUED)

66 (Cont.1)

MCNEAL

(nodding)

You know what you're up against?
If it turns out bad -- you're cooked.
If it turns out good -- it's only
Leonarde Keeler's professional
opinion. It doesn't count legally.

FRANK

I'll take the test.

MCNEAL

All right. I'll set it up for you.

He and the Warden just nod and walk out, and Frank stands there with a few instruments in his hand and turns back to the sterilizer with a look of faith and hope on his face as we

DISSOLVE TO:

67 FULL SHOT - INT. CELL - STATEVILLE PRISON - NIGHT

The cell contains two bunks, one above the other. In the bottom one, Frank is lying wide awake. In the top one lies CORRIGAN, a big brutish-looking convict. Corrigan is looking down at Frank.

CORRIGAN

Listen, kid -- you take it from me --
stay away from Keeler and that lie
detector.

FRANK

(looking up)

I'm not afraid of it.

CORRIGAN

(scornfully)

That's what I said.

(then, disgustedly)

I had the cops - the State's Attorney
- even my own lawyer believing me.
I was a cinch! Then they talked me
into going up against that box!
(he groans)

FRANK

What happened?

CORRIGAN

(with an excited roar)

What d'you mean, 'what happened?'
I'm doin' life, ain't I?

Frank thinks this over and his brow furrows, as we

DISSOLVE TO:

68 CLOSE SHOT - INT. GUARD'S ROOM - DAY

We are close on the Keeler polygraph -- the lie detector. We can see three dials, seven knobs, and three pen points, set out on the graph paper. It is a formidable looking machine. And as CAMERA slowly starts to PULL BACK from it, we can HEAR Keeler's voice coming OVER SCENE.

KEELER'S VOICE

The machine simply registers emotional disturbance.

Now we can see LEONARDE KEELER, the lie test expert. McNeal is standing right beside him, looking at the machine. Keeler touches the blood pressure cuff.

KEELER

This cuff attached to the upper right arm controls the pen that records pulse and blood pressure.

(then he points
to the harness)

This harness goes around the upper chest, and connects with the pen that records the rate of breathing. This is the galvanometer. Emotional tension increases the salt water in your sweat glands and registers on the machine.

They both look up as the door opens and the Warden leads Frank in. The door has an upper half made of glass. The Warden closes the door and leaves Wiecek in the room.

MCNEAL

Frank -- Mr. Keeler is all ready for you.

Frank walks over to the chair indicated by Keeler and sits down. McNeal watches quietly as Keeler begins to adjust two metal plates to Frank's wrist. Frank looks at it a little bit scared.

KEELER

Take it easy, Frank. Just relax.

McNeal exits.

FRANK

(smiling nervously)

I'll do the best I can, Mr. Keeler.
This ain't easy.

(CONTINUED)

68 (Cont.)

KEELER

I know it isn't. But if you're telling the truth, you've nothing to be afraid of.

69 FULL SHOT - OUTER ROOM

As McNeal enters, he stops short. An assistant of Keeler's is there, and right beside him, comfortably ensconced in a chair, is Kelly.

KELLY

(blandly)

Hello, Mac.

MCNEAL

What're you doing here?

KELLY

Oh, I was just driving out to Decatur to see my brother--so I thought I'd stop by.

(then)

I've never seen a lie-test before.

McNeal looks at him, then through the window at Keeler and Frank, and then sharply back at Kelly again.

MCNEAL

Wait a minute! Decatur's out the other way...

He points. Kelly shrugs blandly, as he rises to come beside McNeal and the assistant and look through the window.

KELLY

I took the detour. The long way....

MCNEAL

(eyeing him coldly)

Yeah...

McNeal grins wryly, and Kelly just cocks an eyebrow at him.

70 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. GUARD'S ROOM - DAY

Frank and Keeler. The harness is now on Frank. Keeler is making final adjustments.

KEELER

(to Frank)

Remember, Frank -- no matter what you're asked -- just answer 'yes' or 'no.' Is that clear?

(CONTINUED)

70 (Cont.)

Frank nods and swallows nervously. Keeler now picks up a deck of cards and fans out a dozen or so like a magician.

KEELER

Now I want you to pick a card.

(Frank takes

one - looks at it)

Just remember it -- but don't tell me what it is, now put it back.

71 MED. CLOSE SHOT - INT. GUARD'S ROOM - DAY - AT CARDS

FRANK

Okay.

72 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. GUARD'S ROOM - ANGLING PAST FRANK TOWARD KEELER - MCNEAL AND KELLY AT WINDOW

Kelly and McNeal look on intently.

KEELER

When I ask you whether this is the card, I want you to answer 'no' even if it is the card you picked. Do you understand?

FRANK

(puzzled)

Yes, sir.

73 FULL SHOT - OUTER ROOM

McNeal watching through the window is intrigued by the deck of cards. He turns to assistant.

MCNEAL

What's this for?

ASSISTANT

He is forcing him to lie so it will show on the graph. It gives a basis for judging Wiecek's reactions.

Keeler starts holding up the cards.

74 MED. CLOSE SHOT - INT. GUARD'S ROOM - DAY

We angle past the cards in Keeler's hand, to the dials in the machine, including the three pens.

(CONTINUED)

74 (Cont.)

FRANK'S VOICE
 (coming over scene)
 No... No... No.... No.

As each card comes up, Frank's voice says 'no' and we see that the pens move only a trifle on the machine, but when the ace of spades comes up and Frank says 'no' in the same tone of voice, the pens begin to squiggle.

75 FULL SHOT - OUTER ROOM

Kelly, McNeal and assistant. McNeal and Kelly watch fascinated as the dials and pens work.

ASSISTANT
 (to McNeal, indicating
 the squiggles on the
 paper)
 That establishes the emotional level
 -- now we can detect the variations.

We can see Keeler in the other room adjust some dials. We just see them; we do not hear them.

76 FULL SHOT - INNER ROOM

Keeler picks up a list of prepared questions and turns to Frank.

KEELER
 Remember now, just answer 'yes' or
 'no'.

Frank nods again.

KEELER
 Is your name Frank Wiecek?

FRANK
 Yes.

KEELER
 Did you have breakfast this morning?

FRANK
 Yes.

KEELER
 Do you know Tomek Zaleska?

FRANK
 Yes.

(CONTINUED)

76 (Cont.)

KEELER

Were you ever in Wanda Skutnik's
delicatessen?

FRANK

No.

KEELER

You're six feet tall, aren't you?

At this point, McNeal and Kelly can be seen looking in
through the glass door.

FRANK

I'm only five-foot-eight.

KEELER

Remember, Frank, you are to answer
only 'yes' or 'no'. Now we'll do
it again.

FRANK

I'm sorry, sir.

KEELER

Is your name Frank Wiecek?

FRANK

Yes.

Now the CAMERA MOVES IN on the machine and we see the
little dials moving with each question and answer. We
see the pens squiggling. And as the CAMERA MOVES IN
to show part of Frank's chest, we can see the heaving
of his chest moving the harness that Keeler has placed
on him. And now the SOUND TRACK in between the speeches,
records the heavy, loud breathing of Frank's lungs as
the up and down pressure moves the pen on the paper.
The SOUND is insistent and ominous. OVER THIS we HEAR
Keeler and Frank.

KEELER'S VOICE

You're of Polish descent. Is that
right?

FRANK'S VOICE

Yes..

KEELER'S VOICE

Your mother's name is Tillie?

FRANK'S VOICE

Yes..

DISSOLVE TO:

77 MED. FULL SHOT - OUTER ROOM

It is much later. McNeal and Kelly are still standing looking in the window. CAMERA MOVES UP to window and now we see inside. Keeler's collar is open and his tie is pulled down. Frank Wiecek looks very, very weary. We see Keeler working hard asking questions and we see Frank answer but we do not hear them.

KEELER
(asking a question)

FRANK
(shaking his head)

KEELER
(asks a blunt question)

FRANK
(he reacts strangely to this - he has been answering the questions, head slightly down reflectively. This question brings his head up sharply. He pauses slightly - then answers)

McNeal and Kelly turn quickly to the machine as it scratches and jumps. The assistant catches this and looks inside. CUT TO CLOSEUP of McNeal watching. There is no glory in Frank's disclosure.

78 FULL SHOT - BACK TO INNER ROOM

KEELER
All right, Frank. That's all.
We're finished.

Keeler beckons to McNeal and Kelly to come in and Keeler lights a cigarette and hands it to Frank and then begins to take Frank out of the harness and the wrist electrodes and the arm cuff. McNeal and Kelly enter.

MCNEAL
Well...what's the verdict?

Keeler jerks his head towards the long strip of paper coming out of the machine.

KEELER
There it is.

Kelly and McNeal go over to look at the strip of paper and Frank looks at them anxiously.

79 INSERT: THE STRIP OF PAPER

It is the usual lie-test graph, registering heights and depressions. It is almost entirely uniform except in one place where the graph has taken a decided leap.

80 BACK TO SCENE

McNeal is studying the graph. From the expression on his face, we can tell he's a little bit upset by what happened. Frank starts to walk out of the room now. He looks crushed and rather frightened.

 MCNEAL

 I'll see you later, Frank.

Frank just nods and walks out into the corridor where a trusty is waiting for him. As soon as the door is closed behind him, McNeal turns to Keeler and points to the graph.

 MCNEAL

 What's this big jump right here?

 KEELER

 That big jump indicates that he was lying.

Kelly and Keeler come over and look at it.

 KELLY

 Was that when you asked him if he killed Bundy?

 KEELER

 (shaking his head)

 No. When I asked him if he was married -- he answered 'no.' He was lying.

 MCNEAL

 (puzzled)

 But he wasn't lying. He isn't married. He's divorced.

 KEELER

 (smiling a bit)

 He's a Catholic. He still feels he's married -- so his reaction was the same as if he'd told a lie.

 KELLY

 Do you think he lied -- about anything else?

(CONTINUED)

80 (Cont.)

Keeler takes the paper, studies it, and looks up.

KEELER

I'll need a couple of hours to study the graph. I'll send you a written report this evening.

Kelly and McNeal look at him, and we

SLOWLY DISSOLVE TO:

81 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. TIMES' NEWSROOM - NIGHT - MCNEAL

McNeal is at his desk absorbed in the story he is pounding out at the typewriter. We move in CLOSE on him and on the typewriter, and on his fingers pounding the keys.

DISSOLVE THRU TO:

82 MONTAGE

as McNeal's hands become those of linotype operator's hitting the linotype keys and sending out the slugs of type for the presses.

Then, across the moving hands and the skipping keys, we can see the lines of the story, moving ticker-tape fashion across the screen.

"FRANK WIECEK PASSES LIE TEST

Stateville Penitentiary, December 3...
'Frank Wiecek is innocent of the murder of Policeman Bundy.' This was the official opinion given today by Leonarde Keeler, one of the nation's foremost criminologists, after subjecting Wiecek to....."

CAMERA PANS OFF the end of the ticker-tape and into a...

83 CLOSE SHOT - INT. MCNEAL'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - MCNEAL

He is tossing fitfully, nervous and excited, and he's grinding his teeth. CAMERA PULLS BACK TO WIDER ANGLE, as Laura wakes up in her own twin bed and switches on the light. She looks over at McNeal, worried and then gets out of bed. She leans over him, solicitously, anxiously, and then gently shakes him, trying to rouse him from his nightmare. He awakens sluggishly.

LAURA

What's the matter, darling?

(CONTINUED)

83 (Cont.)

MCNEAL
(half opening
his eyes)

Huh?

LAURA
(gently)
What's wrong?

He makes a face, as if he had a bad taste in his mouth.

LAURA
Want a bicarb?

He shakes his head, dazed.

LAURA
Hungry? How about a nice sandwich?

He grimaces, repelled by the very idea.

MCNEAL
(sitting up,
thoughtfully)

No.

She sits back on her own bed, looking at him, worried.

LAURA
You were gnashing your teeth and
making an awful sound. I've never
seen you this way before, Mickey.

84 MED. FULL SHOT - SCENE - TOWARD DOOR - NIGHT

He glances at her, frowning, then starts getting out of bed.

MCNEAL
(offhand)
Something I ate, maybe.

Laura is instantly the defensive wife.

LAURA
(puzzled)
I ate the same things.

MCNEAL
(starting out)
Maybe it was something I wrote, then.

(CONTINUED)

84 (Cont.)

She looks after him as he goes into the living room and flips on the lights.

85 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. LIVING ROOM - TOWARD BEDROOM - NIGHT

He walks absently to the couch, sits down in front of the bridge table, which has another jigsaw puzzle on it. He isn't aware of what he's doing, but he starts working on it. Then he becomes aware of the fact that Laura has suddenly appeared in the bedroom doorway and is looking at him anxiously. He turns his head and looks at her a moment.

MCNEAL

(softly)

You look nice. Want to marry me?

LAURA

(stands still)

I did.

MCNEAL

Oh, yeah.

(then, turning
back to puzzle)

Thanks.

LAURA

You're welcome. Just remember I'm here.

He continues to work absently on the jigsaw puzzle.

MCNEAL

Okay. Come here. Maybe we can lick this thing together.

She comes over to him, small, charmingly disheveled, and sits down beside him on the couch and snuggles against him. He's still trying to concentrate on the puzzle, but the real inner problem is bothering him.

LAURA

What's the trouble? Don't the pieces fit together?

MCNEAL

Some. But they make the wrong picture.

She fits a piece in the puzzle.

(CONTINUED)

85 (Cont.)

LAURA

The pieces never make a wrong picture. Maybe you're looking at them from the wrong angle.

He gives her a quick glance, but she's working on the puzzle.

MCNEAL

Sometimes, you just can't figure them.

Now she turns to look at him.

LAURA

(gently)

Why don't you let go? Tell yourself the truth! You want him to be innocent -- you want him to be free! Admit it!

MCNEAL

(grimly)

Well, maybe you're right. Maybe I want him to be -- but that doesn't make me believe he's innocent.

LAURA

(gravely)

If you want to believe -- that's enough.

(softly)

Stop fighting it. Believe!

He turns to look at her a moment, and then he sighs deeply, as if someone has just raised a heavy load from his back.

MCNEAL

(lovingly)

Want to marry me?

(quickly, nodding)

Oh, yeah. You did.

(then)

Well, then gimme that sandwich, huh?

Then she grins at him adoringly, and as she rises to get the sandwich, she kisses him quickly and we

FADE OUT

FADE IN

86 FULL SHOT - EXT. WACKER DRIVE - FOOT OF STAIRS - NIGHT

As McNeal comes down the stairs leading to Michigan Boulevard, we can see the skyline behind him. He goes on into the darkness of Wacker Drive.

87 FULL SHOT - EXT. WACKER DRIVE - YE OLDE CELLAR - NIGHT

As McNeal comes up to the entrance, over which we see a neon sign reading: Ye Olde Cellar.

DISSOLVE TO:

88 MED. FULL SHOT - INT. YE OLDE CELLAR - NIGHT

A few men are at the bar drinking beer. It is between mealtimes and there are no diners, except SULLIVAN himself, a wizened, affable little Irishman, who has a mountainous meal piled up before him on a plate and a glass of beer at his elbow. Across from him sits McNeal.

SULLIVAN

Mr. McNeal, there wasn't a finer man ever lived than Judge Moulton. And who would know that better than me-self? I was his bailiff for 15 years. My hand to the Saints, there wasn't a finer man ever.....

MCNEAL

What I really want to know is -- did Judge Moulton promise Frank Wiecek a new trial?

SULLIVAN

A new trial? Sure, and he did. Ain't that what I've been saying all along?

MCNEAL

Are you positive of that?

Sullivan peers at him darkly.

SULLIVAN

It wouldn't be you're doubting my word?

MCNEAL

All I want, Mr. Sullivan, are the details.

(CONTINUED)

88 (Cont.)

SULLIVAN

(drinking beer)

Ah, yes. As I was saying. Right after the trial it was, and His Honor had - what's their names - ah, yes, Frank Wiecek and Tomek Zaleska, and the others, into his chambers -- with me there, of course, to see that no violence was done to his person --

DISSOLVE TO FLASHBACK:

89 INT. JUDGE MOULTON'S CHAMBERS - DAY.

CAMERA PULLS BACK from Sullivan.

SULLIVAN

You can't tell what a criminal will do next.

Behind his desk sits JUDGE CHARLES MOULTON, a man of about fifty-five, still in his Judge's robes. Sullivan stands unobtrusively in a corner.

MOULTON

(drily)

I'm sure you'll take good care of me, Sullivan.

A guard brings Frank Wiecek and Tomek Zaleska into the room. Judge Moulton looks at them unemotionally.

MOULTON

I've just passed sentence on you. 99 years. Now, I'd like to talk to you -- not as your Judge, but as man to man.

(a pause)

The law of the State of Illinois is that a positive identification by one eye-witness is sufficient evidence to warrant conviction of a crime. And the jury believed Wanda Skutnik's eye-witness identification.

(to Tomek)

Tell me the truth. Did you and Wiecek kill Officer Bundy?

Tomek glares at the Judge.

(CONTINUED)

89 (Cont.)

TOMEK

You threw the book at us, didn't you?
What good would it do me to say anything?

His voice rises emotionally and Sullivan moves forward, but Moulton stops him with a gesture.

MOULTON

And you, Wiecek?

FRANK

What do you want me to say? If I say yes, sure, I killed the cop -- what more can you do to me?

MOULTON

If you say no - I might be able to do something for you. But if you say no, I want it to be in the name of God.

Frank stares at the Judge, a little puzzled.

FRANK

Your Honor, I am no more guilty of killing that cop than you are.

MOULTON

And that is the truth?

FRANK

I swore, didn't I? On the Bible. I'm a Catholic, Your Honor, and I --

MOULTON

All right, Frank.

(he rises and smiles)

I just want to tell you boys - I think you got a rotten deal.

He comes around the desk.

MOULTON

I was astonished at the verdict -- but I had to sentence you. The jury gave me no alternative. But though I have no authority to demand a new trial for you -- I'll see that you get it somehow.

(CONTINUED)

89 (Cont. 1)

FRANK

(moved)

Thank -- thank you, sir.

TOMEK

-- And -- I'm sorry, sir. I guess
I lost my head.

MOULTON

You had a right to.

He shakes hands with each of them in turn.

MOULTON

(to guard)

Bring in Decker, Gruska, and the
Skutnik woman.The guard leads Frank and Tomek out. Moulton sighs, and
turns to Sullivan.

MOULTON

I'd give anything if I could have
heard this case without a jury.

SULLIVAN

(affectionately)

Sure, Your Honor has more sense
than any twelve men - especially
when some of them are women.

Moulton smiles a little at this, and sits down. The
guard brings Decker, Gruska, and Wanda Skutnik into the
room. They line up before the desk, Decker and Gruska
puzzled and embarrassed; Wanda openly defiant. The
judge looks at them keenly, letting them sweat it out
for a long moment before he speaks.

MOULTON

(finally)

Mr. Decker -- you swore, under oath,
that you could not identify either
Frank Wiecek or Tomek Zaleska as
the murderers.

DECKER

That's right, sir. Like I testified,
they had their coat collars turned up,
and their faces were hidden --

(CONTINUED)

89 (Cont. 2)

MOULTON

But you saw their approximate height, and weight. And you've seen both Wiecek and Zaleska? Would you say they could -- bear in mind I said could -- could have been the same men?

Decker shakes his head apologetically.

DECKER

No, sir. I don't think they could.

MOULTON

Mr. Gruska, you were in the room when the murder was committed. What do you have to say?

GRUSKA

(nervous, afraid)

I swear to that, like I testify - they big men - Wiecek and Zaleska, they not so big - not so big like the men who shoot policeman - I know -

Moulton nods and turns to Wanda Skutnik.

MOULTON

And yet you, Mrs. Skutnik -- you alone, of all the witnesses, have testified under oath that you positively recognized both defendants.

WANDA

(without emotion)

I did -- and it's true. I got a better look at them.

Moulton looks at her suspiciously.

GRUSKA

Judge...she's a liar. She ran into the closet. I hid behind the stove. The shots were fired. They fought... and all the time I saw. But all the time, she was in the closet. She could not see nothing.

Skutnik's face freezes and she clams up.

(CONTINUED)

89 (Cont. 3)

MOULTON

(to Gruska)

Why didn't you say that at the trial?

GRUSKA

The lawyers didn't ask me. They warn me to just answer question, yes or no.

MOULTON

(nodding)

I think that'll be all. You may go.

The guard ushers them out. Wanda avoids looking at the Judge. Moulton rises again, walks around the desk and paces thoughtfully.

MOULTON

She's lying, Sullivan. Lying. And that jury believed her....

DISSOLVE:

90 OUT

91 INT. YE OLDE CELLAR

SULLIVAN

The Judge was a wonderful man. He did intend to get the boys a new trial -- you have my word.

(he sighs)

Then shortly after, he died...rest his soul...before he could do anything about it.

Some of the cynicism is gone from McNeal's face. He is drawing aimless patterns on the tablecloth with a fork.

MCNEAL

If we only had some way to prove it. Were you the only one in the room beside Frank and Tomek when the Judge promised them a new trial?

SULLIVAN

(thoughtfully)

That I was....

McNeal looks disappointed..

(CONTINUED)