

LOU GRANT

"Nazi"

by

Robert Schlitt

PROD. #7505

FIRST DRAFT

August 2, 1977

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CAST

LOU GRANT.....EDWARD ASNER
BILLIE NEWMAN.....LINDA KELSEY
JOE ROSSI.....ROBERT WALDEN
CHARLIE HUME.....MASON ADAMS
ARTHUR DONOVAN.....JACK BANNON
ANIMAL.....DARYL ANDERSON
DONALD STRYKER.....PETER WELLER
MRS. STURNER.....
MR. STURNER.....
NATIONAL EDITOR.....
FOREIGN EDITOR.....
PHOTO EDITOR.....
JAYSON.....
KELSO.....
FIRST COP.....
SERGEANT PARISI.....
RABBI - DEMONSTRATION.....
RABBI - SYNAGOGUE.....
WOMAN.....
JDLer.....
CARETAKER.....
COP.....
WILSON.....BRIAN DENNEHY
SERGEANT.....
JUNKIE.....
REPORTER.....
FEMALE DISPATCHER (V.O.).....
A CROWD VOICE.....
YOUNG COP (V.O.).....

"Nazi"

SETS

EXTERIOR SETS

HARDING PARK
PARKED CAR
STREET CORNER
VENICE STREET
SYNAGOGUE

INTERIOR SETS

PARKED CAR
TRIB RADIO CAR
CITY ROOM
CONFERENCE ROOM
McKENNA'S BAR
LOBBY
SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY
PARTY HEADQUARTERS
RECORDS ROOM
PHONEBOOTH - PARKER CENTER LOBBY
SECOND FLOOR - STURNER APT.
SYNAGOGUE
SYNAGOGUE - OFFICE
TEACHER'S COUNGE
COFFEE SHOP
BILLIE'S BEDROOM
INT. FOURTH FLOOR CORRIDOR
TRIB LOBBY
BACK OFFICE - PARTY HDQ.
RABBI'S STUDY

"Nazi"

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

1. EXT. HARDING PARK - DAY

1.

A noontime demonstration. The speaker is a young RABBI, in skullcap and suit. He is giving an invocation prior to a small pro-Israel rally. The DEMONSTRATORS are Jewish, and range from conservation older men to JDL-types in leather jackets. Signs: "U.S. - DON'T ABANDON ISRAEL", "SUPPORT YOUR ALLY, ISRAEL", "DON'T FORGET US", "ALLIES BEFORE OIL".

*
*
*
*
*

As the Rabbi chants a prayer, PAN the crowd: the Jewish demonstrators are intent, the nonsectarian ONLOOKERS are merely curious.

RABBI

"Neither decide after the hearing of his ears.
 But with Righteousness shall he judge the poor,
 And decide with equity for the meek
 of the land,
 And he shall smite the land with the
 rod of his mouth,
 And with the breath of his lips shall
 he slay the wicked."

2. INT. PARKED CAR - TIGHT ON STRYKER - DAY

2.

He's in his early 30's -- blonde, blue-eyed, authoritative -- seated in the driver's seat, as becomes a leader of men, turned to talk to the car's other occupants.

STRYKER

Everybody ready?

ANOTHER ANGLE

There are two other MEN in the car. They nod, nervously.

STRYKER

Just remember, stay close, don't
 let yourself get cut off.
 (tight smile)
 O.K. Let's go!

3. EXT. PARKED CAR - DAY

3.

as they emerge. All three are wearing brown uniforms with boots and armbands. (For the moment, no insignia is visible.) Stryker stands on the sidewalk, staring down the street with grim determination.

HIS P.O.V.

At the end of the street, Harding Park.

BACK TO SCENE

The other two have extracted a flagpole from the trunk of the car. At a nod from Stryker they unfurl their banner: red, white and black -- the Swastika!

STRYKER

Fall in!....Forward march!

TRACKING SHOT

The Nazi color guard marches down the street, boots hitting the sidewalk with military precision, faces tense with suppressed excitement and fear.

P.O.V. - MOVING

PEDESTRIANS turning, reacting -- giving way before the marching men and their shocking symbol.

TRACKING - CLOSER: RAKING THE THREE FACES

Lips silently mouth the cadence; eyes stare straight ahead. Now we can hear the Rabbi's voice -- faint, but growing louder as they approach.

RABBI (V.O.)

"And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the
kid;
And the calf and the young lions and
the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them..."

Stryker talks through this, encouraging his advancing troops in a low voice without looking around or breaking step.

STRYKER

Remember now, stay close...Don't
let them scare you...

CONTINUED

3. CONTINUED

3.

HARDING PARK: THE DEMONSTRATORS - WIDE SHOT

The prayer continues.

RABBI

"And it shall come to pass in
the day
That the Lord shall set his hand
again a second time,
To recover the remnant of His people,
'That shall remain from Assyria
and Egypt..."

EDGE OF CROWD

Two bored COPS on crowd-control duty. So far it's
been uneventful. But now, as one of them looks off...

FIRST COP

(slow take)

Oh, geez....

HIS P.O.V.

The three Nazis march to within about twenty feet of the
crowd. At Stryker's command, they halt and defiantly
plant their swastika flag. They begin to chant:

NAZIS

Hitler had...the right idea...!
Hitler had...the right idea...! (etc.)

THE RABBI

Eyes closed, he is lost in a transport of faith.

RABBI

"And He will assemble the dispersed
of Israel,
And He will gether together the..."

The brutal voices break in on him. He opens his eyes.
Horrified, he trails off.

VARIOUS ANGLES

Cries and shouts of anger now. The crowd surges back
and forth. An old man prays silently in Hebrew.
A group of angry JDLers struggles to get at the Nazis.
One Cop bars their way, while the other talks urgently
into his CC unit....

*

CUT TO:

4. INT. TRIB RADIO CAR - MOUNT SHOT - DAY

4.

The ANIMAL AND ROSSI are cruising leisurely down Ventura Blvd. Animal is trying to drive and eat a chili dog at the same time. He spills some on Rossi. The Police Radio is ON, but he seems to be paying no more attention to it than to the chili on his shirt or the truck in the next lane that he's about to sideswipe. He's at peace with the world..

FEMALE DISPATCHER (filter)

Any clear unit in vicinity of Harding Park...we have an FB unit calling in for back-up and Supervisor's car. One-S-Twenty is responding, any clear unit should respond...

A spark of interest flickers across the Animal's sauce-smearred face. Absently, he tosses the rest of the chili dog out the window, reaches over and throws a switch on the radio.

YOUNG COP'S VOICE (filter)

...only three of them, but they're wearing

(mispronounces word)

"Nazy" uniforms and they got this big

(mispronounces word again)

"Swasteeka" flag. And these people -- they're all, you know, Jewish, and they're getting hinky...

As Rossi reaches for the handset of his radio.

CUT TO:

5. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

5.

Lou picks up a radio mike. INTERCUT CONVERSATION:

ROSSI

Nazis in Harding Park. They're breaking up some kind of Jewish demonstration. Just came over the radio. You want us to go after it?

LOU

Why are you asking?

CONTINUED

5. CONTINUED

5.

ROSSI

Well, you sent us out to cover
the florist strike. I just want
to know which one you want.

LOU

Let's see. I've got a choice of
sending you to a riot with guys
dressed up in World War II outfits
or having you go right on to the
florist strike where I believe the
main issue is the use of baby's
breath.

ROSSI

Okay, okay.

CUT TO:

6. EXT. HARDING PARK - DAY

6.

The situation has deteriorated. Rocks are flying through
the air. More COPS have arrived. They have their hands
full separating the Nazis and the Demonstrators who want
to tear them apart. We are at a genuine near-riot, and
it's only a matter of time before the TV mobile units
roll up. Animal and Rossi arrive.

MOVE WITH ROSSI AND ANIMAL

as they struggle through the crowd, Rossi waving his
press pass.

ROSSI

(ad lib, as needed)

Let me through...I'm from the Trib...
Hey, let me get by...don't hit
me. Buddy! I'm just a reporter.

A JDler is struggling with a COP:

JDler

(shouting at Stryker)

What are you hiding from, you
Nazi, you Nazi....
(near tears)

CONTINUED

6. CONTINUED

6.

COP

(holding him back)
Come on, take it easy...They're
just a bunch of jerks...

JDler

(to cop, while he
continues to struggle)
They killed my grandparents...!

*

STRYKER

(yells)
Propaganda! Zionist propaganda!

Rossi struggles through the police cordon, behind which
the three Nazis are at bay, backs up against a fence.
One of them is complaining to a police SERGEANT.

NAZI #2 (WILSON)

Look at them! And they say we're
the ones that are violent!

SERGEANT

(calm contempt)
You guys are just asking for it.
Begging for it.

Rossi sticks his nose into this. The Sergeant nods to him.

ROSSI

What the hell is this?

WILSON

(to Sergeant)
Who's he?

ROSSI

I'm a reporter and I want to
know what's going on.

WILSON

We're exercising our American right
of Free Speech and assembly, and
these Jews are trying to kill us.

ROSSI

What's the name of your little
rat patrol here?

CONTINUED

6. CONTINUED

6.

A sudden barrage of rocks makes them all duck for cover. Stryker is hit on the forehead. He drops like a stone and the third Nazi bends over him, administering first-aid with a dirty handkerchief.

WILSON

(shouts at crowd)

You won't stop us!

SERGEANT

If you don't shut your mouth right now, buddy, I'll stop you personally.

He turns to Stryker, who is starting to get up.

SERGEANT

You better stay down there...

NEW ANGLE - FAVORING STRYKER

holding a bloody handkerchief to the wound on his forehead.

STRYKER

(pleasantly)

Tell me, Sergeant -- are there any pure-bred American patriots left on the police force? Or are you all stooges of the communists?

The Sergeant takes a deep, weary breath and turns to Rossi.

SERGEANT

(with immense self-control)

Hey, reporter...it would be really nice if you could mention something about how the police remained calm in the face of extreme abuse and provocation, you know the kind of thing I mean...

Stryker gets to his feet. A reaction from the crowd as they see the bloody handkerchief.

A CROWD VOICE

Look...he's hit!

CONTINUED

6. CONTINUED

6.

STRYKER

(taunting)

I'm not hurt...Sorry to disappoint
you...I feel great...

Suddenly the Animal pops up from the most unlikely spot
the staging will provide -- camera poised.

ANIMAL

Then let's see a nice big smile,
you off-the-wall lunatic, you!

CLOSE ON STRYKER

Taken by surprise, he turns, his bloody face frozen in
a grimace of naked, horrifying rage.

SOUND: SHUTTER CLICK

FREEZE AND BLEED COLOR

And now we are looking at a b/w photograph....

7. INT. CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

7.

...as it is passed from hand to hand at the daily Budget
Meeting. As in the "St. James Infirmary," the usual
crowd is there.

PHOTO EDITOR

You gotta admit, it's a hell
of a good picture.

HUME

So was "Gone With The Wind."

*
*
*

LOU

What's wrong with running a grabber
on page one?

FOREIGN EDITOR

Three nuts in brown costumes go running
around the park on their lunch hour
and you wanna play it like it was
World War II.

LOU

(with some heat)

No Phil. not World War II --
maybe ten years before the war.

CONTINUED

7. CONTINUED

7.

NATIONAL EDITOR

Wait. This isn't pre-war Germany. Our constitution's first amendment guarantees even nuts in brown shirts a place in the light.

*
*
*
*

LOU

Exactly. But a strong light. That's my point.

*
*

HUME

Cool off. Cool off.
There's no question we have to cover it -- although personally I hate it when we have to give these people any publicity at all. That's the only reason they pull stunts like this in the first place. But at least let's keep it to the absolute minimum.

*

*

LOU

I disagree.

Hume sits back and looks at him.

HUME

All right, Lou. We have some extra time today. It might be healthy to just talk something like this out. I told you my reasons for wanting to hold this down to next to nothing. Why don't you start telling your reasons for going with it?

LOU

News is news.

JAYSON

Wait a minute. Let me write that down.

NATIONAL EDITOR

It will look good on a needlepoint pillow.

HUME

I think it was that year he spent as a headline writer.

CONTINUED

7. CONTINUED

7.

LOU

Charlie, I have a sense of responsibility about what we print, too. This is something we shouldn't duck. We should give it some attention.

*
*
*
*

HUME

Lou...if you think you can come up with an in-depth story on this thing that's worth running, go ahead and do it. And when it's in we'll read it and see.

(beat)

Meanwhile we'll run this One Column to fit on page Eight -- next to the airbag piece.

ON LOU

Glowing, as the voices continue.

PHOTO EDITOR

Picture?

HUME

Kill it.

JAYSON

Nazi-Park-Riot-Rossi-page-eight-column-two...five inches.

*

8. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY - TIGHT ON LOU

8.

With no break in the rhythm (so that he seems to be commenting on the Budget meeting)

LOU

Will you just shut up and listen to me for a minute?

NEW ANGLE - reveals we are at Rossi's desk.

ROSSI

(smug as always)

Look, I know what I'm up against. They're not just clowns, they're sick-oes, these guys. But you don't have to worry about me, Lou. I can handle myself.

CONTINUED

8. CONTINUED

8.

LOU

To tell you the truth, that's not quite at the top of my list of worries.

ROSSI

Well, don't worry about the story, either. I'll write you a beauty. You'll love it. Hume will love it. Mrs. Fynction will love it.

DONOVAN

Listen, I think I ought to warn you. I may like it, but I'll never love it.

ROSSI

Come on, Lou. I have strong feelings about these punks...

REVERSE ANGLE ON BILLIE NEWMAN

As she crosses nearby on the way to her desk. Struck by Rossie's evangelical tone, she reroutes herself so as to be able to eavesdrop. Neither of the two men will notice her.

ROSSI (CONT'D)

...and I know what I'm talking about. It so happens that in addition to being a reporter, I'm also a student of political history, and I know all about how these guys operate ...

LOU

Well, that's great Rossi. Most of these poor miserable fools...
(waving his hand to indicate the reporters)
...sometimes they don't even know what they're gonna write 'til after they've done the legwork. But after all, they're mere reporters. They're not "students of political history" like you. It gives you a tremendous advantage... You have this story written already and the only place you have been is the men's room.

CONTINUED

8. CONTINUED

8.

ROSSI

I don't have to do leg work if
what I'm doing is a think piece.

Rossi instantly realizes he said the wrong thing.

LOU

Ah, now we have it. A think
piece. You want to sit down
and do some writing, don't
you, Rossi? You don't want to
report. You want to show us
how many words you know.

*

ROSSI

You know the trouble with you?
You're moody.
(agitated)
Just my luck. I got you at a
 bad time.

*

*

*

LOU

Yeah, middle age.

ROSSI

So...that's it?
(Lou nods)
I don't do the story.
(Lou nods)
O.K.

Camera shows Rossi's reaction. He walks away. The
phone RINGS on Lou's desk. He picks it up.

LOU

(into phone)
City desk.

CONTINUED

8. CONTINUED

8.

BILLIE

How about lunch?

Lou looks up and realizes Billie is on the phone three desks away.

LOU

(surprised)

Lunch? Yeah, okay.

*

DONOVAN

Who was that?

*

*

LOU

Billie.

*

*

Donovan looks across at Billie three desks away and back at Lou.

*

*

DONOVAN

I wonder if she's got my number.

*

*

CUT TO:

9. INT. MCKENNA'S BAR - DAY

9.

Lou is in a booth with Billie.

LOU

What is it, Billie?

BILLIE

You know I had something on my mind, didn't you?

LOU

Years in the business.

BILLIE

I'm not the assertive type.

LOU

Okay.

BILLIE

I don't ask for things. I guess it's because --

(she thinks)

I'm not the assertive type.

(she looks at him)

I'd like to do a story on the Nazis.

CONTINUED (TO 13A)

9. CONTINUED

9.

LOU

I just turned down Rossi on that.

BILLIE

I know. And he's probably a better reporter than I am, and here I am, not as good a reporter and not the assertive type, and I'm still asking to do that story.

CONTINUED (TO 14)



9. CONTINUED

9.

LOU

Why do you want to do it?

BILLIE

I don't know. It's just that I really wonder what those people are like.

LOU

You have any ideas on how you want to handle it?

BILLIE

I just thought I'd get a hold of some of them and ask some questions and see where that led.

LOU

A novel approach.

BILLIE

(flips open her notebook)

Well, for openers, how about 2385 Western? Party headquarters. I looked them up in the phonebook.

*

LOU

Under what? Lunatic, comma fringe?

She smiles appreciatively.

LOU (CONT'D)

So, Billie, all you want to do is go there and see if there's a story?

BILLIE

Right.

LOU

Well, sure, that's okay.

She leans back.

BILLIE

I may just become pushy.

CUT TO:

10. EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

10.

Western and Santa Monica. Billie stands looking up at a two-story building.

HER POV: Above a dark, slummy doorway, the street number she's looking for. PAN OFF NUMBER as she observes the building. The ground floor is a Vietnamese Restaurant and an Adult bookstore. The second floor is a row of dirty frosted glass-windows, suggesting a loft upstairs. One of the windows has been broken and the shards are crudely patched with plywood and cardboard.

DOORWAY

Billie pauses before it, enjoying one last instant of sunshine and sanity: then she steps across the gloomy threshold...

11. INT. LOBBY - DAY

11.

Billie enters, looks around. The lobby is empty, dirty -- a broad flight of old-fashioned stairs leads to the top floor. Above a row of broken mailboxes is a hand-lettered cardboard sign:

NATIONAL-SOCIALIST
ARYAN-AMERICAN PARTY

upstairs.

Billie reads the sign. She is just starting up the stairs as we;

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

12. INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY - DAY

12.

Opposite the head of the stairs is a frosted glass door with the party name on it. Billie rings the bell. After a moment there is a sudden BUZZER. Billie jumps, then opens the door and steps over the threshold.

13. INT. PARTY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

13.

It's a huge, sparsely furnished loft, the sort of place that used to be an Arthur Murray dance studio in better days. It has not been painted since. The furnishings now consist of crossed U.S. and swastika flags, stacked folding chairs, a mimeo machine, a card-table stacked with mimeoed hand-outs, and very little else. At the far end of the loft is a podium-like elevation with a desk. On the wall behind it is a picture of Hitler and a heavy steel gun-rack containing several rifles, shotguns and a 50 cal. machine-gun. A uniformed Trooper, WILSON sits at the desk, watching Billie approach.

NEW ANGLE

Now Wilson stands. He's wearing a forty-five in a holster on his belt. He sees her gaze lingering on the gun-rack.

WILSON

If you're wondering about our fire-arms collection, it's all quite legal, I can assure you.

BILLIE

Even the machine-gun?

WILSON

It doesn't work. It's just for show. The firing-pin has been removed from the bolt. You don't think we'd be stupid enough to break the law like that, do you? *

BILLIE

I imagine you'd be smart enough to find another firing pin, if you ever wanted it "not for show". *

CONTINUED

13. CONTINUED

13.

WILSON

(smiles)

No comment.

(his eyes run up and down
her with not-entirely-
professional interest)

Anyway, what can I do for you?

BILLIE

I'd like some information about
your party.

WILSON

Why?

BILLIE

(disarmingly)

Oh. I thought you encouraged
outside interest.

WILSON

We do. What's your name, Miss?

BILLIE

Billie Newman.

WILSON

Could I see some I.D. please?

BILLIE

(tries to make a joke)

"Vere are your papers?"

He ignores the attempty. She shrugs digs in her bag
and comes out with her wallet. There's only one window
in it - with her driver's license (deliberately there's
no presspass). He takes the wallet, sits behind the
desk and copies her name on a notepad.

BILLIE

Ah, there is a difference between
you guys and the police. They
make you take it out of the wallet.

Wilson finishes writing. He's a bit less formal as he
hands the wallet back to her.

WILSON

We've got to be careful. We
get a lot of nuts coming in here.

13. CONTINUED

13.

BILLIE

Yes.

(changes subject)

I read about that riot in
Harding Park.

WILSON

(pleased with her answer)

Everything they print about us
is either a lie or a slander.
And I ought to know, I'm the
Propaganda Officer.

BILLIE

Sounds like an uphill job.

WILSON

(relaxing a bit)

It's very difficult to get our
message across, because people
have been brainwashed against us.
It's an image problem, basically...

BILLIE

Mmm.

WILSON

That's why the Commander has started
this new policy. Direct access to
the public. Meetings, demonstrations...
we're gonna let the people know
what we stand for, let them make
up their own minds. Here, come on
over here...

He leads her over to the cardtable with its load of
crude mimeographed literature.

WILSON

See, this literature -- we're
gonna be handing it out at meetings,
on street corners....

BILLIE AT TABLE

She examines the stacks of literature: WHITE POWER,
THE MONGRELIZATION OF AMERICA -- crude cartoons, etc.
Wilson looks on.

CONTINUED

13. CONTINUED

13.

BILLIE

Interesting stuff...

WILSON

Thanks. Take whatever you want...

She makes her way along the stack of hand-outs.

WILSON

That one in the back, I wrote it.

Billie picks it up with a polite smile.

BILLIE

Imagine meeting the man who wrote, "Race-Mixing and Sex-Education in our Public Schools."

WILSON

(swallowing it)

I've got some new stuff coming out that's even better. You should come to our meetings.

BILLIE

I'd like to take you up on that offer.

WILSON

Okay, I'll try and reserve space for you tonight. We're starting to attract a lot of people.

CUT TO:

14. INT. PARTY HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

14.

TIGHT ON MOVIE SCREEN

B/W footage from "Triumph of the Will", a contemporary film of the 1936 Nuremberg Party Rally: floodlights floating over seas of uniformed, jackbooted Nazis, while a thousand-voice choir sings the "Horst Wessel Liede". The clip runs long enough to establish its effect, which should be frightening (in contrast to the banality of Wilson in the previous scene).

The film reaches its end. Suddenly there is only HUM on the loudspeaker and glaring white leader on the screen.

CONTINUED

14. CONTINUED

14.

Gradually the faces we've been watching begin to come back to reality.

The audience consists of about fifteen troopers, in uniform, their families, and, in a back row segregated by a string with a hand lettered cardboard sign, "PUBLIC" Billie and a few other curious outsiders. In relation to the hall, it's sparsely populated. The houselights come on. The Troopers regain consciousness with a sense of embarrassment, smiling and chatting -- occasional looks over at the "Public", etc.

ANGLE ON BILLIE

She's standing next to a Junkie, another member of the visiting public.

BILLIE

Excuse me...

With the altered time-sense that is his hallmark, the Junkie reacts.

JUNKIE

You talking to me?

BILLIE

Yeah. Uh, what do you think?

JUNKIE

About what?

BILLIE

Well...this party...

JUNKIE

(out of it)

This party's no fun.

Billie is about to reply when there is the sudden startling SOUND like a thunderclap. Billie turns...

WIDER ANGLE

At the far end of the hall, a door has been thrown violently open. Stryker strides to the podium. A whisper spreads through the audience, but he remains motionless until there is absolute silence.

CONTINUED

14. CONTINUED

14.

STRYKER

When Adolph Hitler founded the German Worker's National Socialist Party in Munich in 1923, there were only eight members. Eight.

(pause)

Inside of ten years, he became the Chancellor of Germany and the whole world knows what happened then.

REACTION from audience. Stryker times his pause perfectly.

STRYKER (CONT'D)

We know we have a long way to go here in this country, but every day we're a little bit stronger, a little bit more determined, a little bit nearer the eventual victory. What do we want? We want a free America, with no traitors, race-mixers, no foreigners. We want the wealth of this land to belong to the people who really made it, the white Protestant pioneer. And that time is coming. It's getting to be our turn. Oh, sure, we're legal, law-abiding, but when our day comes, and it will, then rest assured we will use the power as it must be used, to liquidate the traitors, to purify our country, to restore the Aryan race to its rightful position as Lords of creation, the way God intended us to be.

Stryker allows the silence to linger for a moment. Then he snaps to attention and gives the Nazi salute. His followers follow suit and they all join in the chant:

ALL

(led by Stryker)

God Bless America...

All remain standing at attention, as Stryker strides imperiously from the platform. The door slams shut behind him, and only after he has left does the crowd relax. Now Wilson climbs the podium.

CONTINUED

14. CONTINUED

14.

WILSON

All right, people. That was a beautiful speech and it reminds us all of how we have to remain dedicated to our movement and its ideals. But dedication isn't enough. We also need hard cash. As you know, we've just opened a twenty-four-hour telephone number that gives a message on the sacred task of American Nazi-ism, as part of our new public relations offensive. Now you know that costs money, so I'm going to call for a battle-offering to help us defray the costs of this thing...

Billie starts to leave.

15. INT. HALLWAY - NIGHT

15.

Billie steps out into the hallway. It's empty except for Stryker who is heading for the stairs. She intercepts him.

BILLIE

Mr. Stryker...

STRYKER

What do you want?

BILLIE

(smile)

Do you have a minute?

Stryker stops, looks her over. His manner is guarded, but not hostile.

STRYKER

What for?

BILLIE

I'd like to talk to you...

STRYKER

The meeting's still going on.

CONTINUED

15. CONTINUED

15.

BILLIE

(another smile)

Yes, but you were the best part.

She expects him to say something -- maybe even a disclaimer of modesty. But he merely accepts her statement as fact and waits for her to continue.

BILLIE

I just had the feeling you would be the one to talk to, to find out about what your party stands for.

STRYKER

Why?

BILLIE

(picking her words carefully)

Well, I'm interested. I'd like to find out more about it.

Stryker senses her slight hesitation.

STRYKER

Business or pleasure.

She hesitates, then summons up her most ingenious smile.

BILLIE

Business. My name's Billie Newman.
I'm a reporter for the Tribune.

*
*

Her smile, her simulation of frankness, are admirable, but the performance is wasted. At the word "reporter" Stryker turns on his heel and strides off.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Hey, don't I get any points for honesty?

(Stryker is moving down the stairs)

If you want the press to treat you fairly, you have to cooperate with us...Hey...

STRYKER

(over his shoulder, pointing up the stairs)

They'll talk to you.

And he steps out the door. It's as if he'd vanished.

CONTINEUD

15. CONTINUED

15.

BILLIE

She stands there, looking down the empty stairs.
Frustration.

CUT TO:

16. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

16.

Billie and Lou.

LOU

You'd think they'd be hot for
the publicity.

BILLIE

Well, he wasn't.

LOU

Anything in the files on this
Stryker? You check that?

BILLIE

Sure, of course.

LOU

Okay, okay.

BILLIE

(shakes her head)

That's what seems strange to me...
alot of these guvs go back through
different groups...the Klan, the
Renaissance Party...But Stryker is
brand new. No criminal record, no
previous arrests. Which is peculiar,
for a professional rabble-rouser.

LOU

Maybe it's an alias.

BILLIE

(doubtful)

They don't usually have aliases. I
mean, not these... *

LOU

"Usually?" Do people usually take
the day off on Hitler's Birthday?
Do they usually....

CONTINUED

16. CONTINUED

16.

BILLIE

(overlap)

I see your point.

LOU

All right, here's what you do. You go down to the Cophouse, you go to B.S.I. Records on the eighth floor -- not Ad Records, B.S.I. records, you ask for Sargeant Parisi...

BILLIE

Lou, I'm going to feel so good when you get over thinking of what to tell me to do next.

LOU

It's just that you're new to the news side. And I'd figure you'd tell me when you didn't need any more steering.

BILLIE

I think I just told you.

LOU

Fine.

She starts away, stops, wondering whether to go back, realizes she has to.

BILLIE

I'm in sort of an uncomfortable position here.

Lou looks at her.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

I mean, I think I just made my big stand a minute too soon. Why am I going to see Sargeant Parisi?

LOU

Because he has an alias file on extremists. So if you take a look, you can...

CONTINUED

16. CONTINUED

16.

BILLIE
(with slight comeback)
That's all I needed to know,
thank you.

17. INT. RECORDS ROOM - DAY

17.

The door opens and a uniformed Sergeant (PARISI, as we'll learn in a moment) enters, carrying two cups of coffee. Billie maneuvers herself, trying to read his nameplate without being too obvious about it. *

BILLIE
Sergeant Parisi? *

PARISI
(pleasant)
Yes, can I help you?

BILLIE
(moving in on Parisi)
I'm a friend of Lou Grant's.

PARISI
In that case...Would you like a cup of coffee?

He holds out one of the cups to her.

BILLIE
Love it.

She smiles and takes it. Parisi looks at a cop at another desk, shrugs apologetically.

PARISI
O.K. What can I do for you?

BILLIE
Well, I'm looking for a Nazi.

PARISI
Have you tried South America?

She smiles.

BILLIE
No, it's a local variety. And Lou suggested you might be able to help.

CONTINUED

17. CONTINUED

17.

PARISI

(lifting the counter)

Come on in the back, we'll see
what we find.

Billie demurely steps through and Parisi leads her into
the back room, talking as he goes.

CUT TO:

18. INT. CITY ROOM - DONOVAN'S DESK - DAY

18. *

Donovan is at the typewriter, laboriously hunting and pecking
out a story with two fingers. He pauses, stuck for a thought. *

Rossi passes, notices, and comments maliciously.

ROSSI

See? Writing's not so easy after
all, is it?

DONOVAN

No, you're right, Rossi. Writing
is a demanding profession. *

And you know the toughest part of
it? *

ROSSI

(intrigued)

What?

DONOVAN

Changing the ribbon. You get ink -
all over your hands, it's just
a mess... *

~~WIDEN TO INCLUDE LOU'S DESK~~ *

The phone RINGS and Lou picks it up as Rossi scowls and
marches off.

LOU

(on phone)

City desk...Grant.

(beat: he's pleased
at what he hears.)

You did?

INTERCUT

19. INT. PHONEBOOTH - CITY STREET - DAY

19. *

Billie on phone, excited.

BILLIE

It's an alias. I still don't know why, but that's one of the things I'm going to check on.

(beat; she listens)

His real name is Sturner, Donald Sturner. I can't find any current address on him...No...he's not in the phone book, that's the first place I...All right, I accept it. I've got an address in Venice, eight years old, from his army records. I'm going to go over there and check it out...

LOU

I doubt he'll be there...

BILLIE

It's a place to start.

And she hangs up.

LOU - He hangs up and turns back to his typewriter, pounding even harder than before.

DISSOLVE TO:

20. EXT. FAIRFAX AREA STREET - DAY

20. *

It's a run-down neighborhood, exhausted after a long, losing battle with urban blight. Billie's car pulls up in front of a multi-family house. The only paint it's experienced recently has come from a vandal's spraycan. Billie gets out of her car and crosses the sidewalk.

ANGLE IN VESTIBULE

She studies the ruins of an intercom system. All the name-plates are empty. While she's looking, a thirty-ish WOMAN sticks her head out of a groundfloor window, startling Billie.

WOMAN

You looking for somebody?

CONTINUED

20. CONTINUED

20.

BILLIE

(reacts)

Oh, you startled me.

WOMAN

(couldn't care less)

Sorry.

(sizing Billie up)

You looking for somebody?

BILLIE

Mr. Sturner.

WOMAN

Second floor in the back.

BILLIE

Thanks. Is he there, do you know?

WOMAN

Him? He's always there.

BILLIE

(this surprised her a bit)

Oh? Is he?

WOMAN

Where would he be at his age?
Skateboarding?

BILLIE

Oh. Uh...I'm looking for some-
one about thirty, blond hair,
blue eyes...

WOMAN

That's the son. He don't live
with them anymore.

BILLIE

You don't happen to know where
he is...

WOMAN

I think Mrs. Sturner said he's
in the Army, overseas someplace.

BILLIE

I see. Well, thanks.

CONTINUED

20. CONTINUED

20.

She starts up the stairs, heading for the second floor.

SECOND FLOOR

As Billie reaches the top of the stairs and approaches
CAMERA

ANGLE ON REAR DOOR

Billie steps into SHOT, reaches for the doorbell. But
her hand stops just short.

INSERT - DOORBELL

Just above it a small brass cylinder has been screwed to
the jamb. It is a mezuzah, a Jewish household charm.

BILLIE

She presses the doorbell, sees the mezuzah and she is
arrested by it. Before she can go further, the peephole
opens; the uncomfortable feeling of being observed
through a fisheye that would make Jesus look like a
mugger. The SOUND of many locks being haltingly opened
(Old people living in high-crime areas). Billie sets
her introductory smile in place as the door swings open.

ANGLE PAST BILLIE

An old woman, MRS. STURNER, stands there, looking up with
an inquiring frown.

MRS. STURNER

Yes?

BILLIE

Are you Mrs. Sturner?

MRS. STURNER

Yes.

From the apartment behind her an Old Man's VOICE calls
out something indistinct:

MRS. STURNER (CONT'D)

(calls back, over her
shoulder)

It's all right, I have it.

(to Billie)

Excuse me. So?

CONTINUED

20. CONTINUED

20.

She pauses, expecting an answer.

But Billie doesn't answer. Her gaze is fixed over Mrs. Sturner's shoulder, into the apartment. Her expression is blank but her eyes are twice normal size.

HER P.O.V.

Stepping out of a hallway in the back of the apartment, comes the old man whose voice we heard. He shuffles into view, peering nearsightedly toward CAMERA. On his head is a black skullcap. Billie stares past him, notes the menorah on a side table.

BILLIE

As she stares, trying to handle her astonishment as it sinks in on her that Stryker's father -- and therefore Stryker himself - is a Jew!

Meanwhile the Mother's voice continues;

MRS. STURNER'S VOICE

(prodding)

What can I do for you?

But Billie doesn't hear. She's still staring.

MRS. STURNER (CONT'D)

What do you want, lady?

Mr. Sturner is shuffling nearer the doorway for a closer look.

BILLIE

(recovering)

Uh...Do you have a son named Donald?

MR. STURNER

(querulous, senile)

What? What's she want?

MRS. STURNER

(over her shoulder)

Nothing....

(urgently, to Billie)

Look...

Billie's professional instincts shout her sense of tact. She talks past the old woman, answering the old man's question.

CONTINUED

20. CONTINUED

20.

BILLIE

I'm looking for your son, Donald...

THE OLD MAN

The import of Billie's words cuts through the crust of senility and touches a nerve.

BILLIE'S VOICE

I'm a newspaper reporter. I'm doing a story on your son...

MR. STURNER

We got nothing to say...Go away...
Tell her, go away.

He stands there, in the middle of the living room, waving his arms in a pathetic rage.

TWO-SHOT - BILLIE AND MRS. STURNER

Mrs. Sturner is trying to ease the door shut on Billie frantically apologizing in a low voice and interrupting herself to call soothingly over her shoulder at her husband.

MRS. STURNER

(to Billie)

Please, he's sick, he's not supposed to excite himself...

(over her shoulder)

She's going, stop it now!

(back to Billie)

Please...

The old man's voice continues, a cracked, weak shout.

BILLIE

(backing up)

I'm really sorry...If you could just tell me.

TIGHT ON MRS. STURNER

The eyes of a beggar.

MRS. STURNER

We got nothing to say...leave it alone...please...

CONTINUED

20. CONTINUED

20.

BILLIE

Allows the door to be closed in her face.

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

FADE IN:

21. INT. MCKENNA'S BAR - NIGHT

21.

Lou is seated at a booth. Billie slides in next to him, trying to be calm as she relays her bombshell.

BILLIE

You're not going to believe this story. It's so good I can't believe it myself

LOU

(the teacher)

You'll find that when you dig a little under the surface, the stuff you come up with is often pretty good. I wish I could feel what you're feeling right now. But when you've been in the newspaper business as long as I have, nothing surprises you. So, what did you find out about Sturner?

BILLIE

He's Jewish.

For a moment Lou is stunned.

LOU

You're kidding. I don't believe it. Are you sure? That's fantastic! The Nazi? He's Jewish?

BILLIE

I double checked. At City Hall, there's a record of his parents' marriage by a Rabbi! Orthodox Jewish service. I've got a photostat.

(beat; Lou still thinking)

That's why he changed his name. So his buddies in the party wouldn't find out! Only now we're gonna tell them.

LOU

Tell them what? Look, the story isn't that we found a Nazi who's Jewish. That's for "Believe it or Not". We try to dig a little deeper in our part of the paper.

(MORE)

CONTINUED

21. CONTINUED

21.

LOU (CONT'D)

The thing I want to know is what turned a bar-mitzvah boy into a Nazi with a swastika on his arm? How did it happen? What made it happen? That's what you're gonna find out.

BILLIE

I figure'd I'd go to talk to Sturner first thing in the morning.

LOU

Well, wait...wait a minute. Let me try something on you. Wouldn't it be a good idea if before you went to see him you talk to everybody who ever knew him?

BILLIE

I'm too anxious to see how he'll react when I tell him.

LOU

When that time comes you better know more about him than he knows about himself.

CUT TO:

22. EXT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY

22.

HOLD ON the building's facade -- a Star of David worked in stone. Then PAN DOWN to Billie and old CARETAKER as she asks a question MOS. The Caretaker nods and conducts her into the synagogue.

*
*

23. OMIT

OMIT

23. *

24. INT. SYNAGOGUE - DAY

24. *

Billie is talking to the Rabbi. She's rummaging in her bag.
He's an old man in skullcap and prayer shawl. *

The Rabbi is behind his desk talking with a ponderous profundity that might almost qualify as an occupational disability.

RABBI

You must remember this goes back quite a number of years. However, I...

He breaks off, distracted by Billie's bag-rummaging. She pulls out a small tape-recorder with an apologetic smile.

BILLIE

I'm sorry...I was wondering if you'd mind my turning this on while we talk. It makes things a lot easier for me...

RABBI

Certainly. It's quite all right.

Billie places the machine on the desk.

BILLIE

Excuse me, you were saying...

CONTINUED

24. CONTINUED

24.

RABBI

(a glance at the recorder)

Yes...I was saying that even after all these years I remember the boy. We have here a Hebrew school, where the children study religious subjects and prepare for the bar-mitzvah. And the boy Sturner I still recall because he was an excellent student, outstanding...read beautifully in Hebrew...He didn't waste his time chasing a ball in the street like the rest of the boys...

*
*
*

BILLIE

Was he bar-mitzvahed?

RABBI

(nods)

Of course. I remember it was very sad.

*
*

BILLIE

Why sad?

*

RABBI

His father, troubled with ill health, was too sick to attend. Naturally, this terrible business you're telling me -- this I know nothing about.

*
*
*
*

BILLIE

Does it surprise you?

RABBI

(thinks, then quietly)

Yes, it surprises me. However, he isn't the first Jew who lost his faith. He won't be the last.

BILLIE

(trying to figure it out)

But a Nazi? Of all the things he might have chosen.

RABBI

(shrug)

When you turn your back on God, whichever way you go, it's the wrong direction.

CUT TO:

25. INT. SYNAGOGUE VESTIBULE - TIGHT ON CARETAKER - DAY 25.*

(This shot should play off previous scene)

CARETAKER

Sure I remember him. Little runty kid. His mother used to bring him every afternoon, then pick him up after.

WIDER ANGLE

Establishes new location. Billie is poring over a large ledger lying on a desk in the deserted office.

BILLIE

(nods)

Mmm. He was an only child.

CARETAKER

(with reservations)

You gotta understand, the neighborhood's changed. Time you're talking about, there was already lots of different elements. The Jewish kids, they were the minority.

BILLIE

Did the other kid's mothers walk them to school and pick them up?

CARETAKER

No. His mother worried about him a lot.

Billie looks further down the row of names in the ledger....

BILLIE

Here it is. "Donald Sturner..."
And what's this after it?

She points. The Caretaker leans over, adjusting his spectacles.

CARETAKER

(reading)

That's his name written in Hebrew.
And the date and the Rabbi's name.

Billie is copying this information in her notebook.

CONTINUED

25. CONTINUED

25.

BILLIE

Samuel Stein...That's the Rabbi
who bar-mitzvahed him?

(Caretaker nods)

But he's not the same man I just
met.

CARETAKER

Oh no. Rabbi Stein's a much younger, snappier
fellow. He could have told you a
lot about that kid. That kid used to
follow him around all over the place.
He was like his hero. *

BILLIE

(closes her notebook)

And where's this Rabbi Stein now?

CARETAKER

Oh, he left...He got offered a big
shuel somewhere back east and frankly
he jumped at it. Boy, that kid
took it hard. It was a real slap in the
face. You should have seen the way he looked.
But the Rabbi had to go, it was a big
opportunity.

CUT TO:

26. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

26.

Lou is at the coffee machine. Billie is talking to him.

BILLIE

I think I'm ready to talk to
him now.

LOU

You've spoken to two people and
you think you're ready.

BILLIE

I know his whole background.

LOU

You haven't even done your basics.
You haven't even found that old
grey-haired school teacher who
thought he was the sweetest kid
in the class.

CUT TO:

27. INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - TIGHT ON KELSO - DAY

He is an old man with white hair and blue eyes, looking like an undernourished, dyspeptic Santa Claus.

KELSO

...a good boy, extremely bright, he had a keen interest in politics for such a young boy.

(reminiscent smile)

You know how there are always one or two who come up after class... they can never get enough. Well Donald was one of those.

PULL BACK to reveal the lounge -- a shabby room, indicative of the extremely small percentage of the G.N.P. spent on education. Billie is seated opposite Kelso. The tape-recorder is on a table between them.

BILLIE

And I understand you were his favorite teacher.

KELSO

(modest)

Let's just say Social Studies was his favorite subject.

BILLIE

Do you remember what his politics were like in those days?

KELSO

(feeling he was too modest)

Okay, I was his favorite teacher. His politics? Oh, nothing out of the ordinary. As a matter of fact, he was a rather clear thinker.

*
*

You must remember, back in the sixties the Peaceniks and the hippies... (there's nothing obvious in his tone, but it's easy to see that he was never a big fan of the Flower Children) ...they were just starting to come into fashion. Long hair, bra-burning, rock and roll music, drugs...A great many of the children, I would say

(MORE)

CONTINUED

27. CONTINUED

27.

KELSO (CONT'D)

the majority of them, they
swallowed it all, hook, line and
sinker.

BILLIE

(prompting)

But not Donald?

KELSO

(with some pride)

No, not Donald. When the rest
of them were burning draftcards
and rioting in the streets, calling
the President of the United States
a murderer...

(the memory still has
power to rouse his anger)

..Donald was smart enough to
see what was behind it. He was
one of the few who kept faith
with his country. And let me
tell you, that wasn't a very popular
attitude for a boy to have in
those days.

BILLIE

Then I take it he wasn't a popular
boy?

KELSO

Well, it wasn't easy for him. But
he believed in sticking to his
principles, no matter what it
cost him. He was a patriot when
that wasn't an easy thing to be.
He even applied to West Point.
I wrote a recommendation for him
myself.

BILLIE

Do you know why he didn't get
in?

KELSO

("I thought you knew")
He never graduated high school.

CONTINUED

27. CONTINUED

27.

BILLIE

(surprised)

Oh?

KELSO

Oh no. He left school for good just a month or so before the end of his senior year. There was an incident in the schoolyard. A fight.

(beat: Billy waits)

A gang of boys -- tough kids, delinquents -- they got hold of Donald and beat him pretty badly. I think they broke his arm. We assumed he'd come back to school, but he never did.

BILLIE

Do you know what the fight was about?

KELSO

It was a...racial thing. Religious... whatever you want to call it. There's always been a lot of... ethnic discord, the student body is very mixed. Very mixed. It was because of his faith.

BILLIE

Are you sure?

KELSO

Quite sure. It was the last time I ever saw him.

(beat)

He was such a nice boy.

CUT TO:

28. INT. CITY ROOM - DAY

28.

Lou and Billie are listening to a tape recorder. They talk over the first bits of dialogue on the recorder.

BILLIE'S VOICE

Could you just give me your personal history?

BILLIE

There's nobody left to talk to. I did three more teachers, all the
(MORE)

CONTINUED

28. CONTINUED

28.

PSYCHIATRIST'S VOICE

I'm Colonel Henry Jordan.
I've been an Army psychiatrist
for twenty years.

BILLIE'S VOICE

And now you can repeat
what you were telling me

BILLIE

classmates I could track
down. Now this psychiatrist.
The only way I could
interview more people would
be to ask, "How come you
didn't know Donald Sturner?" *

LOU

Will you let me listen to
this psychiatrist?

Billie turns up the volume on the tape recorder.

PSYCHIATRIST'S VOICE

...but not all that uncommon. The
person is being attacked, but
instead of defending himself he
begins to identify with the attacker.
He can't bear to be a victim any
longer...so he simply changes
sides. And of course that usually
involves a certain loss of contact
with reality...

*

BILLIE'S VOICE

(following along)

Psychotic?

*

PSYCHIATRIST'S VOICE

Mmm, we have to be careful of
labeling. But on the basis of
what you've told me, I'd say it's
possible. The pattern is already
evident...rigid personality, unstable,
violence-prone...

*
*
*
*

BILLIE'S VOICE

Thank you, doctor.

PSYCHIATRIST'S VOICE

I'd rather have you thank me over
dinner tonight, if you're not --

CONTINUED

28. CONTINUED

28.

Billie quickly reaches over and turns the recorder off.

BILLIE

Well, it is time for me to interview
Stryker, isn't it?

LOU

Yes, it is.

She picks up phone, starts dialing.

LOU (CONT'D)

(as she dials)

Did you go out with that Army
doctor?

BILLIE

Well, you know me. I'm a sucker
for a guy in a uniform.

CUT TO:

29. INT. PARTY HEADQUARTERS - BACK ROOM - DAY

29.

Wilson, in full uniform, is on the phone.

WILSON

Commander Stryker will be right
with you.

A beat, then Stryker enters, takes the phone from Wilson.
The following is INTERCUT with Billie at her desk: *

STRYKER

(into phone)

Yes?

BILLIE

Commander Stryker?

STRYKER

Yes.

BILLIE

This is Billie Newman of the
Tribune. I spoke to you once
before. I'd really like to
interview you.

STRYKER

I don't give out interviews.

CONTINUED

29. CONTINUED

29.

BILLIE

I already have enough material to do a story about you, but I'd hate to do that without checking _____ with you first.

*
*

Stryker's demeanor changes radically.

STRYKER

All right. I'll meet you at the coffee shop at Fifth and Western tonight at nine.

BILLIE

Couldn't we do it here at the Tribune?

STRYKER

If you want to meet me that's where I'll be.

BILLIE

All right. I'll be there. Goodbye.

Billie realizes he has hung up. She hangs up.

LOU

(exasperated)

You're taking stupid chances meeting him alone.

BILLIE

You wouldn't say that to Rossi!

LOU

I encourage Rossi to take stupid chances. But anybody else I would warn -- man or woman.

BILLIE

Lou, you know I've got to meet him.

LOU

(compromise proposal)

How about if I go with you?

BILLIE

(enormously relieved)

Would you?

FADE OUT:

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

FADE IN:

30. INT. COFFEE SHOP - NIGHT

30.

CLOSE SHOT: BILLIE

Alone at a formica-topped table. Nobody nearby. Bright lights, everything quite normal. It ought to reassure her; instead it makes her feel even more nervous; though she is doing an almost perfect job of concealing it.

WIDER ANGLE

reveals the only flaw in her performance; one crossed leg swings in tight nervous arcs. She sips tentatively from a cup of coffee. Suddenly she glances out the window and reacts.

STRYKER - HER POV

standing outside the window, staring in at her. She meets his gaze with all the poise she can muster. A beat, then he turns and slowly walks down the sidewalk and enters the coffee shop, fully aware of the theatricality of his entrance. He crosses to the table, sits opposite her and stares her down.

ANGLE - STRYKER AND BILLIE

BILLIE

Hi.

No answer.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

I didn't know that you would come.

Still no answer.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Because the last time we met you didn't seem interested in talking.

STRYKER

What do you want?

BILLIE

As you know, my paper's doing a story on you.

CONTINUED

30. CONTINUED

30.

STRYKER

The Party has a propaganda officer.
Why don't you see him?

BILLIE

We're not interested in the Party,
we're interested in you. After
all, you're the star of the show,
aren't you?

STRYKER

I'm just their leader.

BILLIE

That's why I want to find out about
you.

STRYKER

My personal life is nobody's business
but my own.

BILLIE

Is that why you changed your name?

A beat.

STRYKER

What's that supposed to be, one
of your reporter's shock tactics?

(then)

No, it's just a matter of party
security. A lot of people would
like to see me dead, you know.

BILLIE

(looks him in the eye)

Would you be willing to tell me
your real name...off the record?

Billie is deliberately inviting him to believe she
doesn't know his real name. There is a moment of
eye-contact.

STRYKER

Why should I? My past history
has nothing to do with the Movement.

CONTINUED

30. CONTINUED

30.

BILLIE

I just want to know what kind of a person you were before you... made your conversion. And how you became a Nazi.

We hear an O.S. crash. The both turn, startled.

LOU - THEIR POV

has just knocked over a stack of plastic trays and is busily picking them up. With great effort he avoids peeking at them and, after replacing the trays, he moves self-consciously to the counter and sits.

ANGLE - BOOTH

BILLIE

Let's start at the beginning.

She takes out a tape recorder and sets it down on the table.

STRYKER

Are you planning to use that?

BILLIE

I always use it in my work, it makes the quotes accurate. That's what you want, isn't it?

She pushes the buttons to start the recorder. Stryker studies the machine as it plays.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

Are you from California originally?

STRYKER

(eyes still on the tape recorder)

No. From the East. Philadelphia.

He examines her closely, waiting to see how the lie goes over. Billie doesn't react at all -- she just waits for him to continue. And, when he does, it is with slightly more assurance.

BILLIE

What sort of background?

CONTINUED

30. CONTINUED

30.

STRYKER

Oh...normal. Nothing out of the ordinary.

(with growing confidence)

I wasn't a Nazi then, if that's what you mean. I used to believe the same lies that everybody else did. I was just like everybody else. But then, gradually, I began to open my eyes and look around me and read and think -- and I began to see the truth...

He's beginning to gather momentum as he discourses on his favorite subject.

ANGLE - LOU

Who has been attempting to steal not-so-casual glances over his shoulder at them. He suddenly looks up and discovers there is a mirrored pastry-case on the wall behind the counter. By looking into it he can see Billie and Stryker. A waitress serves him a cup of coffee.

ANGLE - BOOTH

STRYKER

...one teacher in high school who began to open my eyes. Oh, he couldn't come out and say it, but I got the message. Since then, I've done a lot of reading -- history, politics, anthropology -- all on my own, of course. I didn't bother going to college.

BILLIE

Why not?

STRYKER

For me it would have been a waste of time. They're controlled by Communists.

BILLIE

Even West Point?

STRYKER

(beat)

What do you mean, West Point?

BILLIE

Well, didn't you try to get in there once?

CONTINUED

30. CONTINUED

30.

STRYKER

(beat)

I could have gone to West Point,
but I quit high school. I beat up
this weasly little kid in the
schoolyard, broke his arm, so
they threw me out.

ANGLE - LOU

Watching them intently in the mirror. Suddenly the
waitress places a huge chocolate cake in the rack, obliterating
his view. Lou reacts with frustration.

ANGLE - BOOTH

STRYKER

(almost a taunt)

Anything else you'd like to ask
me?

BILLIE

Yes.

(beat; she looks at him
for a long moment, gathering
strength to launch her
harpoon)

Is your real name Donald Sturner?

Is your father's name Abraham?

Is your mother's name Dora?

(each question is like
a bullet)

Were they married in an orthodox
Jewish ceremony? Were you bar-

mitzvahed on April twenty-eighth

1961 at the Rodoph Scholem

synagogue by Rabbi Samuel Stein?

C.U. STRYKER

With each question his composure disintegrates a bit more.
It takes a moment for him to realize she's got him nailed.
His face is not a pretty sight. His hand slams down on
the tape recorder, turning it off.

ANGLE - LOU

Watching them intently.

ANGLE - BOOTH

CONTINUED

30. CONTINUED

30.

STRYKER
 (low, strangled voice)
 You're not going to print that.

BILLIE
 Is it true?

Another pause. Stryker doesn't move from his contorted position leaning across the table, looking up at her.

STRYKER
 It's a lie.

BILLIE
 Your name isn't Donald Sturner? You aren't Jewish?

His hand leaves the tape recorder and slides under the table.

STRYKER
 (as if he hasn't heard)
 I'm carrying a gun, did you know that?
 (she shakes her head)
 It's in my pocket. I've got my hand on it right now. I could kill you...right this second.

ANGLE - TO INCLUDE LOU

Who, alarmed by the intensity of Stryker's voice has turned directly toward them, making no pretense of covering up.

STRYKER
 (indicates Lou)
 He's with you, isn't he?

BILLIE
 No.

STRYKER
 That's a lie. You've done nothing but lie to me.

Billie stares at him, the possibility of a gun under the table has her frozen with fear. Suddenly he stands up and, with a sudden violent whirl away from her, strides

CONTINUED

30. CONTINUED

30.

out of the coffee shop. Lou gets up and crosses to the booth, sits next to Billie, puts his arm around her protectively.

LOU
You all right?

BILLIE
Yeah, yeah.

LOU
You sure you're okay?

BILLIE
Yeah, Lou, I'm okay. I'm okay.

LOU
That's good. I'm a wreck.

CUT TO:

31. INT. BILLIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

31.

Billie is sleeping fitfully. She awakens with a start, sits up in bed listening as if she hears something. She finally reaches out and snaps on the light and checks the clock. It's 3:15 a.m. Just as she snaps out the light, the phone RINGS jarring her. She looks at it, then picks it up.

BILLIE
Hello?

31A. INT. PARTY HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

31A. *

Stryker at a table at the far end of the empty room. INTERCUT:

STRYKER
That's right, I know your number, where you live...I can get you any time I want. Are you listening?

BILLIE
Yes.

STRYKER
It's not true -- what you said tonight. It's an obvious lie and nobody would believe it.

BILLIE
Then what are you worried about?

CONTINUED

31. CONTINUED

31.

STRYKER

You're the one who should be worrying. You and that damn paper. 'Cause I got nothing to lose, you understand me? And if I have to go I'm gonna take a lot of people with me.

BILLIE

Look, Mr. Stryker, this isn't doing either one of us any good. You do whatever you want to and so will I and right now I want to go to sleep. Goodbye.

And she hangs up. Her poise just now was magnificent, but there isn't any left. She reaches out and takes the phone off the hook and lays it on the table. She lies back down, awake in the darkness, eyes staring.

CUT TO:

32. INT. HUME'S OFFICE - DAY

32.

Hume is reading Billie's article while Lou waits.

HUME

(looks up)
Powerful stuff.

LOU

Maybe too powerful.

HUME

How's that?

LOU

This guy Stryker. He's threatened Billie and the paper. I've alerted building security. And I've hired a private detective to watch Billie. Apparently he knows where she lives.

HUME

I don't like that.

LOU

Well, I thought I oughtta tell you that before we ran the story.

CONTINUED

32. CONTINUED

32.

HUME

Are you suggesting we shouldn't?

The phone RINGS. Hume picks it up.

HUME (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Yeah?

(beat)

Somebody downstairs for you, Lou.

(into phone)

Who is it?

(then, to Lou)

A Mr. Stryker.

CUT TO:

33. INT. LOU'S OFFICE - DAY

33.

Lou, Billie and Stryker, who is dressed disarmingly in civilian clothes -- a sports shirt and slacks -- no garments that conceal weapons, looking nothing like the demi-Fuhrer we've seen before.

STRYKER

I came to ask you not to print that...story about me.

LOU

Look, Stryker, if you want to deny it, we'll run that, too. But we are going to print what we've got.

STRYKER

(forces a smile)

I'll make you a deal, a fair exchange. I've got another story -- better than this. Documented proof. I'll give you that.

Billie looks at Lou. They look at each other. Then back at Stryker.

STRYKER (CONT'D)

Homosexuals in the Ku Klux Klan.

I can give you names, addresses...

*

CONTINUED

33. CONTINUED

33.

LOU

(bored)

There are homosexuals everywhere, Stryker, why shouldn't they be in the Klan. We even have a homosexual sportswriter here on the paper.

BILLIE

(reacts to Lou)

Who?

Lou ignores her.

STRYKER

This isn't a joke to me.

LOU

This isn't a joke to anyone.

STRYKER

Go ahead and print it. I don't care. Nobody would believe it. Go ahead. Nobody would believe it.

LOU

All right. Maybe nobody will believe it.

There are tears in Stryker's eyes now, though he seems unaware of how close he is to cracking.

STRYKER

Please. You don't understand. Look...

(he searches for a way to express what he wants to say)

I've worked so hard...

(he trails off; tries again)

If this comes out...if they find out...It'll all be gone...everything will be gone. Everything I've worked for...I'll lose all my friends...

CONTINUED

33. CONTINUED

33.

Stryker becomes aware of his surroundings. Instantly he pulls himself together. Lou and Billie have not moved. Now Stryker's gaze is malevolent.

STRYKER (CONT'D)

(quiet menace)

You'll be sorry for this. I have nothing to lose now.

LOU

(final)

Goodbye, Mr. Stryker.

Stryker exits.

BILLIE

My God.

LOU

What?

BILLIE

I almost feel sorry for him.

CUT TO:

34. INT. PARTY HEADQUARTERS - DAY

34.

*

Before the picture of Hitler, Stryker, in Nazi uniform, is deliberately strapping on his Sam Browne belt and holster. Wilson opens the door.

STRYKER

Have you mobilized the men?

WILSON

They're on their way...

STRYKER

I want them in uniform.

WILSON

That's what I told them. What's it gonna be, Commander?

STRYKER

You'll find out soon enough.

Wilson closes the door.

CUT TO:

35. INT. TRIB LOBBY - DAY

35.

In addition to the regular guard, there are two other armed guards on duty carefully checking people as they enter the building. Rossi enters, hurrying for the elevator. A guard steps up to him.

GUARD

Hold it a minute, please.
Can I see some identification?

ROSSI

I'm Joe Rossi --

GUARD

Some identification please.

Rossi looks pained and takes out his wallet and shows the guard identification. Billie and Donovan step up behind him and show the guard their identification.

*
*

ROSSI

(to Billie and Donovan)

What's this all about?

*

DONOVAN

They doubled security because of that article she wrote. I knew she was trouble.

*
*
*
*

The elevator arrives, they go in.

ROSSI

Oh yeah. The Nazi thing. I read that. Good job.

I almost couldn't tell a woman had written it.

*
*

BILLIE

I read your piece this morning, too.

(beat)

I almost couldn't tell a man had written it.

ROSSI

(taking offense,
feisty)

What do you mean by that?

Elevator doors close.

*

CUT TO:

36. INT. FOURTH FLOOR CORRIDOR - DAY

36.

SHOOTING OVER OCCUPANTS OF ELEVATOR

as elevator doors open on fourth floor. Lou is leaning against the wall, arms folded. Rossi and Billie both stop.

ROSSI

Now what did I do?

LOU

Not you. Her.

(to Billie)

Billie. See you for a minute?

He beckons to Billie.

BILLIE

(puzzled)

Yeah, Lou.

He motions for them to walk down the hall together. He takes her hand.

BILLIE (CONT'D)

What's this all about?

LOU

It just came in...over the police wire.

(beat)

Stryker killed himself.

She stops, absolutely stunned. Lou puts his arms around her comfortingly. She puts her head on his shoulder for a moment. Then straightens up and pushes back from him. They look at each other for a long beat.

BILLIE

I killed him.

LOU

No. He killed himself.

BILLIE

I put the gun in his hand.

LOU

That gun has been in his hand for a long time.

CONTINUED

36. CONTINUED

36.

BILLIE

(beat)

I know, but if I hadn't written
that story --

LOU

Did you know that when we went
after that story he was going to
kill himself?

BILLIE

No.

LOU

Did you think it was possible that
he might kill somebody?

A beat, then she nods.

LOU (CONT'D)

Who?

BILLIE

Me.

LOU

(he's made his point)

But knowing that, you wrote it
anyway.

(beat)

You had the courage to face that.
Think about it...maybe it'll help
you accept this.

She nods, but still looks unconvinced.

LOU (CONT'D)

Billie, we can't weigh each story
and say maybe we shouldn't run this
because somebody might get hurt.
Sometimes people do get hurt...
sometimes careers are ruined...
governments are brought down. But
if the story is there, we have
to print it. It's our job --
and if you want to be in this
business you have to learn to handle
it.

(beat)

Okay?

CONTINUED

36. CONTINUED

36.

BILLIE

You mean I should shrug this one off and go on to the next?

LOU

(shakes his head)

A man is dead -- a sad, twisted, tormented man -- but a human being nevertheless. By writing about him you've helped us understand him and maybe ourselves a little better. You've done a good job, Billie, and I'm proud of you.

BILLIE

(low)

Thank you.

Lou pats her shoulder and goes back into the city room, leaving Billie alone. A reporter passes her in the corridor.

REPORTER

Good story, Billie.

She says nothing.

LOOSE SHOT

of Billie profoundly disturbed by what she has been through.

FADE OUT:

THE END