

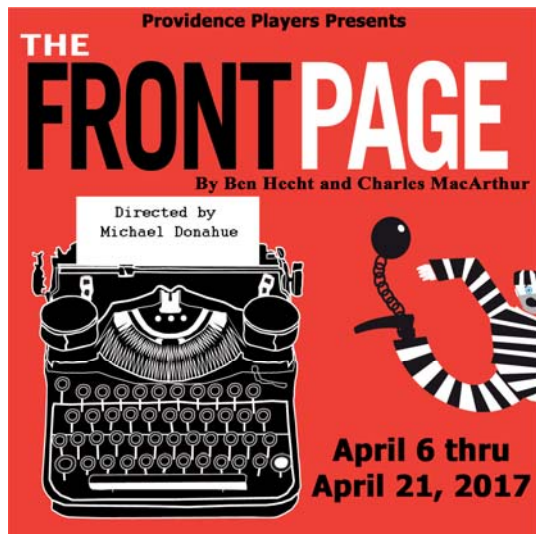
Providence Players of Fairfax – AUDITION ANNOUNCEMENT – *The Front Page*

Tues. Nov. 28th, Wed Nov. 29th, Mon Dec 4th 6:30 pm – 9:30 pm All Dates

The Front Page

By Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur

Directed by Michael Donahue



The classic comedy set in a 1920s Chicago Criminal Courts press room. Reporter Hildy Johnson wants to break away from journalism and get married, but all that changes when there is a jailbreak and an escaped convict, Earl Williams, falls into the reporter's hands. Hildy's daunting challenge now is to get Williams out of the building to a safe place for an interview before rival reporters or trigger-happy policemen discover him. Fast paced, and filled with crisp dialog and sharp humor, this irresistible comedy of both stage and screen fame packs a wallop of nostalgic Americana.

23 Roles – 17 Men, 6 Women – All Open

- The Providence Players is a twenty-year-old, award-winning, all volunteer, non-profit community theater troupe. *The Front Page* is the 3rd production of the Providence Players 20th Anniversary season.
- The Providence Players of Fairfax is a membership organization. Membership is not required to audition. If cast, actors in addition to production team members will be asked to become members of the Providence Players (\$10) for the season (if they are not already).

Availability of the Play for Review

Availability of the Play for Review – The Providence Players does not provide review copies of plays. The script for *The Front Page* may be obtained from Samuel French, the play's publisher and rights holder (<http://www.samuel french.com/p/2473/front-page-the>) and other places.

Performance Dates and Times

Preview: April 5, 2018 7:00pm Curtain

Evening Performances: Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays; 7:30 pm Curtain
April 6 - 21

Matinees: Sundays 2:00 pm curtain
April 8 & 15

Audition Dates

Mon Nov 28 - 6:30 - 9:30 pm (In the James Lee Urbanites Room)

Tues Nov 29 - 6:30 - 9:30 pm (In the James Lee Urbanites Room)

Mon Dec 4 - 6:30 - 9:30 pm (In the James Lee Multipurpose Room)

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Location

The James Lee Community Center
2855 Annandale Road
Falls Church, VA 22042

Auditions will be held in the Urbanites and Multipurpose Rooms – **NOT IN THE THEATER**. The Urbanites Room is located to the left of the main desk at the front entrance of the community center. The Multipurpose room is located to the right of the main desk and down the first hall on the left. Signs will be posted.

Audition Information/Instructions

- **PLEASE RSVP** to providenceplayers@cox.net **with the date you plan on auditioning.**
- **HOW WE WORK:** Auditionees should **plan on attending only (1) scheduled session and stay the entire evening.** Auditions will consist of cold readings from the Samuel French script.
- **AUDITION PROCESS:** Auditions will consist of readings from the script - No monologue required although one of the sides may be a monologue from the play.
- **AUDITION SIDES:** Some sides for the audition are included in this announcements and others will be supplied at auditions.
- **AUDITION FORM:** Resumes and headshots will be accepted, but are not required. Please **ALSO COMPLETE** the attached PPF *The Front Page Audition Form* and bring it with you to the audition.
- **MEMBERSHIP:** The Providence Players of Fairfax is a membership organization. Membership is not required to audition. If cast, actors in addition to production team members will be asked to become members of the Providence Players (\$10) for the season (if they are not already).

Rehearsal Schedule:

A copy of the preliminary stage rehearsal schedule is included with this announcement and will be available at auditions. Stage rehearsals begin in March 2018. In addition to the stage rehearsal schedule, additional full cast readings of the play and some selected scene study and character work may be scheduled based on actor availability in January and February prior to the stage schedule. The schedule for these will be finalized shortly after casting. Unless indicated otherwise, all rehearsals will happen at the James Lee Community Center. Rehearsals will be held in the evenings roughly from 6:45 to 9:45 pm and on Saturdays and Sundays as indicated.

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Please come to auditions prepared to list any availability conflicts over this time period. Space is provided on the audition form for this purpose.

Director's Vision Statement

The world itself is the Press Room in the Criminal Courts building that has not been painted since the late 1800s when it was built. Box set with 7 phones for the 7 papers, 2 tables for poker and other activities, a black walnut roll top desk, a Gents bathroom, water cooler spittoon and large double doors to hall way and two large windows overlooking Cook County Jail. The space should have the look of where a bunch of frat boys hang out and do not clean up.

The authors wrote an epilogue in which they came to realize that the play they had written was a celebration of their time as crime reporters, not a glorification but a capturing of the camaraderie, competition, drudgery and thrill of the hunt.

The press room is basically like a sports locker room where the reporters choose to spend their time away from their families, where they all have stories to share, rag on each other, poke fun of each other, play jokes on each other and even fight with each other.

The reporters do not get paid much and are a wrinkly, dirty bunch in contrast to Besinger, Burns, and the Mayor. Hildy has been gussied up by Peggy.

The relationships in the play are the reporters with each other, the reporters with the politicians, the gangsters, the police, the street walkers. Highlighting the thrill of a rough and tumble relationship is Burns and Hildy, mirrored by the Mayor and the Sherriff, and contrasted by the relationship of Mollie and Earl.

The play ends with a deception, and deception amongst all characters and the world of Chicago is the core of this world in 1920s Chicago. In which reporters, politicians and criminals blur together in terms of truth, loyalty and morals.

Pincus and Mollie truly seem to be the only ones with a moral compass.

No matter how lousy and low brow the newspaper business is once you are in you cannot get out.

The Front Page Character Summaries

(in order of appearance)

Wilson (*American*): Wants to write a play one day.

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Endicott (*Post*): This character is a police reporter for the Post. Recently married and inclined to complain about the job.

Murphy (*Journal*): Hardest of the hardboiled.

McCue "Mac" (*City Press*): Fairly new to the press room, and has been put on fielding the local precincts for news to chase for all the reporters. He is good on the phone, charming and seems to have the connections.

Schwartz (*Daily News*): Has chronically sick wife and two kids who live with his sister.

Kruger (*Journal of Commerce*): Singer who fiddles with a banjo, but does have talent to play & sing.

Roy Bensinger (*Chicago Tribune*): Fuss budget type A, who is a neat freak, and especially protective of his desk area. He is the owner of the big, ornate desk; later in the play, Williams hides inside of it. Bensinger is a neat freak, a quality that the other reporters constantly violate by leaving garbage all over his desk.

Mrs. Schlosser: TBD

Woodenshoes Eichhorn: More engaged with the reporters than most of the local police; he is regarded as inept and slow, and often dismissed by the reporters despite his study of psychology.

Diamond Louie: This character is a local thug who works as a circulation manager at the paper. ex-gangster in Burns' employ

Hildebrand "Hildy" Johnson (*Herald Examiner*): Cocky star reporter and favorite to Walter Burns despite their love/hate relationship. He is extremely confident and a little bit of a show boater in areas of life. He's ready to quit the newspaper business and settle down until he stumbles upon a great break in the Earl Williams story, allowing him an exclusive.

Jennie: Cleaning lady for the municipal building who is sweet, hardworking, woman; she thinks the reporters aren't very nice people.

Mollie Malloy: Lady of the night who has befriended the convicted Earl Williams. She's led a hard life and finds comfort in her relationship with Williams. She is a tough cookie who does not respect the reporters, newspapers or authority much since the system always let's her down.

Sheriff Hartman: Bumbling and inefficient statesman type character. He's eager to can popularity from the hanging of Williams; an overall blundering fool.

Peggy Grant: The strong and popular fiancé to Hildy. She is ready to settle down and tries to maintain control over her beau in direct conflict with Mr. Burns' plans for Hildy.

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Mrs. Grant: This character is skeptical of the main character's commitment to the upcoming marriage, and reveals key information about the murder suspect after being in a car accident.

The Mayor: corrupt as usual.

Mr. Pincus: hapless messenger.

Earl Williams: condemned anarchist looking for an actor who would be comfortable being confined in a small space.

Walter Burns: He's Hildy's boss at the paper. This character is the cold, calculating boss of the paper to include breaking the law. Walter Burns is Desperate to keep his star reporter; he will go to any lengths to entice Hildy to stay. Burns is able to talk himself out of trouble.

Carl, a Deputy: Chorus on the Sheriff's staff.

Frank, a Deputy: Chorus on the Sheriff's staff.

Policemen (at least 2): Chorus on the Sheriff's staff.



Providence Players of Fairfax

Audition Form *The Front Page*

Please fill out each section below

Attach a resume and/or headshot to this form (optional)

NAME		
ADDRESS		
	Home	Work
Phone		
Cell		
Email		

Note: The Providence Players of Fairfax is a membership organization. If you are cast and are not already member, you will be asked to become one. Membership is \$10 per season.

The Front Page – Character Preferences

- I wish to be considered for any role.
 I wish to be considered for any role, but have a strong preference for the roles checked below.
 I would prefer to only be considered for the following roles (checked):

MALE 17 ROLES –Flexibility in Playing Age

- Walter Burns - 50s Hildy Johnson - 40s Bensinger – 30s/50s
 McCue – 30s/40s Endicott - 30s/50s Schwartz - 30s/50s
 Wilson - 30s/50s Kruger - 30s/50s Diamond Louis - 20s/30s
 Officer Woodenshoes - 30s/40s Earl Williams – 20s/30s Mayor – 50s/60s
 Sheriff Hartman – 50s/60s Mr. Pincus - 40s/60s Officer Carl – 30s/50s
 Deputy Frank – 30s/50s

FEMALE 5 ROLES–Flexibility in Playing Age

- Peggy Grant – 30s/40s Mrs. Grant – 60s.
 Mollie – 30s Jennie – 40s/60s Mrs. Schlosser – 40s



Providence Players of Fairfax

Audition Form

The Front Page

Circle all that apply: I'm willing to cut hair I'm willing to color hair
I'm willing to shave my face I'm willing to Understudy

Notes from you about Role Preference – feel free to share here:

Scheduling Conflicts?

Please review the audition announcement, show dates, and preliminary production calendar

The Director may schedule read-throughs and table work sessions in December, January and February, following casting, prior to starting the in-theater production schedule. These will be based on actor availability.

Please list December, January and February pre-stage rehearsal availability conflict dates – dates when you could NOT participate in off stage read throughs and table work.

Please list known conflicts for March Stage Rehearsals (Stage rehearsals begin March 5th:



Providence Players
OF FAIRFAX † #

Providence Players of Fairfax

Audition Form

The Front Page

Give us a sketch of your Theater Background

A resume may be attached in lieu of filling out the table below, though it is not required.

Acting Experience:

High School ___Y ___N - Approx. Number of Productions _____

College ___Y ___N - Approx. Number of Productions _____

Community ___Y ___N - Approx. Number of Productions _____

Pro (Paid) ___Y ___N - Approx. Number of Productions _____

Overall Production Experience:

Production Role	# Shows	Production Role	# Shows	Production Role	# Shows
Directed		Set Decoration		Choreography	
Stage Managed		Props		Musician	
Stage Crew		Lighting		House Mgmt	
Set Design		Sound		Publicity	
Set Construction		Costumes		Photography	
Set Painting		Makeup/Hair		Musician	

Important: Would you be interested in getting involved in the production if you are not cast?

_____ Yes

_____ No


_____ Unsure

Please give us a brief sense of any theater work over the past three years:

THE FRONT PAGE REHEARSAL CALENDAR

Rev. 11/26/2017

DECEMBER

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
NOV 26	NOV 27	NOV 28 <i>FRONT PAGE Auditions 6PM-10PM Urbanites Room</i>	NOV 29 <i>FRONT PAGE Auditions 6PM-10PM Urbanites Room</i>	NOV 30	1	2
3 TOLLBOOTH Tech Week	4 TOLLBOOTH Tech Week <i>FRONT PAGE Auditions 6PM-10PM Multipurpose Rm</i>	5 TOLLBOOTH Tech Week	6 TOLLBOOTH Tech Week	7 TOLLBOOTH Preview Night 7:30PM	8 TOLLBOOTH Opens Performances Evening 7:30 PM	9 TOLLBOOTH Runs Performances Matinee 2:00 PM Evening 7:30 PM
10 TOLLBOOTH Runs Performance Matinee 2:00 PM	11	12 <i>PPF Play Reading Night</i>	13	14 TOLLBOOTH Runs Performance Matinee 2:00 PM	15 TOLLBOOTH Runs Performance Matinee 2:00 PM	16 TOLLBOOTH Runs Performances Matinee 2:00 PM Evening 7:30 PM
17 TOLLBOOTH Runs Performances Matinee 2:00 PM Evening 7:30 PM	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 CHRISTMAS! 	26	27	28	29	30
31 New Year's Eve welcome 2018!						

2017

THE FRONT PAGE REHEARSAL CALENDAR

Rev. 11/26/2017

JANUARY

	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
	1 <i>New Year's Day!</i> <i>2018</i>	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 <i>PPF Play Reading</i>	10	11	12	13
14	15 <i>PPF Board Mtg</i>	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

2018

THE FRONT PAGE REHEARSAL CALENDAR

Rev. 11/26/2017

FEBRUARY

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
				1	2	3
4 !	5	6	7	8	9	10 Providence Players Board Retreat Date
11	12	13 PPF Play Reading Night	14  Valentine's Day	15	16	17 JLCC Closed
18 JLCC Closed	19 President's Day Holiday PPF Board Mtg	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28			

THE FRONT PAGE REHEARSAL CALENDAR

Rev. 11/26/2017

MARCH

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
				1	2	3
4 TECH DAY (tentative) Rehearsal TBD!	5 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	6 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	7 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	8 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	9	10 PPF Theater Use Set Build Weekend 9 AM – 10 PM
11 Set Build Weekend 9 AM – 6 PM	12 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	13 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM PPF Play Reading Night	14 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	15 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	16	17 <i>St. Patty's Day!</i> 
18 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 9:00 AM – 6 PM	19 PPF Board Mtg	20 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	21 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	22 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	23 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	24 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal Tech Weekend 9:00 AM –10 PM
25 PPF Theater Tech weekend 9:00 AM –5 PM	26 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	27 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	28 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	29 PPF Theater Use Rehearsal 6:00 PM –10PM	30 Good Friday	31 Easter Weekend

2018

THE FRONT PAGE REHEARSAL CALENDAR

Rev. 11/26/2017

APRIL

<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
1 Easter Sunday <i>(no Fooling)</i> 	2 6:30PM to 9PM Full Rehearsal costumes & makeup	3 6:30PM to 9PM Full Rehearsal costumes & makeup	4 6:30PM to 9PM Full Rehearsal <i>NO Costumes or Makeup</i>	5 Read closely: 7:00PM PREVIEW SHOW Call at 6:00PM	6 7:30PM SHOW Call at 6:30PM OPENING NIGHT! 	7 7:30PM SHOW Call at 6:30PM
8 2PM SHOW 1 PM Call	9	10 PPF Play Reading Night	11 6:30PM to 9PM Full Rehearsal <i>NO Costumes or Makeup</i>	12 7:30PM SHOW Call at 6:30PM	13 7:30PM SHOW Call at 6:30PM	14 7:30PM SHOW Call at 6:30PM
15 2PM SHOW 1 PM Call	16	17	18 PickUp Rehearsal 6:30PM Start	19 7:30PM SHOW Call at 6:30PM	20 7:30PM SHOW Call at 6:30PM	21 7:30PM SHOW Call at 6:30PM
22 PPF Theater Use Strike 9 AM – 5 PM	23 PPF Board Mtg	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

2018

The Front Page

Audition Sides

PEGGY, HILDY & MRS. GRANT SCENE

PEGGY. Hildy, you haven't done something foolish with that money?

HILDY. No! No!

PEGGY. You still *have* got the rest of it?

HILDY. Of course. Gee, darling, you don't think for a minute –

PEGGY. I think I'd better take care of it from now on!

HILDY. Now listen, darling. I can look after a couple of hundred dollars all right –

PEGGY. Hildy, if you 've still got that money, I want you to give it to me!

HILDY. Now, sweetheart, it's going to be perfectly all right -

PEGGY. Then you haven't got it.

HILDY. Not this minute, I –

PEGGY. You did something with it?

HILDY. No, no. He's sending it right over – Walter, I mean. It'll be here any minute.

PEGGY. Oh, Hildy!

HILDY. Listen, darling, I wouldn't have had this happen for the world. But it's going to be all right. Now, here's what happened! I was just starting out to the house to get you when this guy Williams broke out of jail. You know, the fellow they were going to hang in the morning.

PEGGY. *(Dully)* Yes, I know.

HILDY. Aw, now listen, sweetheart. I had to do what I did. And – and the same thing when it came to the money – *(Peggy turns away)* Aw, Peggy! Now listen. I shouldn't tell you this, but do you know how this guy escaped/ He was down in the Sheriff's office when Hartman – that's the Sheriff – and Eglehofer – that's this fellow from Vienna –

PEGGY. Hildy!

HILDY. Aw, now I can't tell you, if you won't listen. I had to give him the money so he wouldn't give the story to anybody else. Jacobi, I mean. That's the Assistant Warden. I got the story exclusive. *(Turns her around)* The biggest scoop in years, I'll bet.

PEGGY. Do you know how long Mother and I waited, out at the house?

HILDY. *(Taking her in his arms)* Aw, Peggy, listen. You ain't going to be mad at me for this, I couldn't help it. You'd have done the same thing yourself. I mean, the biggest story in the world busting, and nobody on the job.

PEGGY. (*Turning on Hildy*) Every time I've ever wanted you for something – on my birthday and New Year's Eve, when I waited till five in the morning –

HILDY. But a big story broke!

PEGGY. It's always a big story – the biggest story in the world, and the next day everybody's forgotten it, even you!

HILDY. What do you mean forgotten? That was the Clara Hamon murder – I mean on your birthday. Peggy, it won't hurt you to wait five more minutes. The boys' on this way with the money now.

PEGGY. Mother's sitting downstairs waiting in a taxicab. I'm just ashamed to face her, the way you've been acting. If she knew about the money – it's all we've got in the world, Hildy. We haven't even got a place to sleep in, except the train and –

HILDY. Aw, gee, I wouldn't do anything in the world to hurt you, Peggy. You make me feel like a criminal.

PEGGY. It's all that Walter Burns. Oh, I'll be so glad when I get you away from him. You simply can't resist him.

HILDY. Peggy, I've told you what I think of him. I wouldn't raise a finger if he was dying. Honest to God!

PEGGY. Then why did you loan him the money?

HILDY. I didn't. You see, you won't listen to me, or you'd know didn't. Now, listen. I had to give the money to Jacobi, the Assistant –

(Mrs. Grant Enters)

HILDY. Oh, hello, Mrs. Grant – Mother. I was just explaining to Peggy.

PEGGY. Mother, I thought you were going to wait in the cab?

MRS. GRANT. Well, I just came up to tell you the meter's gone to two dollars.

HILDY. Yah, sure. But that's all right –

MRS. GRANT. I had a terrible time finding you. First I went into a room where a lot of policemen were playing cards.

HILDY. Yah – yah!

MRS. GRANT. Then I met that policeman and I asked him where Mr. Johnson's office was.

PEGGY. Now, listen, Mother. I think you'd better go downstairs and we'll come as soon as we can.

MRS. GRANT. You've got a big room haven't you? Where do you sit?

HILDY. Now, I tell you what you do. You and Peggy go on over to the station and get the baggage checked – now here's the tickets.

PEGGY. Now, Hildy –

HILDY. I'll be along in fifteen minutes, maybe sooner.

MRS. GRANT. How do you mean – that you aren't going?

HILDY. Of course I am. Now, I'll meet you at the Information Booth –

PEGGY. Come, Mother. Hildy has to wait here for a few minutes. It's something to do with the office – he's getting some money.

MRS. GRANT. (Stops) Money?

HILDY. Yah – ah – they're sending over – it's my salary. They're sending over my salary.

MRS. GRANT. Your salary? At this hour?

HILDY. Yah. They were awful busy.

MRS. GRANT. Do you know what I'm beginning to think?

HILDY. What?

MRS. GRANT. I think you must be a sort of irresponsible type, or you wouldn't do things this way.

PEGGY. Now you stop picking on my Hildy, Mother.

MRS. GRANT. And here you are standing here with the train leaving any minute –

HILDY. Now, Mother, I never missed a train in my life. You run along with Peggy –

PEGGY. Come on, Mother! We're disturbing people.

HILDY. Listen, Mother. You better run along. I'll put my suitcase in the cab.

PEGGY. Come along, Mother!

MRS. GRANT. Mercy!

AUDITION SCENE w/ Big Group: Mollie, Earl, Hildy, Wilson, Kruger, Murphy, Mrs. Grant, Woodenshoes, McCue, Endicott, Schwartz, and Bensinger

MOLLIE. You're too good for'em – that's why.

EARL. You're good, too.

MOLLIE. *(With wonder)* Me?

EARL. Yeah, I think you're wonderful – I wrote out a statement today. There was a lot about you in it. I said you were the most beautiful character I ever met.

MOLLIE. *(Blinking and dazed)* Yeah?

HILDY. *(Coming back, locks door and crosses down Left)* Better get back in there! The fellers are coming down the hall now!

MOLLIE. They'll find him there!

HILDY. Well, there isn't any place else.

(He looks helplessly around the room; at that moment someone tries the Door Knob.)

MOLLIE. There's somebody!

HILDY. *(Turns, desperately)* Sssh!

ENDICOTT. *(Off)* Who locked the door! –

HILDY. Coming right away, Mike. *(He crosses Center)* He's got to go in there!

ENDICOTT. *(Off)* Well, hurry it up!

(Hildy turns, sees desk.)

MOLLIE. Oh, my God!

HILDY. Wait a minute! I've got an idea! *(Springs and throws swivel chair down stage – opens desk.)*

MOLLIE. *(Crossing up Left beside desk)* That's it!

HILDY. *(Crossing down, drags Earl to desk)* Can you get in this desk?

WILSON. *(Off)* What's going on in there? *(Starts to pound on door.)*

EARL. What good'll it do?

HILDY. *(Shoves him in desk)* We'll get you out in ten minutes.

WILSON. *(Off)* Open up there, will you?

HILDY. All right, all right, all right.

MOLLIE. *(To Earl)* Go on! Please! Please!

EARL. *(In the process)* They'll find me, anyhow.

(More pounding)

HILDY. All right, I'm coming! *(To Earl as he closes lid)* Now keep dead quiet! Don't even breathe! *(He crosses up Center.)*

MOLLIE. I'll be right here. I won't leave you. *(Mollie grabs swivel chair, wheels it in front of desk, and sits. She starts to powder her nose.)*

ENDICOTT. *(Off)* Hey, what the hell!

HILDY. Keep your shirt on! Hey! *(He opens the door)* What are you trying to do! Kick down the building?

(Endicott and Wilson enter. Endicott crosses up Center as Hildy backs away. Wilson crossed down Right to phone at end of the table. Sits.)

WILSON. *(As he enters)* Well, for God's sake!

ENDICOTT. Kind of exclusive, ain't you *(sees Mollie)* Oh! *(Elaborately)* I beg your pardon.

WILSON. City des, please! What's the idea of locking the door?

HILDY. *(Backing against desk)* I was interviewing her.

ENDICOTT. (At phone) Gimme the City desk – What was he doing to her?

WILSON. And with the shade down?

MURPHY. (*Enters. Crossing down Center, picking up phone*) Where the hell you been, Hildy? There's the damndest Hallowe'en going on – the whole police force standing on its ear. Murphy talking. Gimme the desk.

(*Kruger enters.*)

ENDICOTT. Well the old bird wasn't out there. Don't know where we're going next. Call you later.

WILSON. Wilson speaking. No luck yet on Williams. Call you back.

KRUGER. (*Through babble*) God, I never was so tire din my life!

HILDY. Any news?

MURPHY. This is Murphy – Well, they surrounded the house, only Williams wasn't there.

McCUE. (*Enters. Crossing to phone on his table*) God, what a chase!

MURPHY. (*Into phone*) Wait a minute. They shot somebody, anyhow!

KRUGER. Gimme a rewrite.

MURPHY. Herman Schulte, the sheriff's brother-in-law. He was leading the squad through the house, and was looking under a bed when Deputy John F. Watson came in the room and mistook him for Earl. Shot him right in the pants. Yeah, a bull's eye. Right! (*Hangs up.*)

HILDY. (*Taking cue, "A bull's eye"*) He always had lead in his pants.

McCUE. (*At his phone*) McCue talking. Gimme the desk!

KRUGER. (*Phoning too*) This is Kruger, out with Hartman's deputies – Yeah – I'm in the drug store, at Clark and Fullerton. Well, call me back if you don't believe me. (*Hangs up.*)

McCUE. That so? I'll check on it. (*Hangs up*) There's something doing at Harrison Street Station. (*Jiggles hook*) Gimme Harrison 2500. Hurry it, will you please?

KRUGER. (*To Mollie, who is in the swivel chair in front of the desk*) What's the idea, Mollie? Can't you flop somewhere else?

MURPHY. Yah, parking her fanny in here like it was her house. (*Takes a sniff of the air*) Fleur de Floozie, she's got on.

KRUGER. Nnch! (*Neighing like a horse.*)

MURPHY. GO on, Mollie, put it somewhere else. Go about and stink up Clark Street.

MOLLIE. You lay off me!

McCUE. Look out – she'll start bawling again. (*In phone*) I'll hold the wire. Only don't forget me.

HILDY. Let her alone fellas. She's not doing anything.

MURPHY. (*To Hildy*) What are you two so chummy about?

ENDICOTT. Yah, they were locked in here together when he come along.

WILSON. Wouldn't open the door.

McCUE. You'll be out of training for your honeymoon – playing pinochle with this baby.

MURPHY. I thought you were going to catch a train?

KRUGER. Yah – he was running around here a few minutes ago with his pants on fire about going to New York.

(*Mollie is futilely trying to powder her nose.*)

ENDICOTT. Told us he was interviewing her.

MURPHY. What are you trying to do? Scoop us/

HILDY. I'm waiting here for Walter. He's coming over with some dough.

McCUE. (Into phone) Hello, Sarge. McCue. I hear you got a tip on Williams?

WILSON. Look, she's got the snakes. What you making faces about?

ENDICOTT. (Almost singing it) She's jealous because Hildy's going on be married.

HILDY. (Touching her shoulder) Go on – Show'em you can smile through your tears. Relax.

MOLLIE. (Jumping away) You let me alone – all of you.

(Schwartz enters.)

McCUE. (Into phone) Yah? What's the address?

SCHWARTZ. Hello, fellas. What the hell, Hildy? You still here?

ENDICOTT. Yah, and trying to hang something on us? If you ask me. Come on, Hildy! Give us the low down!

SCHWARTZ. Who pulled these shades down?

McCUE. Hey! This looks good. An old lady just called up the detective bureau and claims Williams is hiding under her piazza.

MURPHY. Who you got there?

McCUE. The Captain.

MURPHY. (Crosses and takes phone) Let me talk to him. Hello, Turkey – How's your gussie mollio? I hear this guy Williams is hiding in your mustache – ya? Well, get your nose out of the way. (Hangs up. Points to Mollie's crossed and highly visible legs) Oooh! Lookit! Pikes Peak!

McCUE. Listen, fellows, that sounds like a pretty good tip. What do you say?

HILDY. If you boys want to go out, I'll cover this end for you.

ENDICOTT. Aw, the hell with chasing around anymore. I spent a dollar forty on taxis already.

KRGUER. Don't let's do any more going out.

SCHWARTZ. (Turning to group) If you ask me, I got a hunch Williams ain't anywhere they been looking for him.

WILSON. How do you mean?

SCHWARTZ. Well, I just been talking to Jacobi, about that roof he's supposed to have jumped off of. Look! (McCue goes Right to window) Now there's that skylight he got out of.

ENDICOTT. Where? (He gets up and goes to lower window. Pulls up shade.)

McCUE. How could he get from there to the ground?

SCHWARTZ. That's just the point. (He turns back into the room) Jacobi's gone up there with a couple of cops to look over the whole roof.

McCUE. (Leaning out) I tell you what he could have done, though. Look! He could have jumped over to this roof. That's only about four feet. (He turns to room for corroborations.)

ENDICOTT. (Out of window) Yeh, he could have done that all right.

KRUGER. I'm pretending there ain't no Earl Williams.

SCHWARTZ. (A step into room) And that's why I'm telling you guys that I don't think this guy Williams is anywhere they been looking for him. I got a stinking hunch he's right in this building.

(Mollie drops vanity case.)

HILDY. (Derisive) Hanging around like a duck in a shootin' gallery. (Mollie picks up vanity case.) I suppose. You're a lot of bright guys –

McCUE. It'd be easy once he got on this roof –

HILDY. Hey – Sherlock Holmes, what correspondence school did you graduate from?

SCHWARTZ. What's the matter with that? He could come down on the rain pipe and crawl into any one of those windows on this side –

KRUGER. Well, if the story's going to walk right in the window –

HILDY. The master minds at work! (*Bensinger enters.*) Why don't you guys go home – he'll probably call on you –

BENSINGER. (*Approaching his desk.*) Hello, Hildy. Thought you were going to New York? (*Hildy has spring into action with Bensinger's entrance, but Bensinger sees Mollie*) For God's sake, what's she doing in my chair?

Is that the only place you can sit? That's my property and I don't want anybody using it!

(*Mollie backs down Left and sits in chair.*)

HILDY. Nobody's using it, Roy. Everything's all right.

BENSINGER. Any of you fellows got some aspirin?

ENDICOTT. Now sweetheart, but I got some nice cyanide.

(*Kruger sits Right.*)

BENSINGER. Cut the kidding, fellows. I tell you I'm sick.

SCHWARTZ. How about good truss? I'll sell it to you cheap.

HILDY. What's the matter, Roy? Off your feed?

BENSINGER. If I haven't got a good case of grippe coming. I miss my guess. (*Reaching for desk cover*) Get out of this way, will you?

HILDY. (*Patting his shoulder*) I hope you didn't get it off me.

BENSINGER. I got off somebody. Everybody using my phone all the time – it's a wonder I ain't caught anything worse. (*Pushing Hildy slightly*) Look out, I got to get my cup.

HILDY. (*Doubling up as if in agony*) Wait a minute, will you? – oh!

BENSINGER. What's the matter?

HILDY. I don't know – oh –

BENSINGER. Don't you feel all right?

HILDY. No. (*Coughs violently in Bensinger's face.*)

BENSINGER. (*Jumps up, crosses Center wiping his mouth with a handkerchief*) Don't do that!

HILDY. (*Weakly*) Do what?

BENSINGER. Cough on a guy! Yes!

HILDY. (*Crossing Center*) Well, I don't know what's the matter. I suddenly got a pain right – (*Vaguely indicates his throat*) – and a kind of rash on my chest.

BENSINGER. (*Recoiling*) What? You've probably got some disease.

MURPHY. Sure! He's got the palooza!

HILDY. (*Advancing on Bensinger; takes his hand and presses it against his forehead*) Feel? Ain't that fever?

BENSINGER. Hey, cut it out! It may be diphtheria!

HILDY. I woke up this morning and had yellow spots all over my stomach –

BENSINGER. Now, this ain't funny.

(Hildy following Bensinger. Seizes Bensinger.)

KRUGER. For God's sake, Roy, can't you see he's kidding you!

BENSINGER. *(As soon as Hildy touches him)* Let go of me! You may have something contagious! If you're sick go to a hospital! *(Hildy coughs in his face.)* For the love of God!

MURPHY. It's no worse than a bad cold, Roy.

HILDY. *(Opening his mouth)* Can you see anything in there? Aaah!

BENSINGER. Listen, fellows! You ain't got any sense, letting him hang around here. We'll all catch it, whatever it is! *(They all laugh. Hildy still clings to him.)* All right, laugh! But I'm going to get Doc Springer and clean this whole place up! You God damn maniacs!

ENDICOTT. What's the idea, Hildy? Now he'll be burning Sulphur for a week like last time –

McCUE. *(Crossing Left Center to Hildy)* Yeah, you're leaving', but we gotta work here, with all them stink pots – What a sense of humor you got.

SCHWARTZ. You look here – What about Williams? Let's get the cops and search the building. What do you say?

ENDICOTT. I could use that reward –

MURPHY. You'd never get past the basement.

McCUE. Gee, it would be funny if we found him right here in the building.

SCHWARTZ. What do you say? Should we get the cops?

MURPHY. Call up Lieutenant Callahan, Mac. Tell him we got a hot tip.

HILDY. Wait! What do you want to call the cops for? Suppose he is in the building. They'll grab all the reward and you guys won't get a smell.

SCHWARTZ. Huh?

WILSON. That's right.

HILDY. Listen. Each of us take a floor. *(Mrs. Grant enters.)* And whoever finds him, we split it up. What do you say? Now, now, listen, Mother –

MRS. GRANT. Don't you Mother me! If you've got anything to say for yourself you come downstairs and say it to Peggy –

HILDY. *(Turning to Mrs. Grant)* Listen, Mother, tell Peggy I'll be downstairs in five minutes, will you? Will you go down and tell her that?

MRS. GRANT. *(Taking cue, "five minutes.")* No, sir – I don't mope out of here without you.

HILDY. Listen, Mother, you don't understand. Now I told Peggy –

MRS. GRANT. I know what you told her. A lot of gibberish about a murderer!

(Mollie rises.)

HILDY. No – no!

MRS. GRANT. I don't care if you did catch him, you come with me this minute!

ENDICOTT. I knew there was something in the wind.

MURPHY. Who says he caught him? What's going on here?

McCUE. What do you mean caught a murderer?

KRUGER. So that's it, is it?

SCHWARTZ. *(Taking cue, "What do you mean")* Did you she say caught a murderer?

WILSON. *(Rising and taking cue, "did she say")* What's that? Caught a murderer?

(Woodenshoes enters, stands listening.)

HILDY. No, no! I don't know what she's talking about. I didn't tell her any such thing.

MRS. GRANT. Yes you did!

MOLLIE. He never told her that!

HILDY. I said I was trying to catch one, that's all! You got it balled up, Mother!

MURPHY. *(To Mollie)* What do you know about it? How do you know he didn't huh?
(Murphy grabs Mollie's arm.)

MOLLIE. Let go of my arm!

ENDICOTT. Hildy and that tart were in here together!

HILDY. Say, lay off her!

WILSON. I thought something was going on!

WOODENSHOES. Yah! Yah! She's the one that knows? Ask her!

MURPHY. *(Wheeling on him)* What do you mean – knows?

WOODENSHOES. Sechay la femme! *(To Mollie)* Where's Earl Williams?

MOLLIE. *(Laughing lamely)* How the hell should I know?

WOODENSHOES. Where have you got him, kid?

MURPHY. *(Turning on Hildy)* Who you holding out on, Hildy? Come clean, or God damn it, we'll knock it out of you!

(Schwartz, McCue, Murphy and Endicott rush at Hildy and push him over desk. Mrs. Grant backs up)

SCHWARTZ. Sock him.

McCUE. Yeah. Wat the hell! Sock him, Jimmie!

ENDICOTT. You dirty double-crosser! We'll murder you

MOLLIE. Wait! You damned stool pigeons! He don't know where Earl Williams is! I'm the one that knows!

McCUE. *(Turning around)* Knows?

ENDICOTT. *(A step Center)* What do you mean you know?

(The Reporters leave Hildy and turn on Mollie.)

WOODENSHOES. Where is he?

MOLLIE. Go find out, you lousy heels. You don't think I'm going to tell?

WOODENSHOES. You'll tell all right! We'll make you tell!

MOLLIE. *(Slowly backing up Center)* Yeah? Yeah? The hell I will.

HILDY. Let her alone. She's goofy.

(Schwartz and Endicott turn. Mollie makes a sudden lunge for the door, but Wilson gets there ahead of her. She backs down Right.)

SCHWARTZ. Look out!

ENDICOTT. Close that door!

MURPHY. Don't let her get away!

McCUE. You ain't getting out of here, Mollie.

ENDICOTT. *(Advancing on her)* Now where is he? In the building?
McCUE. *(Advancing on her)* Where are you hiding him?
MOLLIE. *(Back down Right)* I ain't going to squeal! I ain't going to squeal!
MURPHY. Come on, you lousy tart! Before we kick your teeth out!
ENDICOTT. You want us to call the cops and give you the boots?
MURPHY. Go on, Woodenshoes! Slap it out of her!
WOODENSHOES. *(Grabs her)* Come on now! Where is he before I hurt you!
MOLLIE. *(Wrenching free)* Take your hands off me! *(She picks up Endicott's chair; swings it in a vicious circle to ward off the oncoming Reporters)* Let me alone or I'll break your God damn heads!
ENDICOTT. Put down that chair!
SCHWARTZ. Get around – get on the side of her!
MOLLIE. *(Backing off threateningly)* No, you don't! Keep away from me!
KRUGER. Grab her!
(The Men are closing in on her.)

MOLLIE. You'll never get it out of me! Never!
McCUE. Look out!
MURPHY. For God's sake!
ENDICOTT. Hold her!
HILDY. Mollie

(Mollie runs for the lower window sill; jumps out of the window. There is a moment's pause. The Reporters rush to the window. All except Schwartz who runs out. Hildy dashes over too. Mrs. Grant crosses Center, sinks into Schwartz's chair weeping.)

[Following said together]
McCUE. *(As he rushes up to window)* Mother of God!
MURPHY. *(Rushing to window)* What do you think of that?
SCHWARTZ. *(Exiting)* My God, she's dead!
KRUGER. *(Rushing to window)* Oh my God, what has she done?
WOODENSHOES. *(Exiting)* I never thought she'd do that! That's terrible.
MRS. GRANT. Take me out of here! Take me out of here! Oh my God!
WILSON. *(Exiting)* Nom she's moving. Get the cops, Woodenshoes!

HILDY. *(At window)* Holy God, the poor kid. Poor kid!

SHERIFF MONOLOGUE

Hello, fellas. Now, who dumped that bucket of water out the window? Who threw it out the windows is what I asked, and I want to know! (*no response*) I suppose Judge Pam threw that bottle!

Come on now, fellows. I know who it was (*pause*) ... It was Hildy Johnson, wasn't, it? Where is he? (*looking around*)

He's not here eh?! Quit?! Well, I'm glad of it. It's good riddance! Now personally, I don't give a God damn, but how do you suppose it looks to have a lot of hoodlums yelling and throwing things out of windows? (*In a subdued voice*) Besides, there's somebody in that death house. How do you suppose he feels, listening to all this re-vel-ery?

Wait a minute, you! I don't want to hear any more of that Pinky stuff. I got a name, see? Peter B. Hartman. Honest, boys what's the idea of hanging a name like that on me? Pinky Hartman. How's that look to the voters? Like I had sore eyes or something. I swear I don't know what to do about you fellows. You abuse every privilege you get. I got a dam good notion to take this press room away from you.

For the record, Williams won't be found insane. Because he isn't. This ruse of reading the Declaration of Independence day and night is pure fake. But I've got to let this doctor see him, on account of his being sent by these Personal Liberty people, or whatever they call themselves. You and I know they're nothing but a bunch of Bolsheviks, but a hanging is a serious business. At a time like this you want to please everybody.

This hanging's going to come off exactly per schedule and when I say "per schedule" that means seven o'clock and not a minute earlier. There's such a thing as being humane, you know.

THE FRONT PAGE
Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur.

Walter Burns, Hildy Johnson, 2 men

Act Three

Chicago, 1920's. The pressroom of the Criminal Courts building. Ace reporter Hildy Johnson has decided to give up being a reporter and marry his fiancée. Everything is stopping him from leaving the newsroom. A convicted murderer, Earl Williams, has escaped from prison on the eve of his execution. Hildy has him hidden in a roll top desk in the newsroom, but is still determined to meet his fiancée at the train station. His editor, the charismatic and unscrupulous, Walter Burns, refuses to let him go.

WALTER
(grabbing Hildy's arm)

Where the hell do you think you're going?

HILDY
Let go of me! I gotta get my girl! She's downstairs in a cab all alone.

WALTER
Your girl! Good God, what are you? Some puking college boy! Why, in time of war you could be shot for what you're doing – for less than you're doing!

HILDY
To hell with you – there's your story- locked up in that desk! Smear it all over the front page – Earl Williams caught by the Examiner – and take all the credit... I covered your story and I covered it God damn right... Now I'm getting' out...

WALTER
You drooling saphead... What do you mean- a story? You've got the whole city by the seat of the pants!

HILDY
I know all about that, but...

WALTER
You know hell – You got the brains of a pancake... Listen. Hildy, if I didn't have your interests at heart would I be wastin' time now arguin' with you! You've done somethin' big – you've stepped into a new class...

HILDY
(D'artagnan never gave Richelieu an ear more startled or more innocent)
Huh?

WALTER
Listen, we'll make such monkeys out of these ward heelers that *nobody* will vote for them- not even their *wives*.

THE FRONT PAGE
Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur.

HILDY

Expose 'em, huh...

WALTER

Expose 'em! Crucify 'em! We're gonna keep Williams under cover till morning so's the Examiner can break the story exclusive.... Then we'll let the Senator in on the capture – share the glory with him.

HILDY

I see – I see! (*Blinking and warming up.*)

WALTER

You've kicked over the whole City Hall like an applecart. You've got the Mayor and Hartman back against a wall. You've put one administration out and another in. ... This ain't a newspaper story – it's a career. And you standin' there bellyachin' about some girl...

HILDY

Jesus, I – I wasn't figuring it that way, I guess. We'll be the white haired boys, won't we?

WALTER

Why, they'll be naming streets after you. Johnson Street! You and I and the Senator are going to *run* this town.. Do you understand that?

HILDY

Yeah... Yeah! But- wait a minute- we can't leave Williams here... One of those reporters'll...

WALTER

We're going to take him over to my private office right away... Where's the Examiner phone?

HILDY

That one. The red one. How the hell you gonna do it? They'll see him!

WALTER

Not if he's inside the desk. We'll carry the desk over. (*into phone*) Hello! Examiner. Give me Duffy. .. I'd have had him there now if you hadn't given me such an argument.

HILDY

You can't take that out. It's crawling with cops outside.

WALTER

We'll lower it out of the window with pulleys. Quit stallin'. (*To Hildy*) Hildy! Get that machine and start pounding out a lead, will you... Come on- snap into it...

HILDY

How much you want on it?

WALTER

All the words you got...

THE FRONT PAGE
Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur.

HILDY

Where the hell is there some paper?

WALTER
(into phone)

Hello... Hello, Duffy. Get set! We got the biggest story in the world. Earl Williams caught by the Examiner... exclusive,

(Hildy has moved over to Bensinger's desk and is opening the drawers, frantically searching for paper.)

WALTER
(continuing into phone)

Duffy! Send down word to Butch McGuirk I want ten huskies from the circulation department to lam over here –press room criminal courts building. That's what I said – Butch McGuirk. *(To Hildy)* He'll get that desk out – nothin' ever stopped those boys yet.

(Hildy has unearthed a full package of Bensinger's personal stationary. He now picks up the typewriter.)

WALTER

Now listen, Duffy. I want you to tear out the whole front page... That's what I said – the whole front page... out... Johnson's writing the lead...

McCUE MONOLOGUE

(McCue is jiggling the hook on this telephone, trying to attract the operator. The poker players are in the background. There are multiple phones on the table)

(Into Phone) Kenwood three four hundred.

(2nd PHONE on the table rings.)

(Indicating the ringing phone)

Hey, take that, one of you guys. Ernie, you're not doing anything. C'mon guys...

(They pay no attention; In annoyance at their not answering other phone)

Oh! *(Props one phone receiver against his ear; reaches over and answer other phone.)* What's the matter with you guys? Are you all crippled or something?

(Into second phone)

Press room!

Criminal Court press room! *(Quickly gives attention to the first phone)* Hello Sarge – McCue. Hold the line a minute. *(Back to the second phone)* No, I told you it was the press room. I can't help that lady! *(Hangs up; takes the first phone again.)*

(McCue is jiggling the receiver again, In phone) Robey four five hundred.

(In phone) Is this the home of Mrs. F. D. Margolies?

Now, Mrs. Margolies, this is Mr. McCue of the City News Bureau – *(louder)* City news Bureau – is it true, Madame, that you were the victim of a Peeping Tom? Now, that ain't' the right attitude to take, Madame. All we want is the facts – Well, what did this Peeping Tom look like? I mean, for instance, would you say he looked like a college professor? Just a minute, Madame. Is it true, Mrs. Margolies, that **you** took the part of Pocahontas in the Elks' Pageant seven years ago? – Hello. *(To the Others)* She hung up!