

goodbye

OFFICER SHROUD



On September 1 Lawrence Amerika gave birth to its second coroner's inquest, in quest of the reason for the death of one Harry Nicholas Rice on July 20 during a street confrontation at 12th & Oread. Obviously the inquest and to be held promptly after the incident to insure all the facts would be revealed. Six weeks is "prompt"?

We sat in the sticky hot courtroom surrounded by pictures of the judges that had been hanging uppity nigras & poor whites for the last century. My mind flashed periodically on Z. There is a pattern to these inquests; whitewash the police & reveal no truth. Truth is bad business. Dowdell's inquest followed the pattern perfectly. Rice's inquest was like watching a movie for the third time, the only surprise is that you want to see it three times. What follows is an account of the trichinosis.

"Inquest"

A thrilling tragedy in Kansas, written by Dan Young, also starring Dan Young as Douglas County D.A.

Act I

Setting- a decadent courthouse in a small town in Kansas, a city hot with racial turmoil & cultural revolution. Stage right five jurors. All businessmen. No workers, blacks, women, or beatniks. Perfect casting. Front center Dan Young, crusading county attorney, Mike Elwell, errand boy, now running for county attorney. There is no defense. No one can cross examine or object. Truth is bad business. Center back aging coroner, Juli Hoffman's kid brother. Courtroom filled with witnesses & wierdos.

Scene I

Enter series of witnesses notified only 24 hours in advance to assure confusion. Michael Fraine 16. Long hair. He was at the scene. Saw pigs fire. Jury does not listen as planned. Wallace Nicholson. Goatee, but former green beret; jury listens between naps. Cecilia Stevens. She was Nick's girlfriend. An uneasy silence enshrouds the courtroom, people still have a reverence for love, all except Danny Young. He is a monolith of reason, no compassion, perfect D. A. Jody Davis, Ron Bishop, L. L. Husted, Jim Shofstall. All fairly straight looking. All

kooks. Says he fired only once at long haired youth, missed. Nick Rice was standing directly in line with Stroud's shot. Stroud fired with a 9 millimeter bullet. Wound in Rice was 9 millimeter. The truth is loose & rampages through the courtroom. Like a naked man walking through the room screaming yet nobody says anything about it. Sometimes the truth embarrasses Amerika. There is a DEAD sound in the hollow room. The only noise is Stroud repeating script. The jury is thinking about baseball. Enter last testimony. By now jury has forgotten all previous testimony. K.B.I. agent sums up report. Says only one bullet found, but no blood on it. Dan Young with his Nixonian flare moves in for surprise Hitchcock ending, "Who shot Rice?"

SNIPERS from between white houses on east side of Oread. 2+2=sniper???? What is this? Why didn't anyone of the 200 people on the street and in the yards see these snipers, or hear shots? Why weren't there bullets found in the building across the street? Why would they shoot Rice? What is this shit. Fucking Lies? Dan Young dismisses jury
Curtain...End Act II

Act III

Dan Young's plan succeeds. The truth is obvious. Stroud killed Rice. I know it. The witnesses know it. The jury knows it. But the courts going to tie the naked man down and sew clothes on him. He is too embarrassing. Truth just ain't good business. If the jury were poor they would have nothing to lose. But the businessmen might get kicked out of the rotary.

Verdict

"Harry Nichols Rice on Blah blah blah killed by unknown assailant or assailants."

The "unknown assailant" is in the same room with me. I feel his mind loosen and his guts relax. Legal murder, "Jest like shooting gooks in Nam."

Exit: All actors, actresses: A man in jail next door can be heard yelling, for food, for water, no one knows. No one speaks.

CURTAIN

END ACT III

or

The Beginning of People's Act I

ACT NOW

Hoffman's kid brother. Courtroom filled with witnesses & wierdos.

Scene I

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Coroner Adjourns
End Act I Curtain

Act II

Setting-same courtroom, a little later. Young is reading the script perfectly. The jurors have forgotten the morning testimony. The wierdo Oread witnesses are discredited by time lapse if nothing else.

Scene I

Ambulance driver claims street lights shot out earlier by someone on Oread. Testimony goes unquestioned. Enter one Chris Kabbut. Indicates he saw pigs level guns at crowd & fire. Heard no other shots. Saw Rice drop simultaneously. This is the court's token truth. Young makes feeble attempt to discredit Kabbut. Finally dismisses witness. Enter studious David Lee stage right. Saw very little, throws in a speech against street people. Dan is happy now. Enter Mert Olds. He was wounded in leg by bullet fire from direction of police. Testifies he saw car later that night search area with lights out.

Exit all legitimate witnesses.

Scene II

Setting- same sweat house. Pigs sitting together stage left. Happy & snorting. Pigs Sedlak, Stroud, Pingar, & McClure testify they were under a barrage of tomatoes & rocks, no injuries though. They're reading perfectly from Dan Young's script, including, "We was comin down da street," and "I was in the marine corps before becomin' police officer." All saw man tossing matches at overturned VW in the middle of Oread. Heard some-one "order" "shoot him." Stroud. Big dumb pork huntin' coons &

assailant or assailants."

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