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### JOSEPH M. MAJCZEK

#### Perjury led to Joseph Majczek's wrongful conviction for the murder of a Chicago policeman in 1933

**A crusade** by the Chicago Times — predecessor of the Chicago Sun-Times — led to the 1944 exoneration of Joseph M. Majczek, 11 years after he had been wrongfully convicted of the murder of Chicago Police Officer William D. Lundy. The case became the basis of a popular 1948 movie entitled "Call Northside 777" starring James Stewart.

The story began unfolding the morning of October 10, 1944, when a classified advertisement appeared in the Times: "\$5,000 reward for killers of Officer Lundy on Dec. 9, 1932 Call Gro. 1758, 12-7 p.m." A cub reporter noticed the ad and called it to the attention of the city editor, who asked a seasoned police reporter, James McGuire, to find out what the ad was about. From clippings in the Times morgue, McGuire learned that Officer Lundy had been gunned down on the specified date and that Majczek, 24, and Theodore Marcinkiewicz, 25, had been convicted of the crime in 1933 in the Cook County Superior Court.

#### One eyeball

The convictions — which had been affirmed by the Illinois Supreme Court, *People v. Majczek*, 360 Ill. 261 (1935) — rested primarily upon the testimony of a single eyewitness, Vera Walush, who was referred to throughout the legal proceedings as the operator of a "delicatessen" where the crime occurred. The defendants presented an alibi defense. Two relatives and a deliveryman placed Majczek at home at the time of the crime. Four witnesses placed Marcinkiewicz at his home at that precise time, and two others placed him a little later at a neighborhood saloon where he could not have been had he taken part in the crime.

When McGuire called Gro. 1758, a woman answered and identified herself in broken English as Tillie Majczek, Joseph's mother. McGuire realized he had material for the front page when he elicited that Mrs. Majczek had scrubbed floors on her hands and knees for more than a decade, six nights a week, at Commonwealth Edison Company to save the \$5,000 she now offered for information about who killed Officer Lundy.

#### 'A nice little human interest story'

Like many Chicago reporters of the era, McGuire did not write stories himself. The writing was left to a rewrite bank, comprising a half dozen or so facile writers who began work in the afternoon and banged out most of the local copy for the next morning's paper. One rewriter, who wandered into the Times newsroom a little early on October 10, 1944,

was John J. McPhaul. The city editor, Karin Walsh, called him over and said, "Mac's got a nice little human interest story."

"I wrote a story making the 60-year-old scrubwoman the heroine, tossed in a couple of lines from Kipling's 'Mother o' Mine,' and figured that was that," McPhaul recounted. That, however, was not that.

### **Curious leniency**

McGuire suspected that something was amiss in the case. It was curious, he told McPhaul, that Majczek and Marcinkiewicz had not received the usual sentence for murder of a policeman — death in the electric chair. That their lives had been spared, said McGuire, might indicate the judge had doubted their guilt.

On October 11, the day after the jointly bylined story appeared in the Times, McPhaul read a thirty-page statement of facts that Majczek had typed in prison. Had McPhaul not been aware of McGuire's suspicion he might well have disregarded a passage in which Majczek asserted that, after the jury found him guilty, the trial judge, Charles P. Molthrop, took him into his chambers and promised him a new trial, saying he thought there had been a miscarriage of justice. Moreover, wrote Majczek, there had been a witness to the conversation — James Zagata, a coal truckdriver who, having just made a delivery to Vera Walush, had witnessed the crime and knew that the wrong men had been convicted.

### **New witness found**

It seemed preposterous to McPhaul that a judge would host a private conversation with a convicted cop-killer. And, if true, why had the judge not fulfilled the promise? Molthrop could not be asked because he died in 1935. Despite the dim prospect that anything would come of pursuing the angle, McPhaul and McGuire nonetheless thought it worth tracking down Zagata. McGuire found him, still employed as a coal truckdriver and, as luck would have it, most cooperative. Zagata fully corroborated Majczek's account of the conversation in Molthrop's chambers, as the Times explained, in the classic style of the era, on October 12:

Is Mrs. Majczek's battle for Joe's vindication based on anything more than a mother's blind faith in a son? Is there anything in the history of Policeman William D. Lundy's murder or Majczek's trial that might indicate she has sound reasons for believing in her son's innocence?

The Times has undertaken an investigation to determine whether there are any facts — hidden or overlooked — that may be regarded as supporting the mother's contention?

As a beginning, the Times is able to reveal today that Timesmen have obtained corroboration of an astounding statement by Majczek that the trial judge who sentenced him to serve 99 years doubted his guilt.

The statement was given to the Times by James Zagata, coal truckdriver. It is his first public statement on the case since the trial in November 1933, and his first public disclosure that he believes Majczek is innocent.

Zagata was in the delicatessen owned by Mrs. Vera Walush on the afternoon of December

9, 1932, when Policeman Lundy was shot and killed by two holdup men.

Zagata viewed Majczek at a police station shortly after the latter's arrest. The witness said he had not been able to see the faces of the killers clearly and could not make an identification. He repeated this at the trial of Majczek and Theodore Marcinkiewicz.

Subsequently, Zagata told the Times, he pondered the matter and concluded that neither of the convicted men fitted in with his recollection of the killers. He said he was particularly sure that both bandits were much taller than Majczek, a short-statured man.

A few days after the verdict, the truck driver said, he was summoned to the chambers of Judge Molthrop. The judge, he said, questioned him anew about his identification.

"I told the judge," Zagata said, "that I was now sure that neither of the men had been involved in the murder."

According to Zagata, Judge Molthrop replied: "I am sure there has been a miscarriage of justice concerning the identification of both boys. I am going to see that they get a new trial . . . "

#### **'Delicatessen' was a speakeasy**

In successive days, the Times disclosed that Vera Walush, whose testimony had been the sole evidence against Majczek and the principal evidence against Marcinkiewicz, initially had told police, after viewing the suspects in a lineup, that they were not the men. The paper also reported that Walush's "delicatessen" actually was a speakeasy, that Walush had been threatened with arrest for bootlegging if she refused to testify against Majczek and Marcinkiewicz, and that the reason Judge Molthrop had failed to grant the defendants new trials was that he had been warned by prosecutors that granting a new trial would end his career in politics.

There invariably is political pressure to solve a police officer's murder, but it was particularly strong in Officer Lundy's case. The same week he was killed, there were five other murders in Chicago — all unsolved. The Century of Progress exposition, envisioned by its boosters as a pivotal event in the Second City's emergence from the Depression, was scheduled to open in just five months. A delegation of businessmen, worried that the international perception of Chicago as a place of rampant violence would hurt attendance at the exposition and discourage tourism in the meantime, met with Mayor Anton Cermak to demand action. The mayor had been elected in 1931 on a promise to clean up the city's reputation for lawlessness. After meeting with the business delegation, he called a press conference and, the police superintendent at his side, announced — these were his very words — "a war on crime."

#### **Coerced testimony**

As McPhaul and McGuire dug into the case, they learned how Majczek and Marcinkiewicz had come to be suspects in the first place. Although Vera Walush at first told police she had no idea who the killers were, after several hours of interrogation she said one them could have been a man she knew only as Ted. When police discovered that Theodore Marcinkiewicz lived in the neighborhood, he became a prime suspect, but he was nowhere to be found. Two weeks after the crime, by which time it was well known on the street that he was being sought, a bootlegger who lived in the neighborhood was arrested with

a case of whisky in his car. In exchange for not being charged, he told police that Marcinkiewicz had been staying with the Majczek family. When police went to the Majczek home on December 22, 1932, they did not find Marcinkiewicz — but did find Joseph Majczek, whom they took into custody.

Majczek had asserted in the typed statement of facts that he provided the Times that Vera Walush, after viewing him in two separate lineups on December 22, had stated unequivocally that he was not one of the killers. The next day, however, something apparently happened to improve her memory and she positively identified him. The police thereupon wrote a report falsely stating that Majczek had been arrested on December 23, the day Walush had identified him. When Marcinkiewicz surrendered exactly a month later, on January 23, 1933, she positively identified him as well.

### **Times hires a lawyer**

Searching through records at the police warehouse, McGuire found the original arrest report, corroborating Majczek's contention that he had been arrested on December 22. When the State's Attorney's Office refused to reopen the case based on McGuire and McPhaul's dramatic disclosures, the Times hired a well-known lawyer to seek a pardon for Majczek, ignoring the similarly situated Marcinkiewicz. The lawyer, Walker Butler, at the time was a Democratic member of the Illinois Senate and, certainly not coincidentally, a supporter and confidant of Governor Dwight H. Green.

In addition to claims based on the Times disclosures that Majczek appeared to have been framed, Butler developed a substantial claim that Majczek's trial attorney, W.W. O'Brien, had performed incompetently. Two witnesses of dubious credibility provided damaging testimony against Marcinkiewicz. One of these, Bessie Barron, claimed that a few days before the crime Marcinkiewicz had told her "he was going to make the joint," meaning Vera Walush's establishment. The other, Bruno Uginchus, testified that the evening after the Lundy murder Marcinkiewicz told him he "had a little trouble." Although there was nothing to connect these statements to Majczek, O'Brien failed to object to their admission. O'Brien, of course, also failed to cross examine Vera Walush based on Majczek's claim that he had been arrested on December 22, when she had failed to identify him. These issues had not been raised on appeal because O'Brien handled the appeal.

### **Full pardon**

On August 15, 1945, based on Butler's petition, Governor Green granted Majczek a full pardon based on innocence. Marcinkiewicz, a seemingly forgotten man, remained in prison with no one championing his cause. Shortly before Green left office in 1949, he offered to commute Marcinkiewicz's life sentence to seventy-five years, which would have made him eligible for parole in 1958. Marcinkiewicz indignantly turned down the offer. He was wise to do so, for he would be legally exonerated through a state habeas corpus proceeding in 1950.

The Illinois legislature approved special appropriations to compensate both men for the time they spent in prison — \$24,000 for Majczek and \$35,000 for Marcinkiewicz — but again there no calls from the press for reforms that might prevent such miscarriages of justice in the future, or to sanction those who framed the two innocent men — a head-in-

the-sand syndrome that persisted into the twilight years of the Twentieth Century.

*The foregoing account was written by Rob Warden, executive director of the Center on Wrongful Convictions. Permission is granted to reprint, quote, or post on other web sites. The account is based substantially on information Jack McPhaul provided in interviews with Warden in 1980 and 1983. McPhaul died shortly after the second interview. Most of the facts related here were presented in a different form in an article by Warden entitled "A Nice Little Human Interest Story" in the July 1983 issue of Chicago Lawyer. That account, as well as the one above, drew from an account of the case in a delightful book by McPhaul — *Deadlines & Monkeyshines: The Fabled World of Chicago Journalism*, Prentice-Hall, 1962.*



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# Majczek and Marcinkiewicz

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*(March 2011)*

Joseph Majczek and Theodore Marcinkiewicz were two men arrested and convicted of the murder of Chicago Traffic Police Officer [William D. Lundy](#)  in November 1933.<sup>[1]</sup> Some 11 years later in 1944, following the intervention of [Chicago Times](#) reporter James McGuire, both men were exonerated of the crime.<sup>[2]</sup>

The details of the case were used as the basis of the 1948 movie *Call Northside 777* starring [James Stewart](#) and [Lee J. Cobb](#).

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## Background

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On October 10, 1944, a [classified advertisement](#) appeared in the [Chicago Times](#): "\$5,000 REWARD FOR KILLERS OF OFFICER LUNDY ON DEC. 9, 1932. CALL GRO 1758, 12-7 P.M." The ad was brought to the attention of the city editor Karin Walsh, who assigned seasoned police reporter James McGuire to dig into the story further. McGuire researched the case and learned that Officer Lundy had been murdered on December 9, 1932 and that Joseph Majczek, 24, and Theodore Marcinkiewicz, 25, were convicted in 1933 at the [Cook County Superior Court](#).<sup>[2]</sup>

The convictions (which the [Illinois Supreme Court](#) had affirmed as *People v. Majczek*, 360 Ill. 261 (1935))<sup>[2]</sup> were based largely on the testimony of eyewitness Vera Walush. She was recorded as the proprietor of a "delicatessen" (a [euphemism](#) for a [speakeasy](#)) where the crime occurred. Though both defendants presented strong alibis based on a number of witnesses saying they were elsewhere when the crime took place, both were convicted.

Upon calling the number from the ad, McGuire reached Majczek's mother Tillie. McGuire realized there was potential for a human interest story developing when he learned that the \$5,000 on offer had been earned by the mother scrubbing floors at the [Commonwealth Edison Company](#). As McGuire did not write his own stories, it was left to rewriterman John J. McPhaul to write the leader

copy based on McGuire notes for that day's paper, October 10.

## Criminal case

[[edit](#)]

McGuire first suspected there may be a [wrongful conviction](#) when he learned that Majczek and Marcinkiewicz had not gone to the [electric chair](#) for the officer's murder but got 99 years each at [Joliet](#). This might be evidence that the trial judge may have had concerns about their convictions.

On October 11, McPhaul read notes that Majczek had written in prison. In these Majczek stated that following his conviction, the trial judge, Charles P. Molthrop, told Majczek that he believed a miscarriage of justice had occurred and promised him a new trial. Additionally, Majczek stated that a certain James Zagata witnessed Molthrop's admission. Zagata was a witness to the murder and believed the wrong men had been convicted.

McPhaul was uncertain of the veracity of a judge having a private conversation with a convicted murderer - especially one convicted of killing a policeman. But no retrial had taken place as Judge Molthrop had died in 1935. McPhaul and McGuire now went in search of Zagata and located him, still employed as a coal truckdriver and very cooperative. Zagata fully corroborated Majczek's account of the conversation in Molthrop's [chambers](#).

Zagata had been presented with a [police lineup](#) including Majczek but had been unable to positively identify Majczek. He restated this at the later trial. Subsequently, Zagata told the Times, he thought neither of the convicted men fitted his recollection of the killers. He was certain that the true killers had been much taller than the short-statured Majczek. Zagata also said that Judge Molthrop had questioned him a few days after the verdict - the judge was particularly interested in Zagata's issues with the identification. Zagata recalled the judge saying he was going to get a [retrial](#) for the two men.

## Prohibition and Politics

[[edit](#)]

In the following days, the Times disclosed that Vera Walush, whose testimony had been the sole evidence against Majczek and the principal evidence against Marcinkiewicz, had initially not recognised either man during the police lineup. The paper also reported that Walush had been running a speakeasy and that she had been threatened with arrest if she refused to testify against Majczek and Marcinkiewicz. They also reported that the reason Judge Molthrop had failed to grant the defendants new trials was that he had been warned by prosecutors that granting a new trial would end his career in politics.

Cop killings often led to pressure for a conviction especially during the spiralling murder rate of the [Prohibition-period](#) Chicago. The same week Officer Lundy had been killed, there were five other unsolved murders in Chicago.

## Falsified records

[[edit](#)]

Further digging led McPhaul and McGuire to learn how Majczek and Marcinkiewicz had become [suspects](#). Vera Walush had initially been unable to identify the killer but after hours of interrogation she said one them could have been a man she knew only as *Ted*. Police believed this to be a local man Theodore Marcinkiewicz and he became a [prime suspect](#), but he could not be located. Two weeks after the crime a [bootlegger](#) was arrested and in exchange for not being charged, told police that Marcinkiewicz had been staying with the Majczek family. The police raided the Majczek home on December 22, 1932, and though Marcinkiewicz wasn't there they took Joseph Majczek into custody.

Majczek asserted that Vera Walush had not identified him in two separate lineups on December 22, but by December 23 Walush was able to positively identify him. The police then wrote a false report stating that Majczek had been arrested on December 23, the day Walush had identified him. Walush later positively identified Marcinkiewicz when he surrendered on January 23, 1933.

## Walker Butler

[\[edit\]](#)

McGuire located the original **arrest report**, corroborating Majczek's contention that he had been arrested on December 22. When the State's Attorney's Office refused to reopen the case based on McGuire and McPhaul's new evidence, the Times hired well-known lawyer Walker Butler<sup>[3]</sup> to seek a **pardon** for Majczek, ignoring the similarly situated Marcinkiewicz.

In addition to claims that Majczek appeared to have been framed, Butler also developed a substantial claim that Majczek's trial attorney, W.W. O'Brien, had performed incompetently. Key witnesses of dubious credibility provided damaging testimony against Marcinkiewicz. One of these, Bessie Barron, claimed Marcinkiewicz had told her he was going to rob Walush's speakeasy. The other, Bruno Uginchus, testified that after the murder Marcinkiewicz said "had a he little trouble." Whilst neither of these statements related to Majczek, O'Brien failed to object to their admission. O'Brien also failed to cross examine Vera Walush on her initial inability to identify him. These issues had not been raised on appeal because O'Brien handled the appeal.

## Exoneration

[\[edit\]](#)

On August 15, 1945, Majczek received a full pardon based on innocence from Illinois **Governor** Green. However, Marcinkiewicz remained locked up. He was legally exonerated through a state **habeas corpus** proceeding in 1950. Life magazine photographed Majczek, Marcinkiewicz and McGuire all leaving the jail house together.<sup>[4]</sup>

Both men were later compensated by special appropriations — \$24,000 for Majczek and \$35,000 for Marcinkiewicz.

Majczek died in 1983 aged 73.<sup>[5]</sup>

## Further reading

[\[edit\]](#)

Scotti Cohn, *It Happened in Chicago* (2009), Globe Pequot (**ISBN 978-0762750566**)

## References

[\[edit\]](#)

- ↑ "ILLINOIS: The Reward" . *Time Magazine*. August 27, 1945. Retrieved 2011-03-13.
- ↑ <sup>*a*</sup> <sup>*b*</sup> <sup>*c*</sup> "Perjury led to Joseph Majczek's wrongful conviction for the murder of a Chicago policeman in 1933" . NorthWesterLaw. Retrieved 2011-03-13.
- ↑ "Walker Butler Papers" . University of Illinois at Chicago. Retrieved 2011-03-13.
- ↑ "Life photo of Joe Majczek, Teddy Marcinkiewicz, and reporter James McGuire walking out of the jail house" . *Life Magazine*. Retrieved 2011-03-13.
- ↑ "Joseph Majczek obituary" . *New York Times*. June 1, 1983. Retrieved 2011-03-13.

## External links

[\[edit\]](#)

- The Wrongful Convictions Project
- Victims of the State , summaries of over 950 wrongful U.S. convictions

<b>Categories:</b> <a href="#">Illinois law</a> <span> </span>   <a href="#">Overturned convictions</a>
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## Call Northside 777

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

***Call Northside 777*** (1948) is a documentary-style [film noir](#) directed by [Henry Hathaway](#).<sup>[1]</sup> It is based on the true story of a Chicago reporter who proved that a man in prison for murder was wrongly convicted 11 years before. The names of the real wrongly convicted men were [Majczek](#) and [Marcinkiewicz](#) for the murder of Chicago Traffic Police Officer William D. Lundy.

[James Stewart](#) stars as the persistent journalist and [Richard Conte](#) plays the imprisoned Frank Wiecek. Wiecek is based on [Joseph Majczek](#), who was wrongly convicted of the murder of a Chicago policeman in 1932, one of the worst years of [organized crime](#) during [Prohibition](#).

Contents [hide]

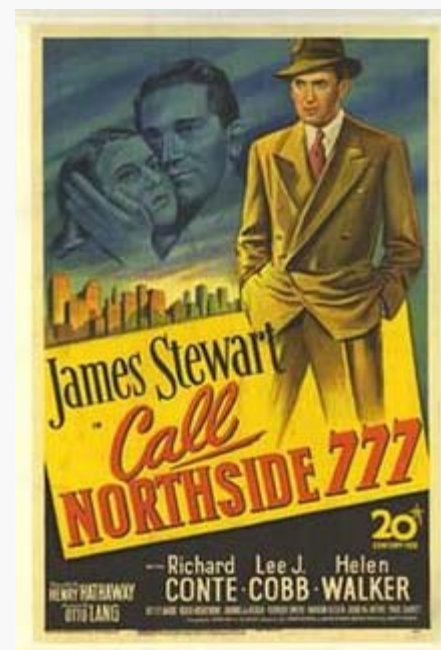
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### Plot

[[edit](#)]

In Chicago in 1932, during Prohibition, a policeman is murdered inside a [speakeasy](#). Frank Wiecek ([Richard Conte](#)) and another man are quickly arrested, and are later sentenced to serve 99 years' imprisonment each for the killing. Eleven years later, Wiecek's mother puts an ad in the newspaper offering a \$5,000 reward for information about the true killers of the police officer. This leads the city editor of the *Chicago Times* Brian Kelly ([Lee J. Cobb](#)) to assign reporter P.J. McNeal ([James Stewart](#)) to look more closely into the case. McNeal is skeptical at first, believing Wiecek to be guilty. But he starts to change his mind, and meets increased resistance from the police and the state attorney's office, who are unwilling to be proved wrong.

*Call Northside 777*



Theatrical poster

Directed by	<a href="#">Henry Hathaway</a>
Produced by	<a href="#">Otto Lang</a>
Written by	Adaptation: <a href="#">Leonard Hoffman</a> <a href="#">Quentin Reynolds</a> Screenplay: <a href="#">Jerome Cady</a> <a href="#">Jay Dratler</a> Articles: <a href="#">James P. McGuire</a> <a href="#">Jack McPhaul</a>
Starring	<a href="#">James Stewart</a> <a href="#">Richard Conte</a> <a href="#">Lee J. Cobb</a>
Music by	<a href="#">Alfred Newman</a>
Cinematography	<a href="#">Joseph MacDonald</a>
Editing by	<a href="#">J. Watson Webb Jr.</a>
Distributed by	<a href="#">Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation</a>
Release date(s)	February 1, 1948 (U.S.A.)

This is quickly followed by political pressure from the state capital, where politicians are anxious to end a story that might prove embarrassing to the administration. Eventually, Wiecek is proved innocent by, among other things, the enlarging of a photograph showing the date on a newspaper that proves that a key witness's statement was false.

Running time	111 minutes
Country	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> United States
Language	English

## Cast

[[edit](#)]

- James Stewart** as P.J. McNeal (based on real life reporter James McGuire)
- Richard Conte** as Frank Wiecek (based on real life convict Joseph Majczek)
- Lee J. Cobb** as Brian Kelly (based on real life editor Karin Walsh)
- Helen Walker** as Laura McNeal
- Betty Garde** as Wanda Skutnik (based on real life witness Vera Walush)
- Kasia Orzazewski as Tillie Wiecek (based on real life mother Tillie Majczek)
- Joanne De Bergh as Helen Wiecek
- Howard Smith** as K.L. Palmer
- Moroni Olsen** as Pardon Board Chairman
- J.M. Kerrigan** as Sullivan
- John McIntire** as Sam Faxon (his first credited film role)
- Paul Harvey** as Martin J. Burns
- George Tyne as Tomek Zaleska (based on real life convict Theodore Marcinkiewicz)
- Michael Chapin as Frank Wiecek Jr.
- Leonarde Keeler** as Himself – (uncredited), the actual inventor of the **Polygraph**
- E. G. Marshall** as Rayska (uncredited)
- Walter Greaza as Detective
- Thelma Ritter** as receptionist (uncredited)
- Lionel Stander** as Corrigan – Wiecek's cellmate (uncredited)

## Production notes

[[edit](#)]

This was the first Hollywood feature film to be shot on location in Chicago. Views of the **Merchandise Mart** as well as **Holy Trinity Polish Mission** can be seen throughout the film.

## Critical reception

[[edit](#)]

The film received mostly positive reviews when it was first released, and again when it was released on DVD in 2004. In 2004, the *Onion AV Club Review* argued that the film may not be a true **film noir**, but is good nonetheless: "Outstanding location shooting and Stewart's driven performance turn a sober film into a vibrant, exciting one, even though the hero and the jailbird he champions are really too noble for noir."<sup>[2]</sup> The website *DVD Verdict* made the case that the lead actor may be the best reason to see the film: "Its value exists mainly in Stewart's finely drawn characterization of a cynical man with a nagging conscience."<sup>[3]</sup>

## Adaptations

[[edit](#)]

For an episode of CBS Radio's "Hollywood Sound Stage", broadcast December 27, 1951, Harry Cronman adapted and directed a condensed 30-minute version of the movie, casting **Dana Andrews** and **Thomas Gomez** in the leads. Tony Barrett, **Bob Sweeney**, **Betty Lou Gerson**, and **Frank Nelson** played supporting roles.<sup>[4]</sup>

## Awards

[[edit](#)]

Wins

- Edgar Award**: from the **Mystery Writers of America** for Best Motion Picture Screenplay; 1949.

Nominations

- Writers Guild of America**: WGA Award; Best Written American Drama, Jerome Cady and Jay

Dratler; The Robert Meltzer Award (Screenplay Dealing Most Ably with Problems of the American Scene), Jerome Cady and Jay Dratler; 1949.

## See also

[[edit](#)]

- List of American films of 1948

## References

[[edit](#)]

- ↑ *Call Northside 777* at the Internet Movie Database.
- ↑ Murray, Noel . *Onion AV Club Review*, film review, March 29, 2005. Last accessed: April 5, 2008.
- ↑ *DVD Verdict* . Film review, 2005. Last accessed: April 5, 2008.
- ↑ http://radiogoldindex.com/cgi-local/p2.cgi?ProgramName=Hollywood+Sound+Stage

## External links

[[edit](#)]

- Call Northside 777* at AllRovi
- Call Northside 777* at the TCM Movie Database
- Call Northside 777* at the Internet Movie Database
- Joseph M. Majczek legal case at Northwestern University School of Law



Wikimedia Commons has media related to: ***Call Northside 777***

### Streaming audio

- Call Northside 777* on Screen Guild Theater: October 7, 1948
- Call Northside 777* on "Hollywood Sound Stage: December 27, 1951

V · T · E ·	Films directed by Henry Hathaway	[ <a href="#">hide</a> ]
1930s	<i>Heritage of the Desert</i> (1932) · <i>Wild Horse Mesa</i> (1932) · <i>The Thundering Herd</i> (1933) · <i>Under the Tonto Rim</i> (1933) · <i>Sunset Pass</i> (1933) · <i>Man of the Forest</i> (1933) · <i>To the Last Man</i> (1933) · <i>Come on Marines</i> (1934) · <i>The Witching Hour</i> (1934) · <i>The Last Round-Up</i> (1934) · <i>Now and Forever</i> (1934) · <i>The Lives of a Bengal Lancer</i> (1935) · <i>Peter Ibbetson</i> (1935) · <i>I Loved a Soldier</i> (1936) · <i>The Trail of the Lonesome Pine</i> (1936) · <i>Go West, Young Man</i> (1936) · <i>Souls at Sea</i> (1937) · <i>Spawn of the North</i> (1938) · <i>The Real Glory</i> (1939) ·	
1940s	<i>Johnny Apollo</i> (1940) · <i>Brigham Young</i> (1940) · <i>The Shepherd of the Hills</i> (1941) · <i>Sundown</i> (1941) · <i>Ten Gentlemen from West Point</i> (1942) · <i>China Girl</i> (1942) · <i>Home in Indiana</i> (1944) · <i>Wing and a Prayer</i> (1944) · <i>Nob Hill</i> (1945) · <i>The House on 92nd Street</i> (1945) · <i>The Dark Corner</i> (1946) · <i>13 Rue Madeleine</i> (1947) · <i>Kiss of Death</i> (1947) · <i>Call Northside 777</i> (1948) · <i>Down to the Sea in Ships</i> (1949) ·	
1950s	<i>The Black Rose</i> (1950) · <i>You're in the Navy Now</i> (1951) · <i>Fourteen Hours</i> (1951) · <i>Rawhide</i> (1951) · <i>The Desert Fox: The Story of Rommel</i> (1951) · <i>Diplomatic Courier</i> (1952) · <i>Niagara</i> (1953) · <i>White Witch Doctor</i> (1953) · <i>Prince Valiant</i> (1954) · <i>Garden of Evil</i> (1954) · <i>The Racers</i> (1955) · <i>The Bottom of the Bottle</i> (1956) · <i>23 Paces to Baker Street</i> (1956) · <i>Legend of the Lost</i> (1957) · <i>From Hell to Texas</i> (1958) · <i>Woman Obsessed</i> (1959) ·	
1960s	<i>Seven Thieves</i> (1960) · <i>North to Alaska</i> (1960) · <i>Circus World</i> (1964) · <i>The Sons of Katie Elder</i> (1965) · <i>Nevada Smith</i> (1966) · <i>The Last Safari</i> (1967) · <i>5 Card Stud</i> (1968) · <i>True Grit</i> (1969) ·	
1970s	<i>Raid on Rommel</i> (1971) · <i>Shoot Out</i> (1971) · <i>Hangup</i> (1974) ·	

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June 1, 1983

## Joseph M. Majczek, 73; Conviction Led to Film

AP

**CHICAGO, May 31**— Joseph M. Majczek, whose wrongful 1933 murder conviction in the still-unsolved death of a policeman was the basis for the movie "Call Northside 777," died Sunday after a long illness. He was 73 years old.

Mr. Majczek was confined to a mental institution for the last years of his life, after a car accident and stroke, according to his family.

Forty years ago, two reporters for The Chicago Times showed in a series of articles how Mr. Majczek had been wrongfully convicted in the slaying of William D. Lundy, a Chicago police officer. He served 11 years of a 99-year sentence before being pardoned by Gov. Dwight H. Green.

Mr. Majczek was released in 1945, 10 months after the articles appeared. An advertisement placed in The Times by Mr. Majczek's mother, Tillie, prompted the investigation. It offered \$5,000 to anyone who could prove her son was not guilty.

Mr. Majczek's story was made into the movie, which starred Jimmy Stewart as a character combining the two real-life reporters, Jack McPhaul and James McGuire. The movie's title came from Mrs. Majczek's advertisement, which ended with a telephone number.

After his release from prison, Mr. Majczek worked for an insurance company and for Cook County Circuit Court. He also remarried the woman from whom he had been divorced after his conviction.



## Abstract

Footnotes (188)

<http://ssrn.com/abstract=292095>[Download This Paper](#) | [Share](#) | [Email](#) | [Add to Briefcase](#) | [Purchase Bound Hard Copy](#)Theaters of Proof: Visual Evidence and the Law in Call  
Northside 777[Jennifer Mnookin](#)

University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) - School of Law

[Nancy West](#)

University of Missouri at Columbia

[Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities, Summer 2001](#)**Abstract:**

This Article, a collaboration between a law professor specializing in evidence and an English professor who writes about film, analyzes a film of the late 1940s - Call Northside 777 (henceforth Northside), directed by Henry Hathaway and starring Jimmy Stewart - as a study in evidence. We argue that the film, an explicit retelling of an actual Chicago wrongful conviction case, speaks powerfully to the question of what counts as proof and what persuades, both in the courtroom and in our cultural imagination. The film strongly suggests that legal conceptions of what constitutes good evidence may deviate from more broadly-held ideas of legitimate proof. Legal standards of evidence are portrayed as rigid and conservative, too willing to rely on the reliable and too resistant to novel forms of knowledge. The Article explores in detail how Northside sets up a hierarchy of evidence, with eyewitness evidence at the bottom, expert evidence in the middle, and photographic and visual evidence portrayed as the best evidence of all. We show, however, that in the end, Northside's hierarchy depends on a host of simplifications, both of the historical record on which Northside is based, and also of the ways that visual evidence is made and deployed.

We also use Northside as a jumping-off point for a broader examination of the relation between films and legal evidence. We analyze the actual use of reenactments and other films as legal evidence in the period contemporaneous with Northside, and we show that for the most part, judges shared the vision set forth in Northside of film as a nearly transparent medium of truth. In addition, we look at Northside as a "reenactment," a hybrid form that lies between drama and documentary, and show that dramatic reenactments and trials have a special relation: they are both, at heart, attempts to capture the past in an authentic and credible fashion. Neither claims to capture the past directly, but both verdicts and reenactments want to be seen as being true to the past in all of the ways that matters. The Article, therefore, suggests an important affinity between the trial and the filmed reenactment: Both are attempts to create believable stories of the past, stories not literally true that nonetheless become substitute depictions for what actually occurred.

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