

Titans of Park Row!

by
Mitchell Akselrad

Draft 8
September 17, 2012
For Jeff Silver and Matt Rosen

EXT. PARK ROW, NEW YORK - DAY

A tower, silhouetted by sun.

The *New York World* building, the city's tallest at 14 stories, Gold Dome basked in warm light. A young blond man admires from the street. Turned away from us. He ignores the other buildings. He wants the *World*.

HOLD ON this small man and the colossal construction...

CUT TO:

EXT. ELEVENTH STREET PIER - EARLY MORNING

Superimpose: 1897

Lower East Side, Manhattan

Fog lifting. A ferry from "The City of Brooklyn" docks. Under the boardwalk FOUR BOYS play as a red-and-yellow oilcloth PACKAGE is pulled in by the current. The boys push and shove to get to it. One rips away the cloth, sees:

A MAN'S SEVERED TORSO AND TWO ARMS

Bloody. A crab crawls out of a gash between the nipples...

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL MORGUE - DAY

Hellish decay. Sun streams through a skylight. Corpses on marble slabs, icy mist shoos away the flies.

The Torso-n-Arms is wheeled passed the on-duty Constable - he's unfazed, playing solitaire. He simply doesn't care.

Among a group of ever-present reporters, GEORGE ARNOLD, working the morgue beat for the lowly rag *NEW YORK JOURNAL*, watches SUPERINTENDENT inspect

The serrated gash in the chest...

The arms, bluish pale and muscular...

The callused hands.

Hideous and captivating, Arnold starts writing in a moleskin: "...BEHEADED, CAST INTO RIVER..."

CUT TO:

EXT. PIER 14, NORTH RIVER (THE HUDSON, WEST SIDE) - DAY

A MARCHING BAND PLAYS. Celebratory balloons fly. Waiters with oyster trays weave through the upper-crust crowd and (far too many) on-duty Policemen enjoying this lavish, excessive affair. At center, an ANNOUNCEMENT BANNER:

"W.R. HEARST OFFERS A NEW EVENING JOURNAL"

Everyone's waiting for something. Two relative nobodies: MR. CLARK, 50s with mutton chops, berates the younger JAMES GORDON BENNETT JR. for drinking the champagne.

CLARK

You've any idea what that's cost us?

BENNETT JR.

Us? It's the widow Hearst's money.

CLARK

Her money, my headache. Goddamn boy. It's the *commemorative launch* ...where in hell is he?!

CUT TO:

A STEAM YACHT ON THE WATER - ITS BOW READS "VAMOOSE"

Ugly, stripped to bare essentials so it's fast. At the helm, the young Blond man, eyes steady, hair blowing in the wind...

ON THE PIER

People notice the blur on the water getting closer. Young women, especially, crane their necks as the *Vamoose* docks --

Off steps WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST to applause and shouts of congratulations. Energetic, wide smile, 33 going on 21.

But as he glad-hands, he notices something isn't right. Among all the excess, something is still missing. His *Sunday* editor, MORRILL GODDARD, 40s, eyes the *Vamoose*:

GODDARD

So that's the world-record holder.

WILL

27 knots...Morrill, how many people made it out here for today?

GODDARD

It's a good-size crowd.

But the boy-king is unsatisfied. Across the way, he SEES the No. 7 train letting passengers off at the station --

So Will starts walking. And Morrill just shakes his head...

EXT. TRAIN PLATFORM - DAY

Will charms the CONDUCTOR as Goddard blocks boarders from getting on in the b.g.

CONDUCTOR
Uh, but you see, Mr. Hearst --

WILL
W.R., please!

CONDUCTOR
Mr. W.R. the train runs on schedule
so we can't just lend it out --

WILL
Who said anything about *lending*?

Will slips an arm over Conductor's shoulder and a check into his pocket:

WILL
See, I've just expanded my paper
and I want the public to know about
it -- all New York, not just the
ones who made it out here today.

CONDUCTOR
But sir, this is the city's train.

WILL
Today it belongs to the *Journal*.

Off the face of a man who never learned the word "no"

CUT TO:

THE TRAIN RUNNING THROUGH THE CITY - PARTY RAGING INSIDE.

But now, as rich folk celebrate onboard, ordinary citizens can cheer the passing train and read the ANNOUNCEMENT BANNER pinned to its caboose. A brilliant advertizing ploy.

Will hands Goddard a glass of champagne, they "cheers".

WILL
To the new *Evening Edition*! Now I
didn't see him onboard; is he here?

GODDARD
No, I'm gonna meet him tonight.

Clark approaches, struggling to balance as Goddard drinks.

WILL
How's it taste?

CLARK

Expensive!
 (pushing Goddard out)
 I reserved the pier! Was
 commandeering a *train* really
 necessary?

WILL

Publication without promotion, Mr.
 Clark, is well intentioned but
 ultimately futile...

(notices a young girl
 eyeing him)

...like winking at a girl in the
 dark. A new *Evening Edition* only
 succeeds against Pulitzer's *World*
 if all New York knows about it.

CLARK

So you spent on caviar, balloons, a
 train - the only thing missing is
 the man you intend to run it! Is
 it too much to even ask for a name?

WILL

That reminds me, I need more money.

CLARK

We made a million dollar investment.

WILL

Well now I'm behind by two --

CLARK

And losing thousands more every
 day! It's not enough you haven't
 turned a profit in a year, but
 these frivolous purchases, be it
 cocktails or the whole Goddamned
Morning Advertiser --

WILL

What I "purchased" was its A.P.
 Wire Service - the newspaper *just*
happened to come with it.

(he's incorrigible)

How I choose to spend my money is
 of no one else's concern --

Will starts to head toward the girl, Clark grabs his arm --

CLARK

But it's not *your* money, it's *your*
 mother's - and she's made it my
 concern. There's a reason your
 father left it all to her. Babicora
 may be in *your* name, but everything
 else belongs to her. Remember it.

WILL
Believe me Clark, I don't forget.

Will goes to sweet talk the girl. Clark enjoys his victory.

CUT TO:

INT. BRISBANE'S OFFICE, OFFICES OF NEW YORK *WORLD* - SAME TIME

New York World Editor ARTHUR BRISBANE, 30s, handsome, watches the party train from his 7th floor window. His office also serves as a small apartment, bed sheets unmade.

SEITZ, the *World's* portly advertizing manager, knocks.

BRISBANE
Solly's leaving now, isn't he?
It's the end of an era, Seitz.

They walk out together.

BRISBANE
You see what was going on at the pier? I wonder how many on-duty police felt it necessary to patrol Willy-the-Worst's launch party.
(sarcastic:) Misappropriation of Police resources - a page one story?

SEITZ
Haha, that'll be the day...
(spots a typo in notes:) Hey, are there two "T"s in water?

BRISBANE
Only the wettest.

WORLD OFFICES

Marble, impressive. Brisbane and Seitz come onto the floor where messengers walk practiced routes through ordered cubes.

Bronze wall-placards read: Who? What? Where? When? How?

The Facts - The Color - The Facts
Accuracy, Accuracy, Accuracy!

It's quiet but for S.S. CARVALHO (Solly), goatee, impeccably dressed, angrily boxing his things at a desk hardly befitting his years and experience. Retiring, this is his last day.

BRISBANE
You'll miss it.

CARVALHO

Not *all* of it. Can't see why you insist on staying with him, Arthur.

(pause)

Well, uh, please give him this:

Carvalho leaves an envelope on the desk, shakes Brisbane and Seitz hands and walks out. Brisbane reads the envelope:

Labeled: "For Mr. Pulitzer."

CUT TO:

INT. BAR, TENDERLOIN DISTRICT - LATE AFTERNOON

Carvalho sits at the bar with his box-of-things. He shares a (couple) drinks with Hearst's friend Goddard while scanning a *Town Topics* gossip rag filled with stories about "Willieboy."

CARVALHO

It was smart to leave when you did.

GODDARD

You didn't think so at the time.
But Solomon Carvalho - *retiring...*
"My soul's overwhelmed with sorrow;
stay here and keep watch --"

CARVALHO

What's with the Bible talk?

GODDARD

All newsmen study the tactics of their rival - when you edit a *Sunday*, your rival is God.

CARVALHO

"God" ... I'm an old man, Morrill, all I've left to look forward to is my meeting with him.

GODDARD

Nah. Like Lazarus you've just met a premature end. And in your case, too, I know of another man to aid your resurrection...

Puzzled, Carvalho follows Goddard's gaze to a back corner where sits the "other man" - Will - raising a glass of water.

ANGLE - LATER

Will and Carvalho sit together. Carvalho sips scotch; Will gulps water, arm draped around Carvalho's seat seductively. Accustomed with deadlines, their dialogue is quick-paced:

CARVALHO

"Was forming an Evening Edition a
good idea?" You're asking now? Ha!
(realizing it's a test)

Well, they're reading more in the
evenings: they have a day's pay to
spend. Staffs are rested, they can
react to what people want...yeah,
you may have a future yet. Now,
who are you putting in charge?

WILL

You.

CARVALHO

...Excuse me?

WILL

You're going to run my *Evening
Journal* - still think I've a future?

CARVALHO

I may've spoke too soon. Mr.
Hearst --

WILL

W.R. - my boys call me W.R --

CARVALHO

I'm not your boy and I'm retired --

WILL

Two things I wish to rectify --

CARVALHO

Are you telling me you expanded,
bought presses, bought the space,
advertized and celebrated a new
Edition and you've no one to run it?

WILL

I do have someone to run it.

Will hands him a check for \$35,000 - the largest check he's ever seen! Carvalho stands for emphasis as *Town Topics* falls out his pocket:

CARVALHO

Jesus! Between moves like this and
your poor readership you won't last
three months!

Awwkwaard. Carvalho can't believe he had the balls. Will picks up the gossip rag, sees the stories about him inside.

WILL

You seem to know all about me...

CARVALHO
 Everybody knows about the "San
 Francisco-boy Millionaire."

WILL
 I see that here, yes.

Realizing it was insulting, Carvalho re-sits, embarrassed.

CARVALHO
 You know, you puzzle me Mr. Hearst.

WILL
 You're not the only one.

CARVALHO
 No... A year ago you backed that
 man, uh, Jennings Bryan, in the
 election. Seemed simple enough -
 he wanted to end the gold standard,
 your father owned a silver mine: a
 Bryan Presidency would have made
 your family richer.

(Will sips his water)
 But then most forget, your father
 owned a much larger gold mine...
 which means supporting Bryan would
 actually have *destroyed* the family
 coffers... not benefited them...

He's trying to ask Will "why". But no explanation comes.

CARVALHO
 I imagine you had a great many
 options; you could have done
 anything. Why newspapers?

WILL
 What does that matter?

CARVALHO
 Bryan might have been a terrible
 leader - or an excellent one, but
 you only picked him based on
 personal motivations. You print
 for yourself, with no regard as to
 how it affects...anyone else. I
 just left a man like that, I don't
 wish to be employed by another...

(gives back the check)
 Far more generous though he may be.

BEAT. He gets up to go, leaving Will to think on this.

WILL
 Solly, all you need to know is that
 I surround myself with the best.

CARVALHO

It's not enough. The *Mercury* and *Times* evening editions had great men - Pulitzer ate 'em both up.

WILL

Why?

CARVALHO

It's what I'm trying to tell you. You need something else - that won't just appeal to your vanity, a real reason readers will want to defect,

INSERT CUT: In the evening hours, Journal reporter George Arnold files his "BEHEADED, CAST INTO RIVER" story...

CARVALHO

...to betray a publisher they've trusted so long to deliver the Word - and whose trusted them to buy it. What you need, Mr. Hearst, is --

WILL

A story.

CARVALHO

The *right* story. Without that, you'll be fodder for the competition. And make no mistake, Joseph Pulitzer is the competition.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATWOLD MANSION - "RIVER GIVES UP A MURDER MYSTERY"

-- Reads the *Evening World* article under the fold. The *World* tops a stack of papers atop a silver tray carried by

JABEZ, a Valet, gliding through this Lakewood mansion. He passes KATE PULITZER with her newborn and disappears into a separate, secluded wing built of stone --

THE TOWER OF SILENCE. Lined with cushion like a sanitarium. What years of success have built.

INT. BASEMENT POOL

Ocean fed and steam heated. Sitting there, slumped, bearded: the legendary JOSEPH PULITZER, 50s. Atlas drained.

INT. OFFICE, TOWER OF SILENCE

Wheezing, Pulitzer grabs the *World* off Jabez's tray; skims.

Then Jabez hands him the ENVELOPE Carvalho left "For Mr. Pulitzer." Pulitzer reads to himself, then crumples it up. Whatever it said, it ruined his day.

PULITZER
I want to see Brisbane first thing
in the morning.

Jabez nods. As he opens the door to leave, a baby CRIES O.S.

PULITZER
And if he's going to make that
indefuckingfatigable noise, tell my
wife to take him outside!

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT, THE HOFFMAN HOUSE - EVENING

Will has sex with the girl from the train. She's trying hard but his mind is elsewhere - Carvalho's admonition.

LATER

The girl is gone. Will sits on the edge of the bed reviewing page proofs...

He turns the pages with his toes. An odd movement, solitary, as he looks for the answer to his emptiness in those pages. Instead, he finds an ad for a new play at *The Herald Theatre* - *"The Girl From Paris"*...

CUT TO:

INT. "HERALD SQUARE" BROADWAY THEATRE - NIGHT

A packed house. Will enters, shakes USHER'S hand, familiar.

USHER
New girl tonight, I hear she's
good.

Will's view is terrible, blocked by a fat woman's head. He sees a FOURSOME enjoying a BALCONY with a fantastic view --

MOMENTS LATER

Foursome count dollar bills as Will eases comfortably into his new seats. Applause as the curtain rises on *The Girl from Paris*. An actress appears on stage. Blonde, a vision.

Will is shocked - he recognizes her: TESSIE POWERS, late 20s.

INT. BACKSTAGE, VAUDEVILLE THEATRE - LATER

Actors and stagehands greet Tessie with roses.

WILL (O.S.)
You should be making double what
Lillian Russell is. I'll talk with
the producer.

Tessie is surprised to see him standing there.

TESSIE
Were they enjoying it?

WILL
There is no doubt.

TESSIE
Then let Lillian Russell keep her
money... William Randolph Hearst,
how are you?

WILL
Famished. Have supper with me.

TESSIE
I have plans with my friends.

He looks to the group, as if just realizing they're there.

WILL
Everybody, your meal is on me!
(cheers, then much softer)
Only you'll have to excuse Ms.
Powers here.

CUT TO:

INT. "SHERRY'S" RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Very upscale. Will belongs, Tessie doesn't. Other patrons
steal judgemental glances, Will is completely oblivious to
Tessie's discomfort as he eats a plate of french fries.

WILL
I love the theatre; it's my
sanctuary. Have you been in New
York all this time?

TESSIE
Among other places. Took time to
get here from San Francisco.

WILL
Do you love it as much as you
thought you would?

She feels a rich woman's eyes on her:

TESSIE
Most days.

He sees her looking down at her plate embarrassed, notices the rich woman giving them looks. Will calls the waiter.

WILL
Garçon, evening. Seems the lady over there can't take her eyes off my table...
(Tessie is twice as embarrassed now)
...I think it's the fries. Send her a plate on me, please.

Waiter nods. Will stares at the woman until she looks away, then smiles, pleased with himself.

WILL
You haven't asked *me* anything...

TESSIE
There isn't much I don't know, most of it's printed in the gossips.
(now he's embarrassed)
I was very sorry about your father,
I know how much he meant to you.
Do you ever go back to Babicora?

WILL
(touched)
You remember Babicora?

TESSIE
Your father's ranch? Of course, you loved it there. I used to think that's where you'd end up the way you'd talk about it.

WILL
How did I talk about it?

TESSIE
Like you could be happy there.

WILL
(stops eating)
Tess, I don't know what my mother said to you to make you leave but... I'm on my own now.

TESSIE
She doesn't pay for all this?

WILL

Not for long. And when the *Journal* starts to turn a profit...you won't have to worry about her. We could be together again --

Overwhelmed, she gets up, ignores the looks as she leaves...

EXT. "SHERRY'S" RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Will follows Tessie out. Down the street in an alley, a very different class of people are drinking, laughing... He runs across the road to her, upsetting the light traffic.

WILL

Tess, she's 3000 miles away...

TESSIE

You really think I left because of your mother?

WILL

...She didn't want us to be together but now --

TESSIE

It wasn't her, Will! (beat) You don't, you don't understand me, you don't really understand people. You ride in fast boats, buy balcony seats... eat french fries...

WILL

Tess I'm not the same person I was. I run a newspaper now! And soon I'm gonna build papers in every city, be the greatest --

TESSIE

You're here now, in New York now with this paper and you could --

WILL

New York has 48 other papers! Everyone in there "knows" how I got mine - I have to distinguish myself. I can do that by being bigger --

TESSIE

Putting papers in every city with your mother's money means nothing. It's just more...collecting.

(re: restaurant patrons)

And it won't impress those people. Ever.

Then she points to the people in the alley:

TESSIE

But I wonder, did you ever think about the people out here? There's a lot of them you know. Lot of readers. You think they care about railroads in Washington? They're too busy struggling. Dying. 48 papers in New York, not one speaks to those people. But you - you have opportunity. And will. What you could do with it...

He watches the people in the alley together. An outsider.

TESSIE

If you had done nothing but vanish to Babicora I... I never needed the name... So you want to run a newspaper now. Alright. But then don't expand it, run it. Maybe even run stories about *them*. Touch them, let them know their lives mean as much as the people in there. If for no other reason than *they* won't care how you got your start - they have their own lives to worry about... I have to go.

She kisses his cheek - an indication, perhaps, of what could be. Then she goes, leaving him to stand alone.

CUT TO:

EXT. HARLEM WOODS - MORNING

Superimpose: Harlem

A father plays hide and seek with his two sons. One sprints down a hill behind a rock. He spies a package:

Wrapped in red-and-yellow oil cloth. He unwraps it:

We don't see inside, but the boy will never be the same...

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL HALLWAY/MORGUE - DAY

The boy's find is rolled in by Superintendent and

Veteran Detective ART CAREY, mustache. As they roll through, it catches the attention of physicians, patients, visitors...

CAREY

It was found in the Ogden woods
near Undercliff, but I read about
oil cloth like this in the papers
yesterday --

SUPERINTENDENT

At the pier? That's miles away.

CAREY

I am aware.

They pass the ever-present group of reporters, always on the hunt. *Journal* reporter Arnold (seen earlier) overhears:

REPORTER

Was that Carey from Goatsville?
Must be his first stiff in years.

They push and shove to catch a look as the cart hits a marble slab. Superintendent and Carey lift the unseen body part off-

SUPERINTENDENT

Dear God...

BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Yesterday's Torso-n-arms lines up perfectly with today's find:
A MAN'S MID-SECTION. Pruned abdomen, shriveled penis, bloody stumped thighs. The two sections come from the same body.

Reporters immediately start shouting questions...mayhem.

SUPERINTENDENT

Where are the rest of the police?

CAREY

No one else cares.

SUPERINTENDENT

(re: reporters)

Clearly somebody does...

CUT TO:

INT. TOWER OF SILENCE, CHATWOLD - PULITZER'S FACE

CONTORTED. With great effort he breathes in, out...

PULITZER

Fuck...what is the point of this?

He's sprawled on the floor. A fat DOCTOR with a thick German accent kneels on his stomach. Brisbane sits nearby stifling laughter as Seitz munches on a piece of toast with jam.

DOCTOR

It's the latest science in forcing
one to take deep breaths --

PULITZER

What was wrong with the *old* way --

DOCTOR

The key is deep breaths, you must
relax.

PULITZER

I've a 400-pound elephant's knee in
my intestine. Arthur, what's next?

BRISBANE

Word from Huntington: he wants
your support for the rail line.

(off his look)

Just wants to kiss the king's hand.

PULITZER

Oof -- Or another part of my
anatomy. But I'm no king, just a
kingmaker. What's next?

Seitz takes a loud bite of toast - *crunch!* Pulitzer winces.

BRISBANE

Your boy Ralph accepted the award
for allaying the Venezuelan Crisis.

DOCTOR

-- Breathe in, breathe out!

PULITZER

Use that in our coverage on Cuba.

SEITZ

Oh, Bradford wanted to thank you
for his promotion!

Brisbane winces - Seitz made a big mistake saying that.

PULITZER

His *what*?

(Doctor jabs his knee)

Can we please!

BRISBANE

Let's give Mr. Pulitzer a moment.

Brisbane escorts them out then sits. Pulitzer lays there.

PULITZER

Bradford's "promotion"?

BRISBANE
It's...merely an "honorary"
title...Editorial Manager.

PULITZER
You tell Seitz he wants to continue
as *advertising* manager, he'll eat
with his mouth shut! Help me up.

Pulitzer grasps Brisbane's hands intimately - he trusts him.

PULITZER
I leave for Wiesbaden Thursday.

BRISBANE
Europe again? Globe trotting does
as much to exacerbate these phantom
afflictions as does your shouting.
I know you're pained but exertion --

Kate suddenly enters, baby in arms. Brisbane smiles at her.

PULITZER
Not now, Kate.

KATE PULITZER
...Good day, Mr. Brisbane.

BRISBANE
Good day, Mrs. Pulitzer.

...Chastened, she exits just as quickly. Pulitzer gives
Brisbane the *World* issue with the River Murder story...

PULITZER
Carvalho's departure has created a
void. You did well reorganizing the
Sunday - now I want you to do the
same with the *Evening*. Make it
worth its new price of two cents.

BRISBANE
(studying the article)
Well... thank you, Chief --

PULITZER
Now it will continue under my name.

BRISBANE
(beat, disappointed)
I'm to run the *Evening Edition*, but
not use my own name?

PULITZER
You'll be compensated. But the *New*
York World has one editorial voice.

BRISBANE
Heard all the way from Wiesbaden?

PULITZER
I'm wired reports every day and I read every issue. Arthur I'm 50. I've two sons to whom I wouldn't entrust my horse poised to inherit this, a wife too busy with an infant to care of my ailments and men trying to usurp me with "honorary" promotions. But I have the *New York World*. Don't begrudge me.

He pats Brisbane's hand, as much affection as he's capable.

PULITZER
It will be the culmination of print news this past century - you'll be a part of that. Now, let's get that fucking fat man back in here...

CUT TO:

INT. BOARDROOM, JOURNAL OFFICES, TRIBUNE BUILDING - DAY
Financial brains and editors debate the *Evening's* premiere story. Amused, Goddard just reads his *Sunday* as a young COMICS ARTIST sketches. Unengaged in a big group, Will fidgets. OVERLAPPING SHOUTS --

EDITOR 1
They're going to consolidate New York - consolidation is historic!

EDITOR 2
There's a war brewing in Cuba!

EDITOR 1
Who gives a damn about Cuba?

GODDARD
Cubans.

EDITOR 1
New Yorkers are the ones buying --

WILL
No one's buying - not yet.

EDITOR 3
So we should talk about Samson! He steals money from the paper --

WILL

He's a good writer so from now on
 he'll steal only small sums from
 the paper; the largest he can steal
 from me.

(they're stunned, he
 doesn't miss a beat)

None of this is right. We need a
 story worthy of the new *Evening*...

EDITOR 1

These are all important issues W.R.

WILL

Important to whom? We're not,
 we're not...touching people...

Unable to communicate Tessie's sentiments, he just leaves.

EDITOR 1

What the hell is he talking about?

WILL'S OFFICE - WILL

Shuts the door, frustrated. Pinned to his wall, two maps: a MAP OF GREATER NEW YORK (all the modern boroughs are different cities) and a MAP OF AMERICA with certain cities circled like San Francisco, Chicago, St. Louis. Will tears the second down. Stares at Greater New York.

WILL

What the hell am I talking about?

INT. MAIN FLOOR, JOURNAL OFFICES, TRIBUNE BUILDING - EVENING

Will steps out onto the floor, oversees:

The shabbiest newsroom on Park Row. A CIRCUS of newsmen, page boys, clerks, librarians and reporters roam through flat and rolltop desks atop a sea of scrap paper, crammed under a light grid; cigar smoke, loud chatter, tobacco spat into brass spittoons...

A BELL RINGS to signal a changing of the guard: reporters make last edits, turn in their stories to the various editors - sloppy stacks to be organized in a pre-computer age. Hats come off stands and sleeves unrolled as they file out and the *Morning Edition* staff parades in to do it all again.

Will finds Goddard at his desk, reviewing submissions:

GODDARD

Find what you're looking for?

WILL

I want to get out of the office.

GODDARD

Yeah. Take the *Vamoose* out for a --

WILL

No, I want take a beat. See what's to be seen.

(Goddard looks surprised)
What do think? City beat, the hall?

GODDARD

George!

The reporter we've been seeing, George Arnold, comes in, meet hanging from his lip. Goddard motions for him to wipe.

GODDARD

W.R. here's looking for a story.
Take him to Bellevue.

CUT TO:

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL MORGUE - EVENING

Will and Arnold file in unnoticed among a gathering of reporters and physicians as CORONER inspects the (half) body.

ARNOLD

(sotto to Will)

Two pieces of some body were found at the pier and in Harlem.

WILL

And?

ARNOLD

And nothing.

Disappointed, Will watches Coroner measure the wingspan --

CORONER

He was about five foot eleven... He was very strong... You can tell by the muscle development. He was stabbed several times, poisoned, severed in - well - more than one place, possible signs of drowning and boiling. And I can say without hesitation that this...

(looks at the penis)
...man...was alive 48 hours ago.

There's a response, but Will's unimpressed. As he leaves Arnold there:

WILL

This isn't it.

Detective Carey steps forward to address. He hasn't been this important in some time - Arnold is ready to record for *the Journal* as is NED BROWN for *the World*.

CAREY

Initially we speculated the body was prepared for photography as for a medical college. But it still retains its organs and the wounds were inflicted before death. I imagine this section here, in the chest, was removed to erase some identifying mark, possibly a tattoo. The upper half, was most likely dropped in Brooklyn, the lower in Harlem, meaning different jurisdictions and impossible to know where the act was committed.

ARNOLD

What act, Detective?

CAREY

Murder.

QUOTE! MURMURING. Arnold sees Brown leave early...

INT. OFFICES OF THE NEW YORK WORLD - AFTERNOON

...Brown submits an article for tomorrow's *World*, titled: "River Mystery Grows in Horror"...

BRISBANE'S OFFICE

...Brisbane reviews articles, picks up Brown's; reads.

He grabs yesterday's *Sunday*, finds the River Gives Up a Murder Mystery article, lays today's next to it. He adds an exclamation point to the new title: "...Grows in Horror!"

Smirks.

INT. OFFICES OF THE NEW YORK WORLD - NIGHT

Brisbane walks the hall, finds Brown... (Nearby, we may notice a painter scratching "Editorial Manager" off the door of the recently-promoted Bradford.)

BRISBANE

Brown, good work on this river story. I'm thinking front page for the *Morning* - and *Evening*. Now, let's find an illustrator...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF NEW YORK - NIGHT/DAWN

Will wanders, thinking. Sees two Police step over a homeless man reaching up - not malicious, not helpful either.

He walks on. Nearby, *World* NEWSBOYS cut rope from the day's paper stacks. He sees they're hooked by something:

WORLD HEADLINE: "RIVER MYSTERY GROWS IN HORROR!"

And underneath the headline:

An ILLUSTRATION OF THE DEAD MAN'S HAND, GRABBING OUT AT THE READER. Gruesome and captivating.

NEWSBOY
The two pieces line up perfectly!

Will watches Boy spread his hand out, lining it up with the illustrated hand; smiles at the *World's* brilliant tactic...

And realizes.

CUT TO:

Will sprinting across the Row as fast as his legs can carry him, rushing past Nighthawk cabbies --

INT. JOURNAL OFFICES - WILL

Rummages through various article submissions, finds Arnold's.

WILL'S OFFICE - LATER

Will consults Arnold as he paces the room, energized...

WILL
You've been following this case...

ARNOLD
Yeah.

WILL
Tell me about it.

ARNOLD
Not much to tell. Two pieces of the same body, turned up in two different parts of the city...

As Arnold talks, Will takes a blue pencil to his MAP OF NEW YORK and colors in the Bowery near 11th St. Then West Brooklyn. Then Harlem.

WILL
What are the police doing about it?

ARNOLD

Heh, not much. They don't care
'bout a case like this.

WILL

A case like what?

ARNOLD

Unclaimed body, don't know whose
jurisdiction it's in - New York or
Brooklyn - don't want the headache.

WILL

What about justice for the victim?

Arnold snickers. Will grabs his *World*, leaves him there...

INT. BAR, TENDERLOIN DISTRICT - DAY

The same bar we were in earlier. Carvalho nurses a drink.
Sees Will come in, *World* paper in hand.

WILL (PRELAP)

Run my *Evening Edition*.

ANGLE - LATER

They're both at the bar, leaning close.

CARVALHO

Mr. He -- W.R. -- I told you I
appreciate your offer but... You
want a drink?

WILL

No - water, thanks - what if I told
you I had a story? Like you said,
a story on which to launch.

CARVALHO

What story?

Will throws the *World* onto the bar. Carvalho scans the page:

CARVALHO

A murder? No, a waste of time.

WILL

...The *World* wants it.

CARVALHO

The *World* can afford to.

WILL

(with a smile)

So can I.

CARVALHO

It's not news. Goddamn awful but --
look change in Cuba is news.
Change in New York is news.
Murders happen everyday.

WILL

That's what I thought too - everyday
a body's found in an alley, some
corpse on a corner - but how often
do body parts start popping up
across New York? He was hacked into
pieces. Spread around. It took
time. Savagery. And the police
don't care. The World will cover it
for a few days, milk the headlines,
and then this horrible crime will be
forgotten. But. What if we shed
light? Asked the right questions --

CARVALHO

What questions?

INSERT CUT: WORKERS UNLOAD A GOSS PRESS IN FRONT OF THE RHINELANDER BUILDING...

WILL

What crime warranted that? Who is
worthy of such a death? Who --

CARVALHO

Who thinks they can get away with it?

WILL

Exactly.

INSERT CUT: WORKERS PULL THE GOSS UPWARD, CARVALHO OVERSEES...

CARVALHO

You want to take on Pulitzer?

WILL

I want to run a paper as it's never
been done before. Let this be how
we do it. With real life on our
pages. They'll buy the Journal
because. It's. Theirs. "Murders
happen everyday" - how much longer
will people permit the apathy of
their guardians and leaders? No,
if any more go unsolved they will
tear this island apart. But if
they see that someone - we - are
willing to pick up the pieces of
this bloody puzzle, it will be the
Journal that unites all New York.

And the look on Carvalho's face tells us - he's in:

INT. RHINELANDER PRESSES ROOM - DAY

Will and Carvalho proudly survey a floor filled with presses. Their armory. And they're ready for war.

CARVALHO

All's left to do now: print a first issue - and hope they read it. Pulitzer's gonna try the usual...

WILL

The usual.

CARVALHO

Yeah. So what do you want to do?

WILL

Print a first issue. And make sure they read it...

INT. BRISBANE'S OFFICE, OFFICES OF THE NEW YORK WORLD - DAY

Brisbane delegates to Brown...

BRISBANE

First thing Mr. Pulitzer wants to do, offer the customary \$500. No one else will waste that kind of --

...As Seitz drops a paper on his desk. Brisbane's jaw drops.

EXT. PARK ROW - EVENING

In droves, they grab copies of the new *Evening Journal* as a Newsboy prepares to shout and we go

INT./EXT. LIBERTY YACHT - EARLY MORNING

A \$1.5 Million vessel at 300 feet. Pulitzer eases into a SILENT ROOM: like Chatwold's Tower, it filters exterior noise. Jabez hands Pulitzer the *Evening Journal*

JOURNAL HEADLINE: \$1000 REWARD

(And here is where we HEAR THE NEWSBOY shout the "extra!")

The gauntlet thrown. He reads, a thousand emotions swirling.

PULITZER

...well done. Little shit.

AND SO IT BEGINS...

CUT TO:

INT. RHINELANDER PRESSES ROOM - DAY

The machines are going, loud. An impressive sight. Will and Carvalho walk through, shouting over the noise.

CARVALHO

You got Pulitzer's attention, he'll be looking to control the story now!

WILL

This is our chance, Solly, can't let the World muscle us out!

CARVALHO

Their combined circulation is 750,000 - DAILY - almost 10 times our numbers! But look around, we can hit that --

WILL

I don't care how many we're printing, I care how many they're reading! We've got to grab 'em!

CARVALHO

Well...why should anyone care, they don't even know who the stiff is!

WILL

That's it! It Could Be Anyone!!

CUT TO:

JOURNAL HEADLINE: "IS ANY ONE YOU KNOW MISSING?"

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL MORGUE - MORNING

A CROWD strains to see if the body might belong to missing kin. Ned Brown pushes through; everyone watches an OLD WOMAN inspect the body and faint at the sight of the penis!

JOURNAL HEADLINE: Journal Investigates Identification Theory!

WORLD HEADLINE: No Theory! Dead Man's Valise Found!

JOURNAL HEADLINE: Asylum Escapee Wanted for Questioning!

WORLD HEADLINE: River Murder Most Likely Act of a Cannibal!

INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL MORGUE - DAY

A BIGGER CROWD has gathered to watch people try for an ID.

Among the gathered, Tessie watches, a copy of the *Journal* in hand. She smiles, proud of what Will has inspired.

IN BACK

Arnold pursues a different angle:

Interviewing Detective Carey as he plays with a piece of the red-and-yellow oil cloth (crime-scene evidence)...

CAREY

I was under Detective Thomas Byrnes when the charges came down. Pushed me out of the department...no fuckin' loyalty.

(Arnold nods, sympathetic)
Please don't print this but...I was excited to see a corpse again...the old wheels started turning - this cloth he was wrapped in, it's the key, you know. I was out but murder followed me here. And you brought me back. You and Mr. Hearst...

Mutual understanding as they look at the cloth in his hands.

MAIN ROOM - LATER

Curiosity having gotten the better of him, Brisbane enters, moleskin in hand. He takes notes on the crowd's interest.

Through the floor-show, he notices the nail on the body's right index finger is missing.

INSERT CUT: FLASHBACK - A HAND SENSUALLY RUBBING BRISBANE'S SHOULDER; THE SAME FINGER MISSING A NAIL.

BRISBANE
(to himself)
I know that hand...

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S OFFICE, JOURNAL OFFICES - DAY

There's a hustle-n-bustle. A BARBER gives Will a shave, Arnold pitches a story, Carvalho and Goddard read submissions. As Will flails about, Barber strains not to cut his face: *stop moving!*

WILL
So who is this Detective...Carey?

ARNOLD
He works Harlem. Two years ago, Commissioner Roosevelt tries "purging" the department of all corruption.

(MORE)

ARNOLD (CONT'D)
 Carey got thrown out with the bath water - he's been out "tending the goats" since. Hell, PD forgot about him 'till he came in with the second piece of body.

WILL
 So "disgruntled ex-bull," that's your angle?

ARNOLD
 No see *you're* the man pulled him out of the Stix... and he knows it. A loyal detective could be valuable.

He hands Will the oilcloth Carey was playing with - evidence.

WILL
 Very.

Onto the next piece of business:

The *Journal's* young Artist enters, Carvalho recognizes him:

CARVALHO
 Outcault, you work here, too?

WILL
 Of course, Outcault is the best artist in town, I bought him from Pulitzer two weeks before you...

Will looks at Outcault's famous *Yellow Kid* cartoon; caption: "SAY! HOGAN'S ALLEY HAS BEN CONDEMNED BY DE BOARD OF HELT."

WILL
 Imagine when Pulitzer sees the old snaggletoothed *Yellow Kid* in *our* pages. Ha! Good work, Outcault!

GODDARD
 But Pulitzer owns the rights to the *Hogan's Alley* title, doesn't he?

WILL
 The title - but not the image...
 (and he realizes:)
 And it's the image that captures attention! Arnold, Carey thinks the oilcloth's the key: track it, supplier to the buyer. Take the beat ten men we've got with you.

CARVALHO
 We can't lose ten men to one story.

Will starts sketching madly: his own comic. The others strain to see as the sketch comes to life: a squad of heroes.

WILL

Not lost, just... reallocated. It's a race with the World to uncover the identity of this victim. We need every advantage we can get. One reporter collects piecemeal, but the image of a group is odd, attracts attention - and will bring the stories to us... I see a cabal spiriting around New York. Give 'em badges, hell give 'em guns!

GODDARD

I don't think we can issue badges.

WILL

Sure we can. The blue boys didn't want it - let 'em sit this one out.

CARVALHO

So what'll they say, your badges?

WILL

Journal...Journal Murder squad.
(Makes himself smile)
George, spiriting around New York.
Get some of those new contraptions,
real futuristic-like. With lights!
Blazing in the night together...

And Arnold's off running. Carvalho leans to Goddard --

CARVALHO

What new contraptions?

CUT TO:

BICYCLE WHEELS as we see --

SERIES OF SHOTS: ARNOLD AND THE MURDER SQUAD race through NY on bronze bicycles, weaving through crowds. We think we've seen it all, then Will comes riding out in front, a crusader!

Riding through the Theatre District, Will goes right passed Tessie. They lock eyes. He smiles at her, rides on --

Using the Red-and-Yellow Oilcloth sample, they hit up manufacturer A.F. Buchanan & Sons. Then every one of its retailers. Interviewing (and intimidating) salesmen, reading ledger books, eventually coming to Riger's Dry Goods Store.

D.B-3220 matches the cloth. Arnold checks the purchaser...

CUT TO:

INT. MURRAY HILL TURKISH BATH HOUSE, TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Marble floors, steamy. Brisbane approaches the counter.
FRANK GARTNER, 40s, rail thin, operates.

BRISBANE

Morning, I'd like to have a massage
today.

GARTNER

I'll see what's available. Say,
you've been in here before, no?

BRISBANE

Yes, well, in my line of work, a
man often needs some relaxation.

GARTNER

What kind of work is that?

BRISBANE

...Oh, a little reporting...
(as if just remembering)
You know last time I was here, I
had a rubber I was very happy with.
He was tall, quite strapping...
(taking a shot)
He had something on his chest --

GARTNER

Oh that sounds like Villy.

BRISBANE

Villy...

GARTNER

Well "Willy," but he's a Bavarian.
Tattoo on his chest of a woman and
a dick the size of my arm. Willy
Guldensuppe. But now that I think
about it, he hasn't been in the
last few days...

Bingo. Brisbane pulls out his moleskin nonchalantly...

BRISBANE

Hm. If I wanted to maybe find him?

GARTNER

He ain't in trouble is he?

BRISBANE

What could I do about it, right?
But no I was thinking about a human
interest story: kind of men come
into a place like this. I wanted
to get it from the horse's mouth.

Brisbane slides Gartner a buck; he looks through a directory.

GARTNER
 1671 Eastburn...No wait --
 (Brisbane crosses it out)
 He never moved in there, no he's,
 well he's been staying at...

EXT. 439 NINTH AVENUE APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

GARTNER (V.O.)
 ...439 Ninth Avenue. Boarding
 under a woman...

Brisbane stares up at the low-rent tenement. Laundry hangs from fire escapes, heat sizzles off the brick. Nearby, a local soap salesman makes the rounds: "Soap, only a nickle!"

INT. HALLWAY, APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Brisbane walks to a door. A plaque reads: "AUGUSTA NACK - LICENSED MIDWIFE." He writes it down. About to knock, checks his pockets - empty. Thinks...

INT. AUGUSTA NACK'S APARTMENT - A KNOCK

AUGUSTA NACK, 40, German and hair askew, opens the door - Brisbane is there holding a suitcase.

BRISBANE
 Afternoon ma'am. Selling soap
 today at 5 cents; only a nickle.

AUGUSTA
 No, thank you --

BRISBANE
 Oh but ma'am, try the first bar,
 get the second only a penny. At
 third free you're making a steal.
 Why not try for yourself!

Finally she let's him in. He has trouble with the latches as he opens the case; pulls out a bar. Augusta takes it, heads for a bathroom O.S. Brisbane notices a few PACKED SUITCASES.

BRISBANE
 Planning a trip?

AUGUSTA (O.S.)
 (running the water)
 My first since I came to New York.
 Have to let the water get hot.

Brisbane's looking around for any sign "Villy" was here.

BRISBANE
Take your time. So you headed out
with your husband?

AUGUSTA (O.S.)
I'm not married.

The faucet shuts off. He needs more time --

BRISBANE
Oh, didn't mean to pry, ma'am.
How's it smell?

AUGUSTA (O.S.)
Smell?

BRISBANE
(making it up as he goes)
Well yes, any bar of soap cleans
but see mine makes the hands of a
lady smell...like a lady. First
thing a gentleman caller notices.

Faucet comes back on. He continues his search, then sees --

A PHOTOGRAPH: AUGUSTA and "VILLY" GULDENSUPPE at the beach.
His shirt off, a tattoo on his chest. Brisbane swipes the
photo, sticks it in the briefcase just as she returns.

AUGUSTA
No thank you.

BRISBANE
Very well. Can I get the bar back?

AUGUSTA
I already used half...

Brisbane gives her a look: con artist. BEAT. She gives him
a nickle. He smirks and goes. PRELAP PULITZER CHUCKLING...

INT. SAND TREATMENT ROOM, SPA

Candles flicker, steam rises off a sand-covered floor. Buried
up to his neck, Pulitzer listens to Jabez give his report.

PULITZER
So he found him. Seems Mr. Hearst
has a few things to learn yet.
Cable Brisbane... I want him to
print the corpse ID on Sunday, pull
pressure off the *Evening*, bring the
intelligent crowd and rabble back
together...

INSERT CUT: BRISBANE READS THE CABLE, DISAPPOINTED...

PULITZER

And I want him to cut down on the Goddamn help-wanted classifieds, we don't run a fucking unemployment office. And thicker paper grade for the *Sunday*, at least 46 grams per.

Satisfied, Pulitzer's eyes close as he eases back in...

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S OFFICE, JOURNAL OFFICES - EVENING

Arnold bursts in, Will and Carvalho are hunched over reading.

ARNOLD

Found it! The Oilcloth came from a dry goods on the Lower East Side: we found the record of a buyer - with an address!

WILL

Wouldn't happen to be 439 Ninth Avenue, would it?

Arnold is stunned, Will hands him an *EVENING WORLD*. An article below the fold reads: ANOTHER IDENTIFICATION.

ARNOLD

"439..." But it only says it's a possible ID, not even the headline!

CARVALHO

It's more. There's no byline but I worked alongside Brisbane for seven years, I know that wit - it's his prose. And he's on to something.

ARNOLD

So why sit on it?

CARVALHO

Probably waiting for his majesty's permission to run it in full. Why Brisbane continues to subject himself to Pulitzer's shit is beyond me.

WILL

World's teasing the headline of the year; he wants to take back all the readers we gained.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
 The *Journal*'s a new operation - we go down once, no one gives us the chance to get back up. We have to get this ID and put it out there first.

(thinking)
 They'll have to go back, won't they? Canvas with the bulls...?

(then)
 Solly, how much money is left in the account?

CARVALHO
 ...Why?

Will's out the door...

CARVALHO
 Wait, W.R. - why? Why?

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICE, 439 NINTH AVENUE, APARTMENT BUILDING - SUNSET
 LANDLORD, a little bald man sits in a humdrum office.

WILL (O.S.)
 Hi there. Lovely day, no?

Will walks in looking the regular man he wants to be.
 Landlord looks him up and down, sees his odd bicycle outside.

LANDLORD
 Who ah you?

WILL
 Name's Will. Are you the landlord of this building?

LANDLORD
 Yeah, you lookin' for a room?

WILL
 I'm lookin' for a building...

CUT TO:

EXT. 439 NINTH AVENUE, APARTMENT BUILDING - DAY

Ned Brown and other *World* reporters stride up, confident.
 Two men in bowler hats GUARD THE ENTRANCE.

MAN IN HAT
 Where do you think you're going?

BROWN
Inside. What's it to you?

MAN IN HAT
Private property.

Man in Hat flashes a badge: JOURNAL MURDER SQUAD. A couple cops walk up - Man in Hat lets them in, turns to Brown:

MAN IN HAT
Run along now.

Nearby, a *World* man tries a public phone - the cords have been cut! Man in Hat smiles at his handy-work.

BROWN
He bought the whole fucking building?!

INT. AUGUSTA NACK'S APARTMENT - WILL

Eats an apple as Police canvas. *Journal* men "help" interview neighbors, check the roof, etc. Arnold brings Carey over...

ARNOLD
Detective Art Carey, may I present William Randolph Hearst.

CAREY
Mr. Hearst.

WILL
Call me W.R. What can you tell me, Detective?

CAREY
Well there's no way to be certain, but the evidence indicates the man's name was Willy Guldensuppe. A Bavarian, works as a masseuse at a Turkish Baths not far from here.

WILL
And the woman, Nack?

CAREY
Caught her trying to hop a steamer to Hamburg - "to visit family."

INSERT CUT: AT THE DOCKS, AUGUSTA NACK COMMANDS HIRED MEN TO LOAD HER TRUNKS ONTO A STEAMER AS POLICE APPROACH...

CAREY
Doesn't look like she left in a hurry though.
(MORE)

CAREY (CONT'D)
And when you see the size of her,
there's no way she could overpower
a man that big. But Willy was a
boarder here same as a lot of other
men - any one of 'em could have
bought that cloth. You should
know, she claims he's still alive.

WILL
(beat)
Well, we have to hold onto her -
'till we have the story straight.
(Carey understands)
Thank you, Detective.

CAREY
Thank you.

HALLWAY

Arnold pulls out a cigarette as he walks with Will...

ARNOLD
You know, if he *isn't* dead...
(Will shoots him a look)
So if it's another boarder, it
means the killer's still at large.

WILL
...Find me signs of a murder.

Arnold lights a match on the "Licensed Midwife" plaque.

INT. PRISON CELL, THE TOMBS - DAY

Augusta Nack sits in a jail cell. Carey approaches the bars.

AUGUSTA
On what charge am I being held?

Carey has to consult Will, who steps out of shadow.

WILL
Expired boarding permit.

Creative. Augusta and Will eye each other - as adversaries.

CUT TO:

EXT. HORSE CAB - DAY

Will enjoys the sun. Cabbie stops for pedestrians. Will realizes he's in a crossfire: four newsboys from four different papers all SHOUT different headlines from their corners.

But somehow they all sound the same...

INT. RHINELANDER PRESSES ROOM - DAY

Presses ready to run, Carvalho oversees. Will enters.

CARVALHO

I think your gamble's paying off!
Circulation's at 220,000! And
they're reprinting us in St. Louis,
Chicago, Chattanooga - printing the
ID will make the *Journal* a *national*
title --

WILL

We printed half a dozen theories,
what makes this one any different?

CARVALHO

W.R., we beat everyone! We put a
name to New York's lost son --

WILL

He'll be an orphan lest we make
them remember it. Delay it.

CARVALHO

Can't delay it, W.R. Long as we've
got printers, we print.

Carvalho signals the Operator to "go". Will calmly walks to
a pile of replacement ductor roller poles, takes one --

And SWINGS HARD onto the INKING TRAIN, ink splatters! *CLANG!*
CLANG! Busting up the Goss. Well now they'll have to delay.

CARVALHO

W.R. what the fuck?!!

WILL

Please, Solly, the language. Now
nothing we print matters if we
can't make it stick --

Will looks at the bashed press...and his BLACK fingers.

WILL

So let's print it right.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK ROW - EVENING

Brisbane walks, notices a SEA OF RED in his peripheral view --

INT. DRESSING ROOM - TESSIE

Carefully pencils eye shadow as Will SLAMS a copy of the *Evening Journal* in front of her - she jumps!

TESSIE

Ah! Will how did you -- you can't just come barging --

He holds it up, headline is a glorious red: VICTIM IDENTIFIED AS WILLY GULDENSUPPE!

TESSIE

Oh My God, it's in color!

WILL

First in history for a breaking story. I wanted to show you.

TESSIE

(touched)

It's beautiful. So you found him! Oh Will, I'm...I'm really happy you took on this story. They've all been reading.

WILL

What about you? You been reading?

(she smiles)

I want to celebrate. You hungry?

TESSIE

Will...I don't belong in your restaurants.

WILL

Actually I had a different idea...

CUT TO:

INT. BAR/RESTAURANT, TENDERLOIN DISTRICT - NIGHT

DANCING! A huddle stomps and swirls to joyous Immigrant music. Will drinks water on the side until Tessie pulls him to the center. Patrons pat him on the back. Accept him.

After, Tessie's theatre friends clamor to sit with Will.

FRIEND (MAN)

Did you always wanna run papers?

WILL

(looks to Tessie)

Well... there was a time, I thought I might be a ranch-hand.

(off their looks)

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
Yeah, my father owned a ranch -
Babicora. 900,000 acres; beautiful,
open, the way the explorers would
have seen it...

FRIEND (WOMAN)
So how'd you wind up in newspapers?

WILL
Just, uh...one of those things.

FRIEND (MAN)
Well cheers! To the man who found
Willy Guldensuppe. I'm sure you
gave his family closure, even if
they never find the killer.

WILL
(intrigued)
You've given up so soon?

FRIEND (MAN)
Well...I suppose there's still the
question of "why." Why'd he do it?

WILL
What do you think?

FRIEND (MAN)
Me?

WILL
Yeah, you. Why's a rubber from
some midtown bath house getting
chopped up. What do you think?

BEAT. Then laughter. Tessie loves the way he interacts with
them.

INT. APARTMENT, THE HOFFMAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Will leads Tessie into the room. BEAT. He steps away. She
looks on him with Respect. And an old love is reignited.
She kisses him, he holds her close...

LATER

Tessie lays in bed, rolls over to see Will sitting on the
edge, flipping the page proofs with his toes. She laughs.
She comes around, sits between his legs, shows him how-to
with a real dancer's graze. They turn the pages together.

TESSIE
Do you think you'll ever go back to
Babicora?

WILL
One day.

INT. BRISBANE'S OFFICE, OFFICES OF NEW YORK WORLD - NIGHT
Brisbane reads the *Journal's* front page story, frustrated...

PULITZER'S TOP FLOOR OFFICE

Floor-to-ceiling windows out which we see Lady Liberty lit. Frescoed ceilings, walls wainscoted with leather; all covered in dust. Brisbane walks through, fingers grazing, wishing. Off the empty King's Chair --

INT. HOTEL SUITE - NIGHT

Pulitzer reads a telegram, only one word we need to see:
"COLOR"

In between labored COUGHS he orders a group of male secretaries. One is BUTES, British.

PULITZER
Get word to Arthur that --

BUTES
Sir, the cable offices are closed --

PULITZER
Then break the fucking windows and climb in! Too savage? Buy off the operator, but you tell Brisbane, tonight, I want six color presses.

BUTES
...Yes Sir...but what is it we're to print in this new color?

CUT TO:

INT. WORLD PRESSES ROOM, NEW YORK - LATE NIGHT

Brisbane yawns as the *Morning* is set for print. We only see part of the headline: "...IDENTIFICATION..." It's colored.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT, THE HOFFMAN HOUSE - BEFORE DAWN

Will kisses a sleeping Tessie as he heads out for work...

EXT. THE HOFFMAN HOUSE - BEFORE DAWN

As Will leaves, he sees a thin man in TUXEDO standing out front holding a silver tray with a glass of Brandy on top.

WILL
Waiting for someone?

BENNETT JR. (O.S.)
Lap number six, here I come!

Bennett Jr., seen earlier at the pier party, rides up in a three-piece suit on a *boneshaker* (bicycle with big wheel in front, little wheel in back). He grabs the glass of Brandy.

BENNETT JR.
Evening, W.R.

WILL
James Bennett, Jr. - actually it's 4:30 in the morning. What are you doing out here?

BENNETT JR.
(downs the Brandy)
Exercise! Come ride with me!

He wheels out another boneshaker as Will heads off to work --

WILL
Another time.

BENNETT JR.
You frightened?
(then)
You know printing the ID was a mistake...

Will stops - Bennett knows he's got him.

BENNETT JR.
Jameson, lucky number seven coming up - make it a double this time.

CUT TO:

Will and Bennett racing around the block at 4:30 a.m.

BENNETT JR.
I saw your boys on these, I just had to have one!

They pass Valet, Bennett grabs the Brandy without stopping, takes a sip, throws the glass into the street: *clash!*

BENNETT JR.
So it's just you and Pulitzer now,
eh? Forget us other poor saps...

Bennett nearly knocks over a drunk-passerby, doesn't slow.

WILL
Your father's *Herald* invented the
modern paper, James.

BENNETT JR.
But how quickly the story changes -
he had his devoted following 'till
Jewseph Pulitzer came along... with
a Nose to overshadow him, haha!

WILL
Here's your chance to *restore* it.

BENNETT JR.
No, the paper was my father's game.
Dividends keep me fed... But you,
you beat Pulitzer and you win the
people's trust.

(prodding)
Or's it a bit the other way 'round?
You wanna beat him don't (you?) --

Will stops. Bennett realizes and turns around.

BENNETT JR.
You haven't thought it all the way
through.

WILL
What was wrong with the I.D.?

BENNETT JR.
There was this murder in Chicago...
A sausage maker named - well who
can remember - he stuffed his wife
into one of his vats, boiled her to
death. That was the story, except
they couldn't ID the body...

(Will doesn't get it)
You printed the ID, but Nack claims
Villy is still alive; you can be
proven wrong. If you're wrong,
you're no longer trusted. And
that's what he wants. He has to
put you down now. As long as the
head is missing, Pulitzer can win.
Because there is doubt.

WILL
Why are you helping me...I thought
you didn't care about newspapers.

Bennett urinates into the street, his back to Will.

BENNETT JR.
 I don't. Father wasted his life on
 deadlines and ink just to have it
 snatched away, not me...
 (buttoning up his fly)
 Still, what son doesn't carry his
 father's shame everywhere he goes?
 (beat, then walks on)
 Remember W.R., Park Row is only
 ever the crown and the competition.

Bennett disappears into the night as nearby a *World* cart drops the morning paper. Now we see it in full:

WORLD HEADLINE: THE IDENTIFICATION IN QUESTION!

WILL (V.O.)
 (into a phone)
 Hello Solly? It's W.R. - I want to
 change the headline...

CUT TO:

JOURNAL HEADLINE: JOURNAL ORDERS FOUR LAUNCHES TO SEARCH EAST RIVER FOR MISSING HEAD! WILL PROVE VICTIM'S IDENTITY!

INT. BRISBANE'S OFFICE, OFFICES OF NEW YORK WORLD - SUNSET

Brisbane fell asleep reading the paper. A hand gently shakes him - Kate Pulitzer, here with baby Herbert. Warm, reserved:

KATE
 Evening.

BRISBANE
 Mrs. Pulitzer, evening. What are you doing here?

KATE
 I thought I'd take Herbert to see where his father works.

BRISBANE
 Joseph's office is on the 12th.

But she sets Herbert down on the desk, lets him crawl. They both watch him as they speak of other things.

KATE
 It's good to see you. Though you look terrible - I know you've been working hard, but are you alright?

BRISBANE

I am. Thank you for asking. I am.
(she's not buying it)
I just knew him is all. Guldensuppe.
Not well, not well at all actually
but...I knew him and now he's dead.
And I feel a little strange.

KATE

No, you're angry. And you're
allowed to be, it was a gruesome
thing done to this man.

BRISBANE

Yes but gruesome things come across
my desk every day. I never felt
anything for *them*. And, as editor
for the largest paper in the world,
never *did* anything for them
either... I'd like to find out what
happened to this man. I'm going to.

She watches him, admiring the display of conscience.

KATE

I've missed you. I think about --

BRISBANE

Mrs. Pulitzer --

KATE

Why are you calling me that?

BRISBANE

Because it's your name.

KATE

You used to call me --

BRISBANE

And that was a mistake. I betrayed
him.

BEAT. Neither one has spoken of this in some time.

KATE

No, you were good to me. While he
was in France or wherever he goes,
you were good to me... Anyway you
repaid your debt many times over
I'm sure, doing all his bid(ding) --

BRISBANE

I love working for him. And I owe
him a lot.

A KNOCK at the door. Seitz enters, surprised to see Kate --

SEITZ

Mrs. Pulitzer, uh, evening...
 Arthur, something's happened...

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S OFFICE, JOURNAL OFFICES - SAME TIME

Arnold bursts in, Will looks up --

ARNOLD

Carey's found a second suspect:
Martin Thorn.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK: DETECTIVE CAREY APPROACHES A BARBERSHOP...

ARNOLD (V.O.)

One of Augusta Nack's neighbors
 mentioned one of her boarders was a
 barber, but didn't know where...

*FLASHBACK: INSIDE THE BARBERSHOP, CAREY TAKES A STRAIGHT-
 RAZOR SHAVE AS HE CHATS UP A BARBER...*

ARNOLD (V.O.)

Carey's industrious, I'll tell ya.
 Took fifteen shaves in one day,
 going around, trying to find him...

*FLASHBACK: INSIDE A SECOND BARBERSHOP, CAREY'S FACE IS BRIGHT
 RED FROM RAZOR BURN AS A BARBER LATHERS HIS CHEEKS. HE
 GRIMACES AS HE TAKES THE RAZOR, ASKING MORE QUESTIONS...*

ARNOLD (V.O.)

They're a chatty lot them barbers -
 turns out one has a grudge against
 "Villy". Martin Thorn stayed at
 Nack's right before the Bavarian,
 which explains why we traced the
 oilcloth there. And get this...

FLASHBACK - INT. VOGEL'S BARBERSHOP - DAY

*Carey, face on fire, squirms as another loquacious Barber
 approaches with a razor. A quiet man sweeps hair in back...*

LATER - Carey talks to the quiet sweeper (named JOHN GOTHA).

ARNOLD (V.O.)

Off the tip of another barber - a
 John Gotha - he found out Thorn
 owns a cottage in Woodside, Queens.

FLASHBACK - EXT. COTTAGE, WOODSIDE, QUEENS - DAY

A plumbing pipe snakes out to a nearby pond where ducks bathe. A FARMER tosses bread crumbs...

ARNOLD (V.O.)

They widened the search, checked waters all the way down to Staten Island, guess what they found?

FLASHBACK - INT. BELLEVUE HOSPITAL MORGUE - NIGHT

A push cart wheels in: TWO ROTTED LEGS, sawn halfway through. Line them up. Except for the head, the body is complete.

FLASHBACK: POLICE HQS, ARNOLD AND CAREY EXCHANGE DOLLARS...

ARNOLD (V.O.)

Gotha's agreed to help the bulls set up a sting to catch Thorn. I asked Carey for an exclusive.

WILL

Good thinking...

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY ALLEY - NIGHT

A dark corridor, gas arc lamps illuminate zigzag patterns. Police hide in doorways, behind crates, etc.

And Will is here, huddled next to Carey, nervous...

A man walks in and out of darkness. MARTIN THORN, 30s, bearded, dirty... he steps into light --

They pounce! Thorn throws punches, one catches Will's jaw, he goes down. But the cops are brutal, kicking and clubbing him to the ground. As Thorn is hauled away, John Gotha steps out and nods to Carey - a positive ID. Carey helps Will up - he's just a little shaken...

EXT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS, MULBERRY STREET - DAWN

Superimpose: New York Police Headquarters

Carey escorts a cuffed Thorn from a Police Wagon. Across the street, Arnold reports from a window. Next door, reporters from a different paper. And so on down the line - an entire row occupied 24/7 by reporters keeping watch on Police HQ...

CUT TO:

EXT. PULITZER'S JEKYLL ISLAND ESTATE - DAY

A lavish debutante party for Pulitzer's 17 year-old, LUCILLE. Delicate, she plays hostess to 100 guests; a table of caged canaries for party favors. At a table, Brisbane finds Pulitzer's brother ALBERT, about 300 pounds, shoving a piece of cake into his mouth.

BRISBANE

Well if it isn't Albert Pulitzer,
good to see you.

ALBERT

You mean "surprised". I assume my
sister-in-law made the guest list.

BRISBANE

Why don't you go say hello to him?

ALBERT

Why break a longstanding tradition?
He knows where to find me.

Pulitzer stands on the periphery - in sunglasses - awkwardly positioned to see out his good eye. Brisbane joins him.

BRISBANE

Glad to see you stateside again.
How long will we have the pleasure?

A peacock SQUAWKS, setting off pain all over Pulitzer's body - he has his answer. He notices Pulitzer's awkward stance.

BRISBANE

How are your eyes?
(no response, he sighs)
She's beautiful. As is the affair.

PULITZER

\$10,000 for a Goddamn party.

They both watch Kate, beautiful today, a real socialite.

BRISBANE

You could have told her "no."

But he didn't. They walk the garden's edge, avoiding guests.

BRISBANE

Well it'll attract the right kind
of husband.

PULITZER

My name takes care of that. But
what don't they know: she's fluent
in five languages, she's an artist,
a musician...she didn't want this --

BRISBANE
She's having a lovely time.

PULITZER
Look at 'em all. Just wait until
you get your paper. They line up
to bark favors, their *opinions* --

BRISBANE
I have to get my paper first.

PULITZER
You have to bring up my *Evening*
numbers first.

BRISBANE
Is the *Evening* important again?

PULITZER
You have something to say to me?

BRISBANE
It was a mistake to wait on the ID.
We don't have the luxury to wait a
day on a story, let alone 'till the
end of a week. It moves too quick.

Pulitzer stops. He watches all the people, suddenly uneasy.

PULITZER
This Hearst moves quick, pilfering
my staff, our leads, but also with
his stories. If his suspect is
wrong the *Journal* loses all clout --
do we know all these people?

BRISBANE
(thrown, looks around)
I assume; Kate made the guest list.

Pulitzer's head cocks from side to side, trying to pick up
bits of dialogue, slightly paranoid. Brisbane continues --

BRISBANE
...the detective on the case is as
much a *Journal* man now as Carvalho
or Goddard. He brings the evidence
to them before Mulberry St.

PULITZER
So he has Manhattan, but the murder
happened in Queens, no?
(beat)
He wants to clear the Nack woman.

BRISBANE
She may not be involved --

PULITZER

She's involved. Just have to prove it. I need some fucking quiet. Tell Kate, I want a copy of the guest list and a list of everyone who was actually here - who knows what other tactics he's used. Then get to Queens and find me a story.

He heads back to the house as violinists play, passing Kate.

KATE

Joseph, how about a waltz? Like we used to.

PULITZER

It all...it looks wonderful, Kate.

He goes inside. Kate catches Brisbane's eyes, he looks away.

CUT TO:

EXT. COTTAGE, WOODSIDE, QUEENS - DAY

Superimpose: Woodside, Queens

Farmhouses, overgrown marshy lots; churches are the tallest buildings. Lawn bowling and shooting galleries have always been main attractions - until now:

Police hold back a crowd trying to get close to the "Murder House". Around back, Ned Brown sneaks in through a hedge...

INT. COTTAGE, WOODSIDE, QUEENS - DAY

Brown quietly makes his way upstairs. Numbered cards label various marks in the house. In the bathroom:

A WHITE PORCELAIN TUB.

In the hallway, he notices something others missed. A small hole - a bullet hole? Nearby, A BLOOD SPOT on a floorboard.

Brown eyes the distance from the hole to the blood spot. Looks around...

CUTS a piece of the floorboard out; pockets it...

INT. LABORATORY - NIGHT

Brown and Brisbane watch a CHEMIST scrape the blood off the piece of floorboard and test it in a liquid...

CUT TO:

INT. "HERALD SQUARE" BROADWAY THEATRE - NIGHT

Will watches Tessie perform from his usual seat, enamored by her. Suddenly, Carvalho sticks his head in, *World* in hand.

IN THE HALL - Will reads as Carvalho and Goddard look on...

EVENING WORLD HEADLINE: BLOOD IN THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY!
Science Proves Alternate Theory

CARVALHO

W.R. it's just another theory --

WILL

We said it could not have been Nack
- a little frail woman against a
man his size. A bullet hole means
a gun and a gun takes size out of
the equation! Looks like we don't
know what we're talking about!

His angry mood so different from the audience laughter O.S.

GODDARD

I thought Carey told us --

CARVALHO

Carey works Manhattan. Pulitzer may
have gotten to the Queens force --

WILL

Pulitzer is in Europe or shut in on
his boat. And he's still ahead.
What do I have to do? Hm?

GODDARD

(very sarcastic)

Steal evidence, apparently.

Audience laughs, applauds O.S. Will peeks in on the crowd
reacting to the play. And it dawns on him. A true epiphany:

WILL

No. We just have to entertain them.
It's not enough to be their
advocate. We have to excite them
with drama. Engage them. With
engaging stories.

GODDARD

...you want to change the stories?

WILL

No no, the facts are the facts.
But we can *tailor* them.

Goddard looks at him, slightly concerned. Carvalho notices.

WILL

Look Morrill, no one has done more than the *Journal* to bring justice to this case. When the police gave up we stepped in, we may even solve this thing. But it's symbiotic, they have to keep us around long enough to help. And it's our job to give them a reason why they should. Sugar with the medicine.

CARVALHO

So where do you want to take it?

WILL

Pulitzer has them asking about Thorn - fine. Carey had a source, the barber that helped set the sting. But not just any barber, a friend of Thorn's - the friend who "betrayed" him.

GODDARD

...And how exactly do we bring *him* back in?

WILL

(heading back in)
The *Journal* promised a reward. And it has yet to be claimed...

CUT TO:

INT. GRAND JURY SESSION - DAY

Gotha gives a deposition. Everyone listens, rapt...

GOTHA

He told me that he...he shot and stabbed him, then cut him up in a bathtub, out in Woodside, Queens...

EXT. JOURNAL OFFICE, TRIBUNE BUILDING - DAY

And John Gotha receives a \$1000 check from Carvalho. They pose for a photo. CHEERS from the gathered throng...

INT. HOUSE OF HORRORS, EDEN MUSÉE DIME WAX MUSEUM - DAY

A crowd gleefully observes the latest edition:

A DETAILED WAX REPLICA of the murder: Thorn holds a saw to "Villy", bits of red drip into a white bathtub. So real!

INT. JOURNAL OFFICES - DAY

Carvalho reviews Arnold's article. A sub-heading reads:

"Journal Takes Part in Arrest"

Carvalho crosses out "Takes Part in." He writes something else, then hands the page to Outcault the artist...

EXT. MIKE LYON'S ALL DAY/ALL NIGHT RESTAURANT - EVENING

Will and Tessie exit, seized upon by a horde clutching *Journal* copies. Under the headline:

"Journal Leads Arrest." And an illustration of Will heading Thorn's arrest party. Tessie beams with pride.

Policeman steps forward, shakes Will's hand for keeping the streets safe. While they're all looking at the illustration:

BULB FLASH! A young PHOTOGRAPHER snaps a picture. Will's enamored - by the camera...

NEWSBOY
The *World* Desperate! If
Guldensuppe is dead, *World* fears
it's going to be dead, too!

EXT. EAST RIVER - DAY

Four GIANT MOTORIZED BOATS dredge the water with a series of hook-lines. Passersby stop to watch from above...

INT. WILL'S OFFICE, JOURNAL OFFICES - DAY

Will colors more of his New York Map: the city of Queens and East Manhattan. Half of Greater New York is now blue...

CUT TO:

INT. SILENT ROOM, LIBERTY YACHT - NIGHT

Pulitzer grips the telegraph message Butes just handed him.

PULITZER
Goddamnit! God DAMN him! Fucking
John Gotha just *happens* to testify
the moment we come out against
Nack? Unscrupulous cocksucker!
They lose faith in a case against
Nack...we'll restore it. Who is
this fucking boy, hm? Who is he to
come at me with nothing...

Butes takes the momentary silence as a signal to leave.

PULITZER

I took on Bennett, Dana, Godkin, Shurz... and this child tries to bait me with innuendo and Goddamn fabrication?! Appealing to the most base levels of bullshit. We must smash this fucking interloper!

He SMASHES furniture, enraged and exerted when suddenly --

He grabs his eye. Slumps, breathing heavily, wheezing. He scoots onto the bed, clutching his eye. HOLD. A while.

DISSOLVE TO:

THE DOOR OPENS - Jabez wheels a breakfast cart in.

JABEZ

Breakfast, sir. Mr. Pulitzer?

He opens the curtains, DAYLIGHT streams onto Pulitzer's face.

No reaction. He is blind. They both know it.

Both frozen in terror. Pulitzer feels around to the cart. He smells the coffee, feels for a roll - BREAKS it apart, HEARS flakes HIT the plate. All other senses coming into play. He finds his way to a chair, sits, exhausted.

PULITZER

(an attempt at humor)

So quiet, Jabez, anything wrong?

(then)

If my men think me incapacitated, they'll put me out to pasture.

His hand finds a rolled newspaper on the cart - Jabez gulps.

PULITZER

My subordinates are letting this boy creep in like...darkness

(he tries to laugh)

No more gallivanting, Jabez. I have work to do...

INT. OFFICES OF NEW YORK WORLD - DAY

Brisbane finds Seitz at his desk, munching away on a snack.

BRISBANE

He's coming in.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEW YORK HARBOR - EVENING

Liberty sails to the docks. In the distance, the *World* Tower Dome catches setting sun's light - a beacon calling him home.

CUT TO:

INT. CHATWOLD MANSION - DAY

Jabez leads Brisbane, Seitz, Butes and business manager JOHN NORRIS through the magnificent house to the Tower of Silence. They pass Kate. Brisbane nods cordially and moves on. Jabez opens a door for all of them, then stops Brisbane to speak...

INT. TOWER OF SILENCE, CHATWOLD - DAY

Brisbane enters. Darker than usual, Pulitzer's at his desk one with the gloom like a Fuseli painting. As they pace, gesture wildly, Pulitzer stays seated, a rock. In this way, it is more difficult to notice his handicaps.

NORRIS

Mr. Pulitzer, *The World's* weekday readership now sits squarely at 435,000. *The Journal's* is 400.
(beat, lets it sink in)
And if he continues at this rate, Hearst will surpass the *World* in a matter of weeks.

BRISBANE

How is that possible? Joseph didn't even rise that fast.

NORRIS

No one has ever risen this fast.
Not on Park Row, not anywhere.

SEITZ

It's the way he's been reporting.
Facts of the case aren't nearly as important as the way in which he reveals them. It's not just about frights, it's a whole narrative --

BUTES

We can compete. Challenge him directly.

BRISBANE

A battle in the gutter, we both wind up covered in shit.

BUTES

Then what do you suggest?

NORRIS

A price cut. Fifty percent. We bring it down to a penny.

BRISBANE

The *Morning*?

NORRIS

And *Evening* --

Pulitzer's hand SLAMS against the table, making them jump - and reminding them he's still in the room.

PULITZER

Back to a fucking penny. Took me years to get here...

SEITZ

There's little stigma anymore, even the *Journal*'s slogan is "You can't pay less than a cent, you can't --"

PULITZER

I don't care about the FUCKING JOURNAL'S SLOGAN!

NORRIS

Yours is still the standard, sir. The name most trust. Make the *World* a penny paper, I guarantee we sell a million copies overnight. The flood will attract a whole gaggle of advertisers and we'll leave that rich prick in the dust.

BRISBANE

Cut down to a penny, we operate at a loss. Chief, do it for too long, even you could lose everything.

Hard to tell if Pulitzer is registering the fact.

NORRIS

Once Hearst is gone we can re-raise costs. But if you don't get rid of the competition, it'll be Hearst who's setting prices. And Hearst who sits on the throne.

WE SLOWLY PUSH IN on Pulitzer, deciding, as the debate heats up around him.

BRISBANE (O.S.)

We could reach out to his people, maybe even to Hearst directly...

NORRIS (O.S.)
How would that look --

SEITZ (O.S.)
Assuming he'd be receptive --

BROWN (O.S.)
I could get word to George Arnold --

BRISBANE (O.S.)
Reporter to reporter, approach it
like a *business* arrangement --

PULITZER
None of you are going.

This is felt around the room, Brisbane shakes his head.

PULITZER
This is a matter to be settled
proprietor to proprietor. He's
copied me, engaged me - he'll
listen to me. I'll meet with Mr.
Hearst myself.

CUT TO:

INT. DELMONICO'S RESTAURANT - AFTERNOON

The creme-de-la-creme of 5th Avenue Steakhouses - and the entire place is empty except in the back, a table's candle glows and a man eats alone: Pulitzer. Will approaches...

PULITZER
My staff just told me you were
expelled from school for sending
each of your professors chamber
pots with their names engraved on
the sides... it wouldn't have done
the trick to just send one?

Will sits. Pulitzer eats a thick slab - rare - keeping his eyes down to hide his blindness.

WILL
In for a penny, in for a pound... A
young man, you ventured into the
French's Hotel lobby only to be
thrown out. Twenty years later you
had it razed to the ground - the
World tower now stands in its
place...I've studied you for years.

PULITZER
Flattering. Wish my sons showed
that kind of passion for something.

WILL
I'm sure they do --

PULITZER
Mm, spending. A man shouldn't have both success and sons. One always means unhappiness with the other. Maybe you'll find that out one day.

He washes his gullet with water as Will signals to a WAITER.

PULITZER
Don't bother, I ordered one of these for you. "Studied me for years" ... you know all my secrets then.

WILL
A few. My... financial advisor... couldn't understand why I bought a whole newspaper for its A.P. wire.

PULITZER
It's what I did in St. Louis.

WILL
I know. And you like editors better than reporters...

PULITZER
Well they decide what goes in, what stays out. But the real geniuses: the illustrators. If they furnish you with pictures, you can furnish... well, anything.

WILL
I'll remember that.

A shared moment. Pulitzer forgets himself, the hatred, looks up, exposing his eyes. Will's sudden silence unnerves him.

PULITZER
Do you know what kind of man sends chamber pots to professors? One who stands to lose nothing. But who fights and wins every time? Someone with nothing to lose. You learn that watching the fights. The strong jawline of a battling boxer - you a fan of boxing, boy?

Pulitzer reaches for his glass, misses, barely noticeable.

WILL
Actually, no. I abhor it.

PULITZER

(laughs; condescending)

Excuse me, didn't realize I was in
the company of such fuckin'
"sophistication."

(cuts another piece)

It's a *man's* sport. But if you did
watch you'd know: it's the one with
no cut man in his corner puts his
opponent down - he has nothing to
go back to.

WILL

We've more in common than you think.

PULITZER

Now you're flattering yourself.

Pulitzer puts down his knife and fork. Sits back. He stares
right at Will, yet milky eyes make for a lifeless gaze.

PULITZER

You've had it in for me.

WILL

Not at all, it's just for every
World read it's a *Journal* not --

PULITZER

No, this goes beyond profit margin,
I think. Beyond pride, even. Why?
I ever throw you out of *my* lobby?

WILL

You're mistaken.

PULITZER

Am I? Why did you buy the *Journal*?

There's something to his question, both know it. A history.

WILL

It was for sale.

PULITZER

So were half a dozen other papers.

WILL

I got a good price on this one.

BEAT, Pulitzer deciding something. Then he returns to eating:

PULITZER

So your decisions are financially
based sometimes. Good. I have an
offer, I suggest you take it: We
split the market.

(MORE)

PULITZER (CONT'D)
Journal continues at a penny, *World*
 dailies stay at two, we form a
 collaboration, and put
 this...competition...to bed.

Waiter sets a plate in front of Will. Lifeless prey.

WILL
 You've destroyed every competitor,
 now you want to partner with one?

PULITZER
 There's more of the penny crowd, my
 lot pays a higher price, we both
 come out on top, otherwise, well,
World already blocked out the *Sun*.

WILL
 You should have stayed abroad,
 Joseph, I might have stayed afraid.

PULITZER
You are afraid. Little boys who's
 fathers give them the world...I had
 to build mine from the ground up.
 Makes me sick to look at imitators.

Pulitzer doesn't see his napkin fall to the ground: Will notices. He *SCRAPES* his knife against the plate - Pulitzer tries to conceal his pained reaction - as Will takes pleasure jabbing at Pulitzer's side with every name:

WILL
 Carvalho said you'd try this.
 Goddard, too. And Chamberlain.
 Outcault drew me a picture. All
 left you for me and you know why?

PULITZER
 You pay more.

WILL
 No. I keep them well into the
 night, they've no time to spend
 what I pay. But working for me
 reminds them why we do what we do.

PULITZER
 What do we do? Lead stray cattle?
We're being herded. You're making
 it the trend. Convincing them that
 journalism and capitulation to the
 masses' appetite for melodrama are
 one and the same. But when the
 story has no more turns to take
 what then? Readers already
 conditioned for "breaking news"
 every fucking day --

WILL

And you followed me. So what does that say about you?

PULITZER

I played the game. I've played many. Whatever the new rules I've always made losers of my competition and managed to separate myself from...from everyone. All for a black-and-white rag with a very lofty title.

(beat, self-aware)

Is that really what you want?

WILL

I have other intentions --

PULITZER

We always do. But that's all you get. It's even less when this bile you call effort is the foundation on which you'll build everything.

WILL

I'll build everything atop your tower's rubble. After I raze it to the ground.

PULITZER

I've spent half a century doing this, boy. This story merely puts a cap on it.

WILL

No. This murder defines a new century - one to which you don't belong. And you know what they'll say? It wasn't because of who was killed or because of who killed him - but because of how the killing was covered. I reject your terms.

Will picks up Pulitzer's napkin, lays it on his lap. He puts the frail man's hand to his jawline so he can know his face.

WILL

I may not like boxing, but you see, Mr. Pulitzer, I am a fighter.

Pulitzer's hand comes to life, forces Will's to his own jaw --

PULITZER

You see, Mr. Hearst, so am I.

Will walks out, Pulitzer wipes his hands with the napkin as score takes us into

A SEQUENCE OF SCENES: EVERYONE STEPS UP THEIR EFFORTS --

EXT. ELEVENTH STREET PIER - DAY

Police escort a cuffed Augusta Nack and Martin Thorn onto a ferry headed for Queens. They say nothing to each other. LARGE CROWDS have gathered to witness the spectacle...

WILL (V.O.)
Nack or Thorn? The question on
everyone's lips. They've been
ferried out to Queens county...

CARVALHO (V.O.)
We're not keeping them in New York?

INT. TOWN HALL - DAY

A formal committee meeting. A large map presents the greater New York area and the proposed joining of the five boroughs.

WILL (V.O.)
"New York" hasn't consolidated yet -
Queens is where it happened so
Queens is where they'll be tried.
And where Thorn will be convicted.

A meager few spectators observe the meeting, one of them is Morrill Goddard. The sparsity is contrasted by --

INT. EDEN MUSÉE DIME WAX MUSEUM - A PACKED HOUSE

Observe the changed display: now Thorn and Nack are depicted hacking Guldensuppe up in the bathtub. Spectators marvel.

CARVALHO (V.O.)
What about the bullet hole, Nack --

INT. POLICE HEADQUARTERS, 300 MULBERRY STREET - DAY

A promotion ceremony, Carey is one of a few named "Detective Sgt." Arnold is among friends and family, applauds.

WILL (V.O.)
Forget the bullet hole, bury it.
Our villain is Thorn - Carey
assures me the evidence is mounted
against him. Even if it wasn't...

INT. PRISON CELL, THE TOMBS - DAY

Augusta reads a love letter, smells it and smiles (it's been sprayed with perfume). There's a stack waiting to be read.

WILL (V.O.)

...Nack's getting love letters and marriage proposals - they love her. No, Nack will go free, and Thorn will get the chair. Let Pulitzer try to sway opinion against her.

EXT. WORLD BUILDING, PARK ROW - EVENING

Next to the building, a crowd has gathered around a LIGHT --

THWONG! It snaps on and after a moment to generate, it casts a 200,000 candlepower light into the sky, projecting: **THE WORLD, ONE CENT, CIRCULATION NEARLY ONE-HALF MILLION PER DAY!**

INT. UNION CLUB OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK - DAY

Clark reads a *World* editorial to his mutton-chop cronies:

CLARK

"The reason for this price reduction is a secret that we are ready to share with the people: we prefer power to profit." - how humorous of him - "The enormous sales of the *Evening* and *Sunday* editions so far surpassing all other journals permit a sacrifice in revenue." What a load of shit.

INT. JOURNAL OFFICES - DAY

Carvalho takes a meeting with men in suits, handshakes as Goddard looks on from his corner...

WILL (V.O.)

Pulitzer needs advertisers' dollars to stay afloat so we'll pull 'em away with better deals. Then we advertise...

QUICK SHOTS: All over town, JOURNAL BILLBOARDS PROCLAIM: **"You Can't Get More Than All The News; You Can't Pay Less Than a Cent!"** and **"While Others Talk the Journal Acts!"**

WILL (V.O.)

I want to see this paper's name everywhere, no matter the cost.

(MORE)

WILL (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Then we'll run targeted circulation
 campaigns, letters to the better
 ladies of New York, Staten Island,
 the Bronx, the *London Letters*, hell
 to Alan Dale the drama critic!

INT. TOWER OF SILENCE, CHATWOLD

Pulitzer hands Brisbane a homemade, leather-bound 300 Pg book, inside a ledger with two columns of words:

PULITZER
 From now on we communicate by
 cipher - I don't trust these public
 offices, the boy could pay
 operators for our content. So I
 invented my own code...

QUICKS SHOTS: Pulitzer dictates to a handful of secretaries; secretaries transcribe long-winded instructions into code, code is transported to Telegram offices and *World* staff under Brisbane's direction struggle to understand them.

INT. BAR, TENDERLOIN DISTRICT - NIGHT

On Brisbane, PAN OVER to the MAN sitting across being HIRED. PAN BACK: Carvalho has replaced Brisbane with a better offer.

He reluctantly hands over a check signed by "W.R. Hearst."

WILL (V.O.)
 Finally, we hit him where it hurts.
 Any talent plans on joining the
World, we offer him double the
 salary, on the spot!

INT. UNION CLUB OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK - DAY

The blue bloods read copies of the *Journal* and *World*, colorful, packed pages with pictures and bold print.

James Gordon Bennett Jr. holds up a copy, its *Yellow Kid* cartoon prominently displayed on the front --

BENNETT JR.
 Our Gilded Age jaundiced by these
 "yellows" - nothing like what my
 father would have printed.

BLUE BLOOD
 Absolutely. Pure sensationalism,
 how could anybody be fooled by it?

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

World and *Journal* newsboys shill their papers to the fools:

WORLD NEWSBOY
World finds Death Carriage used by
 Thorn to transport body!

JOURNAL NEWSBOY
 Pulitzer has a \$10,00 slush fund
 dedicated to perverting the case --

A customer starts for one, then buys the other. A BRICK FLIES...*World* boys charge the *Journal* corner, a brutal melee.

WILL (V.O.)
 No longer is our purview to merely
 present the facts, they have to
 know he is wrong and we are right!

INT. VAUDEVILLE THEATRE - NIGHT

Tessie performs, Will in his balcony seat. But when not reading a *Journal*, he watches the audience, not the stage...

WILL (V.O.)
 The Guldensuppe murder is the most
 important matter facing every
 constituent of this city. It
 concerns the security, the unity
 and prosperity of each denizen. We
 must ensure the rights of every New
 Yorker, American, John Q. Citizen
 of the world!

INT. WILL'S OFFICE, JOURNAL OFFICES - DAY

Will stands over his key men, doling out instruction:

WILL
 Because someone will take the fall
 for this murder. And when justice
 is served, one paper will be New
 York's victorious tribune, while
 the other is renamed the obsolete
 sheet that victimized an innocent.
 And that sheet will lose the trust
 of the people forever. No mercy
 gentlemen, it is the only thing we
 share with our competitor. This is
 a fight for our survival!

END SEQUENCE.

INT. WILL'S OFFICE, JOURNAL OFFICES - LATER

As Will escorts everyone out, shuts the door. He turns to see Carvalho still standing there.

CARVALHO

No holds barred, eh?
(off his silence)
Well there's a problem, we've no
money left. The presses, the
advertising, Nack's building, the
launches you've insisted on keeping
out everyday --

WILL

I want the launches out there.
It's important we keep looking for
Guldensuppe's head.

CARVALHO

Important we keep looking or that
they know we keep looking?
(beat, Will paces)
I work for you. And I want this
paper to succeed but this all-
out...assault you've outlined, we
just can't do it --

Will SLAMS the table out of frustration.

CARVALHO

Can you go to your mother?

WILL

(hates it)

I don't go to my mother, I go to
Clark.

CARVALHO

Why'd she make him the bookkeeper?

WILL

'Cuz he's also her cousin.

CARVALHO

Must be some family picnic.

He notices Will looking at something out the window, we don't
see what it is.

WILL

We need it? I'll do it.

CUT TO:

INT. "SHERRY'S" RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Where Will and Tessie ate earlier. Probably the same patrons, too. Will sits alone, nervous. Clark joins him.

WILL
...I asked to see my mother.

CLARK
She couldn't come.

WILL
Couldn't or wouldn't?
(beat, very humble:)
I need to ask you for more money.

CLARK
You just don't learn, Will. As a business man you need to --

WILL
I'm not a business man, I'm a newsman and to report the news I need means to do so. I need my...
(embarrassed)
mother to "authorize" more funds.

CLARK
I wish you could appreciate how difficult it's been for me to effectively convey to her how ill-advised your expenditures are. Ten thousand here, twenty thousand there - nothing's too good for her boy. But yet, the mere idea of your bringing shame to the family name...well that is intolerable...

Clark drops a *TOWN TOPICS* gossip column onto the table:
"Willy-the-Worst" Spotted on the Town with Actress!

CLARK
All these tarts. You can imagine her disappointment. And now this "actress" you flaunt about town --

WILL
Flaunt...I love --

CARVALHO
It means I am no longer authorized to finance your New York ventures.

BEAT. The ground has opened up; Clark is proud of himself.

WILL
I'll go under, we'll be ruined.

CLARK

Then go back home to San Francisco. Or, if that is unsuitable, you can go to Babicora. You always loved it there. Suppose that's why your father left it to you. But this...episode is done.

Will glances at the patrons, they're looking at him, whispering. He never blows, just looks back at Clark.

WILL

No, I'll just sell it.

CLARK

What?

WILL

Babicora. I'll sell it. And if she cares so much about the family name, then Phoebe Hearst has 24 hours to buy it from me, for the bargain price of one million dollars. Or I sell to an outsider.

CLARK

(as Will rises)

Wait, Will, it's the only thing in your name! You'll have nothing.

WILL

I'll have the *Journal*. 24 hours.

He gets up and leaves.

CUT TO:

TWO SETS OF HANDS, SIGNING A DEED OF OWNERSHIP FOR BABICORA --

BUYER: "PHOEBE HEARST" . . . SELLER: "W.R. HEARST"

CUT TO:

EXT. DECK, CHATWOLD MANSION - PULITZER - DAY

Sitting out in the sun, waiting for someone. The mansion basks in light. His brother Albert sits down into frame, wheezing slightly from the effort and trying to hide it.

PULITZER

The man I asked to see was always a slender fellow, not a 300 pound P.T. Barnum escapee.

ALBERT

I was told you can't see anything.

PULITZER

I heard the chair's wood
splintering under your fat ass.

ALBERT

Well it's half a decade since last
we spoke and I'm greeted by insult.
There was a time we could at least
be civil. Are you still so angry
with me?

(Jabez approaches)
Some coffee, please.

PULITZER

I should ask you that question.

ALBERT

Why. Because you abandoned us?
Because you never came home for any
of their funerals?

(pause)
I forgave you years ago. So what
do you want?

PULITZER

I want to ask you a question. All
New York is talking about my feud
with this young man, Hearst --

ALBERT

I don't pay attention to those
things --

PULITZER

No you traipse around Paris shoving
pastries into that hole in your
face. But Hearst came to New York
with a wealth at his disposal - and
a wealth of options on which to
squander it. So of all the papers
on Park Row, with their 100 and
200,000 in circulation, I'm left to
wonder why young W.R. Hearst took
on the *Journal*, a floundering rag
at a mere 75,000 daily which, only
a short time before that, was owned
by my dear brother Albert.

BEAT.

ALBERT

I ran it, then sold it to McLean.

PULITZER

Who turned around and sold it to
Hearst in the time it takes a
normal-sized man to shit breakfast.

(MORE)

PULITZER (CONT'D)
You found him, didn't you? And
I'll bet he paid handsomely, too.

Jabez brings the coffee. Albert calmly pours himself a cup.

PULITZER
You're a fat coward, Albert.

ALBERT
How is Kate? And my dear nephews?

PULITZER
Well he won't break me. But I tell
you this, he'll come far closer in
the attempt than you ever did.

Pulitzer rises with all the mobility he can muster, leaves...

INT. TOWER OF SILENCE, CHATWOLD

...and descends into his fortress, greeted by Brisbane who
notes the anger on his face.

PULITZER
We're not taking full advantage of
the means at my disposal. Let's go
to the study.

OFFICE

Buzzing with secretaries, stenographers. A *Journal* and *World*
spread the desk for comparison. *Journal* Circulation: 435,000.

ANGLE - Pulitzer and Brisbane

Consulting a map of Queens, "X"s surround the murder house.

PULITZER
(re: the map)
We pay utility workers to salt the
grounds with pieces of plaster,
novelties, kitchen knives...

BRISBANE
Chief, what are you doing? Is this
really the story you want to print?

PULITZER
We're not printing a story, we're
printing a better story. The
better story is all that fucking
matters.

BRISBANE
I don't know how I feel about this
type of --

PULITZER

I didn't ask. Finds the funds, pay the workers.

BRISBANE

Let's do some more *reporting*. I'll put my best men on it...

Falling on deaf ears. Brisbane puts away his moleskin.

BRISBANE

Come back to the office. It will be much easier to mobilize --

PULITZER

And let them see me like this, are you fucking stupid?!!

(beat)

Do you know what that would do?

(then)

Or do you?

Brisbane moves away. In his corner, Butes smirks.

IN THE HALL

Brisbane leans back, closes his eyes. Floorboards squeak --

KATE is standing there. BEAT. LUCILLE'S COUGH O.S. pulls Kate away. Brisbane looks at his moleskin - once used to record facts, now worthless - as we

CUT TO:

INT. MIKE LYON'S ALL DAY/ALL NIGHT RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A famous bowery joint for criminals and cops alike. *Journal* men celebrate with shots; Arnold and Goddard at a bar yellowed by tobacco spit, charred by the butts of a thousand cheap cigars. Arnold is in good spirits, Goddard is quieter.

ARNOLD

...so they wed inside the Statue of Liberty, thereby answering the riddle: "what man married a woman while inside another?"

Goddard courtesy-laughs as he downs his beer, orders another.

ARNOLD

So glum. Business is booming, we're in a dead heat with King Croeseus, you've a problem with success?

GODDARD

I'd just rather get drunk tonight.

Arnold notices a few cops flirting with prostitutes. A policeman's hand disappear up a woman's skirt.

ARNOLD

(mock shame)

Look at 'em, New York's finest.
Absolutely disgraceful...though I
have to say, I like his technique.

(back to Goddard's
moodiness)

I know what's bothering you. But
it's always been this way, these
petty rivalries. Before Pulitzer
and the *World* it was Bennett and
the *Herald*, before Bennett and the
Herald it was Dana and the *Sun*.
The titans we ask to hold up the
world - it's a revolving door.

GODDARD

Oh? They're just "prophets raised
from among their brothers"?

ARNOLD

Huh?

GODDARD

It's different now. Every headline
now contains the paper's name.
When did that become the rule
rather than the exception?

ARNOLD

If they know who we are they know
where to get their information.

GODDARD

They know who we are they know who
to listen to. Our own "brand" of
news. Of truth. Soon these people
won't even have to think for
themselves.

(shakes his head, drinks)

At least we're still trying to
discover the truth in this *case* -
but will that always take precedent
over the need to out-do our rival?
What if our sales fall?

ARNOLD

You're worried about these people?
(looking at the bar's
patronage - animals)
This is New York.

GODDARD

Mm. But they're paying attention.
And New York is consolidating.

(MORE)

GODDARD (CONT'D)
The five boroughs will become one city. Coastal, cosmopolitan, modern, it'll be known the world over. At the end of this, one of them will hold New York in his hand - and with it, the world.

ARNOLD
What's your concern?

GODDARD
What happens if, say, that hand decides to make a fist?

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT, THE HOFFMAN HOUSE - EMPTY SPACE - NIGHT

Next to Tessie in bed. Fancy new photography equipment in the corner. Will sits among a minefield of papers. Choice words in the *Journal* implicate Thorn. Tessie comes over --

WILL
Don't! -- they're...arranged a certain way.

TESSIE
Are you angry with me?

He considers for a moment, shakes his head "no."

TESSIE
What are you looking for?

WILL
Anything missed. Whatever's been left on the table to be scooped up, give us an edge.
(then)
Tell me something, Tess. Who was Guldensuppe to deserve this?

TESSIE
I don't know, Will. I don't know who Guldensuppe was.

WILL
Well aren't you curious?

TESSIE
I suppose, but, we're not going to learn much more.

She crawls back into bed. Will notices an old *World* Issue - "BLOOD IN THE HOUSE OF MYSTERY!" He considers.

WILL
And what if I told you I'm not so
sure Thorn's the one that did it?

She sits up, intrigued despite herself...

TESSIE
You really think so?

WILL
Don't you?

CUT TO:

EXT. WOODSIDE, QUEENS - DAY

Will rides through. At first he only occasionally notices, then it hits him hard enough he has to stop peddling: Stretching along his path as far as he can see, children and adults alike are digging, wading through marshes, checking haystacks. They shout to each other "Anything?" "Any sign of a head?" "I think I see an eye!"

A once sleepy farmland awakened.

Some have set up lemonade and food stands. And at every one you can buy a copy of the *World* or the *Journal*. An industry based on the Hunt. Will lays his bike down, buys a lemonade - and a *Journal* - and marvels at what he's helped to create...

EXT. COTTAGE, WOODSIDE, QUEENS - DAY

Still surrounded by shoving on-lookers. Unable to get in, Will gets pushed to the periphery, down to the edge of the pond seen earlier.

FARMER (O.S.)
Savages.

Will turns - it's the Farmer seen earlier when first shown the Murder House. He sprinkles bread crumbs to his ducks.

FARMER
Digging up the earth day and night,
can't plant anything! Keep looking
for that damn head!

WILL
(stifles a smile)
They're just curious. Aren't you?

FARMER
I keep away, that house has brought
me nothing but misfortune.

WILL

...Really...

FARMER

My ducks. They were crossing this field here to Mrs. DeBeuchelare's dairy, you see, not all the way down to the next street where Mrs. Jacobs --

WILL

Uh huh.

FARMER

They had eaten something they couldn't keep down, I was real worried about their digestion --

WILL

Mr. Wahle, excuse me, can you tell me anything about your neighbor?

FARMER

The Brauns?

WILL

...No. Thorn. In the house there.

FARMER

I know where you mean! No one there named Thorn, though.

WILL

He introduced himself as Braun?

FARMER

And his wife: Mrs. Braun.

BEAT. Will takes some bread, starts feeding with Farmer.

WILL

...his wife...?

FARMER

(quieter)

I knew my ducks, see, they'd been swimming around the drain there so I went over and right at the end of the pipe, there was water coming out. But it was reddish...

INSERT CUT: RED LIQUID drips from the pipe leading from the house into the pond. FARMER sees a duck climb out, red water runs off its feathers...

WILL

It was probably blood.

FARMER

Yeah but they said this all
happened end of June. My ducks
have been sick since April!

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL, THE TOMBS

Two police officers dump bags of mail onto a table, Two more
find space for gift boxes and flowers. Arnold conducts an
interview with Augusta Nack. The photographer seen taking
Will's picture before - now a *Journal* man - snaps a photo.

Will comes down the hallway, keeping back, listening...

ARNOLD

Quite a few marriage proposals Ms.
Nack, but should these matrimonial
candidates be afraid of you?

AUGUSTA

I am an innocent woman. And as I
have said, I do not believe Willy
Guldensuppe is even dead...

INT. HALLWAY, THE TOMBS

Will leads Arnold out.

ARNOLD

She's a razor's edge that one.

WILL

You believe her, don't you?

ARNOLD

520,000 readers do.

Will stops him, very aware of the various cells around them.

WILL

Pulitzer's the one kept her in
here. I'm saying: we said it was
Thorn, so he...

ARNOLD

Yeah.

WILL

So if there *was* a woman involved...
I mean we know Thorn had a whole
stable so it would probably...

ARNOLD
Everything alright, W.R.?

WILL
Yea...Listen, I'd like you to find
someone for me. A Mrs. Braun...

They pass a window out which Will sees a *JOURNAL BILLBOARD...*

CUT TO:

EXT. PIG MARKET, HESTER STREET - DAY

An outdoor bazaar where immigrants haggle over everything from peaches to suspenders in six languages (everything but Pig, hence the name). Pulitzer walks through - sunglasses, cane, and hat; Butes leads him by the arm.

PULITZER
Smell that, Butes? Smell of the mud. My doctor tells me fresh air may sooth my stresses. I'm not sure how the retinae and olfactories connect but who the fuck am I to question a quack... See her, Butes?

BUTES
Who's that, Mr. Pulitzer?

With his cane he directs Butes' eyes in the general direction of the Statue of Liberty, clearly visible in the harbor:

PULITZER
A *World* campaign raised the funds for her foundation's construction.

BUTES
I didn't know that, sir.

PULITZER
Wasn't blue bloods or bureaucrats, was people like *this* sent pennies, dimes, nothing more than a dollar: 150,000 of them built themselves a symbol. They have that power, *en masse*. Anyone who claims to lead them is a liar or a fool.

(beat, lets it sink in)
Those closest to me are scheming, Butes... You'll assume control of special projects.

(then)
Know that smell. Embrace it.
"News" is only that which arrests their attention. If it takes us down into the mud, so be it.

INT. JOURNAL OFFICES - LATE NIGHT

A door's window SHATTERS, a hand reaches in, unlocks. Men in hats move in - Butes is their leader. They search through memos, ledgers... Butes notices the New York MAP mostly colored blue... They HEAR A NOISE, run out...

CUT TO:

INT. OFFICES OF THE NEW YORK WORLD - NIGHT

Brisbane enters finishing up a last bit of sandwich. MUZZLED VOICES, a LIGHT on in H. Bradford's office (whose promotion was revoked earlier). Brisbane peers in: Butes is in there.

BRISBANE
You're all working late...

They cover up their papers, very clandestine.

BROWN
Andes had us...reach out to sources at the *Journal* - turns out the bulk of Hearst's capital came from a land sale, but it's almost gone.

Brisbane nods skeptically, knowing full well their methods...

MAIN FLOOR

Brisbane finds Seitz measuring *Journal* ad space with a ruler.

BRISBANE
It's like a Roman Senate - we could grow gardens with all the plotting.

SEITZ
Circulation's up --

BRISBANE
Wonderful.

SEITZ
-- by 88,000. We've poached off The *Press*, the *Recorder* the *Mercury*...everyone but the *Journal*. And their numbers are going up, too: Saturday to Monday alone, 4,897. Hearst has us staggering. I know what he pays for advertising and he's spending money as it's never been spent before.

BRISBANE
Our great kingmaker - made a king.
(off his look)
(MORE)

BRISBANE (CONT'D)
We vindicated Hearst, copying his tactics only spurred him on. Now the Chief's got us chasing our own tail, everyone answering to a different captain.

SEITZ

The trial's about to start - get the verdict right, we level Hearst with a single blow, advertisers will refill the coffers and leave him for the buzzards. It'll be like old times again.

He looks to the plaque: The Facts - the Color - the Facts!

BRISBANE
Old times, huh?

EXT. CHATWOLD MANSION - DAY

Heavy rain. Brisbane runs to the door.

INT. CHATWOLD MANSION - DAY

He stands there, sopping wet. A maid brings Kate to the foyer, then leaves them. Brisbane looks lost.

BRISBANE
It was always like this, wasn't it?
Whatever means necessary...

KATE
You get used to it.

BRISBANE
I don't want to.

She walks to him, unaggressive. Puts her hand to his. He takes it. Rain the only sound. They kiss...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. PARK ROW - NIGHT

The air is colder; passersby grip their collars. A few trees are red and brown... We're looking out the window of

INT. WILL'S OFFICE, JOURNAL OFFICES - CONTINUOUS

Again Will is looking at something out the window we still don't see. Lost in thought; SILENCE.

A moment before NOISE from his open door fills the soundtrack and we realize Carvalho is trying to get his attention.

WILL

...What are we talking about?

CARVALHO

(holds up a money order)

"Wire the entire courtroom for" --

WILL

I want up-to-the-minute coverage
World boys will be on the steps --

CARVALHO

W.R. we are hemorrhaging \$100,000
every single month. And you don't
have any more land to sell.

WILL

I'll sell other things. I'll
borrow against the presses, the
building lease. But he'll have to
stop before we do.

CARVALHO

What if we're too late?

Off his look, Carvalho shuts the door. He lays down a *Herald*, a *Times*, a *Press*. Reads from them:

CARVALHO

They say we've debased ourselves.
We are "so low in moral tone as to
make our toleration and success a
reproach upon the community..."

Unimpressed, Will starts scanning tomorrow's *Morning...*

CARVALHO

Covering this case has been fun but
there are other issues; Spain's
crushing the Cuban rebels --

PULITZER

The Cubans will have to wait.

CARVALHO

I'm talking about your reputation.
Sensational headlines are fine
grabbers but --

WILL

"Sensationalism" is always the cry
of the paper to the rival which
passes it. But while they condemn
me, their readers will indulge.

CARVALHO
You got the readers.

WILL
The "penny crowd"? But they were a given, not like his "high-class" following. You know what? They're no different.

CARVALHO
And you want them all.

WILL
I want them all.

CARVALHO
It could take years.

WILL
I don't think so.

Will suddenly notices something in the broadsheet.

WILL
It's not right.
(off Carvalho's look)
This page, it's not right.
What time have you got?

The whole building starts to RUMBLE, a rocket blasting off.

WILL
Never mind...

Will sprints out the door - Carvalho follows through the madness, down to the second floor where we find the source of the earthquake: GIGANTIC HOE PRESSES printing - obviously the operation has expanded. Will grabs the 'bulldog' - the first copy fresh off the machine.

WILL
Stop 'em. Stop these presses now!!

PRESS OPERATOR leans his head out.

PRESS OPERATOR
But we won't make the mail train!
A delay will cost --

WILL
You'll never send this paper out
with my name on it! Kill it!

A calamitous shut down. Will shows Carvalho the 'bulldog':

WILL
A misspelling - third paragraph.

Carvalho just looks at him - has he even heard a word?

CARVALHO

Level off costs. In a couple years, you'll make back the money you invested. But keep going like this - and if we're wrong about this one story - you're done for!

WILL

We won't be wrong.

BACK ON THE MAIN FLOOR

Will and Carvalho find Arnold surrounded. He is worried.

WILL

What?

INT. OFFICES OF THE NEW YORK WORLD - NIGHT

Clock reads 1 a.m. as a group of police headed by Detective Carey - and flanked by Arnold - storm onto the floor. Some *World* men try to protest but they walk right on up to Seitz.

CAREY

Where's the head?

SEITZ

What?

CAREY

You heard me. This office is in possession of stolen evidence.

Butes comes onto the floor. So do Bradford and Brown...

BUTES

What's going on?

SEITZ

There's some rumor --

CAREY

Where's the head?

SEITZ

We don't have any head.
(looks to Brown, who nods)
We don't!

No one understands. Carey walks the floor, "inspecting"...

CAREY

We received a tip. We can talk more down on Mulberry Street --

SEITZ
We don't have any fucking head!

BUTES
You received a tip? From who?
(beat)
Who?

CUT TO:

INT. PARLOUR, CHATWOLD MANSION - BRISBANE

Sitting with Kate at Lucille's bedside, ill. The room has been converted into a kind of hospital/greenhouse as thick cables and odd contraptions pump in steam and electricity. Nurses mill about carrying trays of tea, food and medicine;.

KATE
Aren't you needed at the office?

BRISBANE
She looks better.

KATE
She does, doesn't she.

The baby GURGLES. Brisbane lifts him from his crib, sits. Kate wipes a tear away. Brisbane takes her hand. They sit together as a low-rumbling of percussion and bass crescendos:

CUT TO:

ON THE CORNERS, NEWSIES SHOUT THE HEADLINES ONE AFTER ANOTHER

WORLD NEWSBOY
Famous defense Attorney William Howe defends Martin Thorn in the "case of his life"....!

JOURNAL NEWSBOY
Court wired for telegraph, *Journal* to have up-to-the-minute accounts!

WORLD NEWSBOY
Manny Friend defends Augusta Nack, claims she was set up!

JOURNAL NEWSBOY
Nack to testify against Thorn!

WORLD NEWSBOY
Evening World circulation reaches 750,000!

JOURNAL NEWSBOY
Evening Journal circulation reaches 750,000!

EXT. COURTHOUSE - DAY

SLOW MOTION (40 fps): a GATHERED THRONG goes ape as Nack, dressed the part of *star witness* with veil and sun umbrella, ascends the front steps with LAWYER. Across the street, Will watches, wide brimmed hat, hands on hips. His silhouette framed against the slow-moving scene is a dynamic image.

Scene resumes normal speed as Arnold whispers in Will's ear:

ARNOLD
Got a lead on Mrs. Braun...

EXT. THE BOWERY - AFTERNOON

Will walks through the neighborhood looking for an address. Everywhere he looks, they read papers on stoops, in windows...

ARNOLD (V.O.)
I put out the name Braun everywhere.
Hospitals, morgues, banks, finally
picked it up from a stevedore lives
down the Bowery; he's expecting you.

A PRELAP KNOCK, then

WILL (PRELAP)
May I come in?

FERRAMON (PRELAP)
So what do you want?

INT. BOWERY APARTMENT - EVENING

Small, in desperate need of a woman's touch. Tenant FERRAMON is perpetually distracted. Will has a hard time making sense of the small space and moldy food sitting out...

WILL
I've been looking for a couple goes
by the name Braun, had a home in
Woodside. I'm told you might know
them?

FERRAMON
Woodside, I never been there. You
want somethin'?

Ferramon starts to make another sandwich with old meat. Spreading some kind of condiment with a knife...

WILL
...No, thank you. So you knew them?

FERRAMON
Knew the wife, not personally but...

WILL
You never met her?

FERRAMON
(shakes his head)
My girl, Ginny, we were 19, you
know? I wanted to get married. We
didn't have so much money and...she
was in the family way, you know?

WILL
Your wife was with child?

FERRAMON
We weren't married. She didn't
want to have it before, was afraid
how it'd look. I heard about this
woman though, had a place in
Queens. She could take care of it.
Take care of Ginny, then we could
get married.

Ferramon hands Will the disgusting sandwich. Stares at him.
Will wants him to keep going... takes a bite... and swallows.

WILL
So what happened?

FERRAMON
I wanted to go with her. But I had
to work so she went alone to have
it done. She never came back.

WILL
Is it possible she...ran away --

Unknowingly waving the knife --

FERRAMON
Ran away!?

WILL
I'm sorry, I just --

FERRAMON
She didn't run away. We were in
love, you understand? I loved her
and she loved me. She never came
back 'cuz that woman did something
to her. My Ginny woulda come back.
I couldn't go to the police...

Will nods, knowing all-too-well, as Ferramon is lost in
tears. He latches onto Will's coat, won't let go.

FERRAMON

I know you, you're the one arrested
that man, you're better than the
police, you can find her!

WILL

I, I'm not...that's not...

FERRAMON

Please, please! Help me.

WILL

I'm sorry...I can't.

(long beat)

Braun: how did you find her?

FERRAMON

Heard at the bath house...My Ginny.
We were gonna plant a rose garden.

Will takes out some money, realizes the futility, drops the bills anyway and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT. PUBLIC PHONE, STREET CORNER - DAY

Will on the phone...

WILL

(into phone)

Guldensuppe, he was a rubber at a
bath house - what was the
name?...Murray...Times Square!

(about to hang up)

I don't care, pay it!

CUT TO:

INT. MURRAY HILL TURKISH BATH HOUSE, TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Frank Gartner (the receptionist seen earlier) steps out of the sauna, naked. He hears footsteps ECHOING. Looks up - Will emerges through the heavy mist, fully dressed.

GARTNER

Can I help you?

WILL

I'm here about Willy.

GARTNER

...I already, um, I already talked
to the police.

WILL

Yes and now I'm here for the truth.
 For the woman he was seeing in
 Queens, the one he was telling
 young men about...or I can print
 that Frank Gartner offered no help
 in bringing this killer to justice -
 on page one.

He's got him by the balls...almost literally.

ANGLE - LATER

Gartner sits with a towel as Will stands over him, listening.

GARTNER

Villy, he'd tell stories about her,
 you know how it is in here. Talked
 of moving out to Queens with her,
 gettin' out of the rubber-business.

WILL

To do what?

GARTNER

Open a farm. Not like, with
 chickens and cows and things, it
 was a place for young girls. In
 trouble...thing is, I don't think
 she was very good at it.

WILL

Braun... Are you telling me the
 killer could still be out there?

GARTNER

I don't know. But he told me once,
 the girls going up there, lot of
 times they didn't come back. I
 mean she wasn't trained or nothin'.
 Wasn't like anyone could tell the
 police what had happened, not with
 what they was doing. Besides,
 Braun found all kinds of different
 ways to get rid of the bodies.

WILL

(concealing his fear)

Keep going.

GARTNER

Then, he got tired of her. Or
 maybe that was bullshit, maybe she
 wanted to get rid of him, I dunno.
 But he was gonna tell the police
 about what she was doing...

WILL
So she went to Thorn.

Will sits down, eye-level with Gartner.

WILL
The women that went up and didn't come back, how many were there?

GARTNER
I don't know.

WILL
Frank --

GARTNER
I don't!

WILL
Not good enough.

GARTNER
She was doing this two or three times a month --

WILL
I need to know --

GARTNER
For eight to ten years.

WILL
(beat)
How many?

GARTNER
In my conservative estimation, 300.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK ROW - NIGHT

Will walks the Row, lost. A *JOURNAL NEWSBOY* holds up the paper, shouts the headline:

JOURNAL NEWSBOY
JOURNAL RIGHT AGAIN! Augusta Nack testimony implicates Martin Thorn in death of Willy Guldensuppe! A Death Penalty Case!

CUT TO:

INT. HALLWAY, CHATWOLD MANSION - NIGHT

Kate speaks with Doctor outside Lucille's room. Brisbane sits nearby reading a *World*, missing the action.

He sees Kate smile, kiss Doctor's hand.

INT. BEDROOM, CHATWOLD MANSION - NIGHT

Brisbane takes off his jacket, lays his paper on the stand. Kate's already in a nightgown looking into Herbert's crib.

KATE
Finish reading?

He nods, conscience clearly weighing on him. As always, she sees it.

KATE
You could write a book. I think
you'd write a very lovely novel.

BRISBANE
That Doctor charges a fortune.

KATE
You think I care in the least?
Come, let's join everyone in
dreamland.

She lays down. He looks into the crib, the baby smiles.

BRISBANE
You don't have to care.

KATE
What?

BRISBANE
You don't have to care how much he
charges. Her father has the money.

Very slowly he grabs his coat, puts it back on.

KATE
Arthur? What's happened?

BRISBANE
I can't keep doing this. What did
I think, that I could move into his
house? His bed?

KATE
(stands)
Well, what if...what if I left?

BRISBANE

No your place is here. And mine is by his side to protect him, even from himself. God, I wanted so much to find that man's killer. I had that opportunity and I let it go, I forgot my duty to him, to Joseph --

KATE

And what about me?!
(he's startled)
It's not fair To play the part of a silent wife every single day?

He holds her...

BRISBANE

We all have parts to play. You play yours for your children.

KATE

My children...

BRISBANE

Lucy was sick. And she's better now because she had great care. Because her father is Joseph Pulitzer. Everyone in his family benefits from that name.

He starts for the door...

KATE

Even your child?

BEAT. She takes Herbert from his crib, walks to Brisbane.

BRISBANE

Would you rather he bore the name of some unknown editor without an apartment, or a king with a castle?

KATE

I'd rather he know his father.

BRISBANE

I'm giving him a better story, Kate. Didn't you know? "A better story is all that matters."

Baby in arms, they embrace for the last time. As a family.

BRISBANE

You have seen, and known, the best of me.

CUT TO:

EXT. JEKYLL ISLAND TRAIN STATION - NIGHT

Brisbane steps off a train. Crickets and owls SQUAWK. Jabez is waiting for him...

EXT. BOAT - NIGHT

A single lamp lights the tiny vessel; Jabez rows as Brisbane waits patiently. They graze the shoreline, the houses of the titans of the universe barely visible in the night...

INT. ENCLOSED PORCH, PULITZER'S JEKYLL ISLAND HOME - NIGHT

Pulitzer sits at the far end, in darkness. Brisbane opens the door, steps in, the wood creaks under his weight. He walks the long corridor-like porch to Pulitzer.

BRISBANE

For so prolific a man, you're a hard man to reach...

He sees Butes in the darkness.

BRISBANE

I've...I think we both know my work has left something to be desired of late. I'd been uncomfortable with the direction you were taking but --

Pulitzer hoists himself out of the chair, he seems so old and frail. He holds a *World* - starts reciting from memory:

PULITZER

"Lady Mackay's nursery is outfitted with rouge-colored drapes and a wall palette" --

BRISBANE

My editorial...?

PULITZER

-- "that compliments a most expertly crafted crib. The new addition to the Mackay clan will be most welcome." You present a woman in this light, in my paper?

BRISBANE

I...I didn't realize it would be a problem...what is the problem?

PULITZER

An expecting mother? We do not print such obscene things --

BRISBANE

You can't be serious...Everyday we talk of famine and war - if it was Guldensuppe's blood we'd splash it on page one. But *pregnancy* is --

PULITZER

Don't you DARE use that fucking word. Not with me.

The telegraph can be heard inside. Butes goes in.

BRISBANE

I came here because I feel I have been selfish and I wanted to resume my duties --

PULITZER

Your lack of judgment, your refusal to do the job for which I pay you, leaves me no choice but to consider demotion.

BRISBANE

What?

(re: Butes)

And give him my duties? Or some other shadow puppet?

PULITZER

(re: paper)

I reject this lewd content, we have a moral duty --

BRISBANE

You sacrificed "moral duty" long before "pregnancy" became an issue.

PULITZER

I fucking told you --

BRISBANE

And you know it. Who cares what the headline reads, so long as the man who shouts it shouts loudest --

PULITZER

There will be some compensation for the time --

BRISBANE

You won't even win. You are your own disgrace --

PULITZER

You're fired! Get out of my home.

BRISBANE

"Cut off even in the blossoms of my
sin...No reckoning made --"

PULITZER

All my homes.

BEAT.

BRISBANE

You know Chief, you remind me of
the gentleman in one of Horace's
fables, who ran and rode and
sailed, thinking to flee from his
cave... 'til finally he discovered
he was fleeing from his own shadow.

Brisbane leaves, walking back out into the dark. Butes re-
enters, telegraph note in hand.

BUTES

Thorn's trial has broken for jury
deliberation.

PULITZER

Now we wait.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE PADDY WAGON - NIGHT

Thorn sits shackled to the floor. Outside the driver shouts
"Woah!" as the horses stop. Carey opens the back door - Will
steps inside, sits across from Thorn. Carriage drives on.

THORN

Who are you?

WILL

Your accuser.

THORN

(remembers)

The paper man. My "captor." How's
your jaw?

(then)

What'd you, come for a quote?

WILL

What can you lose? Defend yourself:
Tell me what was happening at that
cottage, with the woman --

(Thorn's eyes go wide)

Mrs. "Braun."

THORN
I have nothing to say.

WILL
Nack's implicated you. She's the public's favorite - I made sure of that. And now they're going to send you to the gallows.

Shackles rattling... Will's within strangling distance.

THORN
Then you get what you want.

WILL
(and he realizes)
You're protecting this woman. You fall in love? Men do crazy things for love. You might have cut him up after but that doesn't mean you killed him. It doesn't make you a killer... Blue boys thought they found a bullet hole... Did Braun shoot him?

In the shadows, we almost make out the tear falling from Thorn's eye. Then he actually laughs at Will, with pity.

THORN
"Braun." Wouldn't that just work out for everyone...I could be free and you could still be right. Get the fuck away from me.

Will sits next to Thorn - will he strike?

WILL
She played you, didn't she?

THORN
"Me" - that's rich.
(then)
All these papers, seems like more of them City types read the *World*. Not like Queens. They say it's all gonna be one city come January one - if I coulda had my trial then, maybe I coulda gotten some more of them *World* readers on my jury.

WILL
Doesn't work that way.

THORN
(temper rising)
Sure.

WILL
It's not too late, Thorn.

THORN
She put me in here...

Will's on his feet, pleading...

WILL
She...?

THORN
I loved her.

WILL
Don't do this to yourself.

THORN
Leave me alone.

WILL
Thorn tell me who Mrs. Braun is!

CUT TO:

INT. BAR/LOBBY, HOFFMAN HOUSE - NIGHT

High ceilinged, a private art gallery of nudes, marble and bronze statues of Eve and Bacchus. Looking down from behind the mahogany bar, W.A. Bouguereau's *Nymphs and Satyr* painting-on-canvas, the famous calling card of the Hoffman House.

Will sits quietly with a half-drunk glass of the most exotic, fruit cocktail you can imagine. A passing drunk hounds him.

MAN
Mr. Hearst, surely you must know
which way the jury will --

WILL
No comment.

He moves off. Carvalho enters, chuckles at the sight.

WILL
Solly! Any word?

CARVALHO
None, they're still deliberating.

Will nods, drinks more.

CARVALHO
I thought you gave it up.
Everything alright?

WILL
(re: the nymphs)
Thought I'd join the fun.

CARVALHO
(smiles)
I hear anything more tonight, I'll
be sure to let you know.

Pats Will on the shoulder, turns to go...

WILL
What makes him run, Solly?

CARVALHO
Who?

WILL
The blind monarch. The carnivore
of the Silurian era. You worked
for him, give me the headline.

CARVALHO
Can't boil a man down like that.

WILL
What are you talking about? We do
it all the time. Whole human
dramas shrunk down to
(measure with his fingers)
this many inches. You worked with
him, kept him going after Morrill
left. Come on, tell me.

Carvalho joins him at the bar.

CARVALHO
He's a great man, W.R. Tormented.
Fierce, ambitious --

WILL
He doesn't like his sons very much.

CARVALHO
...Don't know much about that...

WILL
Something he said. To me.

CARVALHO
Dunno. Hm, I wonder, a man like
that who comes from nothing, builds
a fortune, no schooling... then
your children have everything, I
wonder if you'd...envy them for
having what you never had--

WILL

Or hate them, for lacking what you
never lacked.

Confused, Carvalho watches Will play with his glass.

CARVALHO

W.R....your father... he doesn't
sound to have been anything like...

He doesn't finish the sentence.

WILL

He'd make me ride 'round Babicora,
"Outdoors are where men are made."
He left it to me to remind me that.

(to bartender)

Another please, with the mango yes!
(then)

What kind of idiot goes into
newspapers? You have to love it.
My father bought a newspaper. You
had to own a newspaper if you
wanted to run for office and he was
running for office so he bought a
newspaper. The *San Francisco*
Examiner. I used to write him from
school, send him ideas - for the
mining and things; and the paper.
Tell him how I thought he could
expand, what I thought about
school, what I thought about
mother...what I...thought. And you
know what he told me?

(Solly shakes his head)

Nothing. No, he never wrote me
back once. He wrote my mother -
and there were so many spelling
errors in those letters, Solly, ha
ha, he spelled 'journalism' with
two L's! You think maybe that's
why he didn't write me? He didn't
want me to know he couldn't spell?

CARVALHO

Maybe W.R., maybe.

WILL

Self-made man. Man of the earth,
of the rocks and ore. Built a
fortune out of nothing. Became a
Senator! A god of Industry and
Politics. Couldn't even spell. He
bought a newspaper...but there's no
way in hell he could have run it.

He drinks. For the first time, Carvalho watches him, afraid.

INT. APARTMENT, THE HOFFMAN HOUSE - NIGHT

Will stumbles in, drunk. Tessie wakes, sees him wobbling.

WILL

What do you think, Tess? What do you think?

She turns on the light. He shields his eyes...

TESSIE

Will? Are you drunk?

WILL

What's the answer? Why? We have our who, our what and where and when - but why?

TESSIE

You weren't going to drink anymore, not after the school --

WILL

I had a little downstairs, what of it? I have to be up in two hours.

TESSIE

No you need to sleep.

WILL

What do you think?

TESSIE

Put that to rest, later --

WILL

No! Now. What are they saying in the Bowery Bars, in the Lobster palaces? What do you all believe?

TESSIE

"You all?"
(beat, very quietly)
Will, what am I to you?

He's drunk, but he heard the question. She circles him...

TESSIE

What do we all believe? How do we talk of Willy? Of Will. What am I a...a sampling of your readers?

WILL

Well you're certainly cheaper than a poll, ha ha ha!

She slaps him. He grabs, she pushes away --

TESSIE

"What if I told you I'm not so sure
Thorn's the one that did it?" I
thought you were confessing to me,
I wasn't paying attention - you
were asking permission to take your
fucking story that way --

WILL

Don't use that language with me --

TESSIE

And that night with everyone. I
was so proud of you and you only
wanted to know which story would
keep us guessing - keep us buying!
Who cares if it's true!

WILL

Don't do this --

TESSIE

Is this what you wanted?

WILL

Tess --

TESSIE

Just print anything, is this the
life you dreamed for yourself?

WILL

I had to sell my dream - for you!

TESSIE

No, don't you DARE put that on me!
You had enough, before. We could
have gone away if you wanted, but
you didn't because this war with
him is so much more important --

WILL

Stop it!

TESSIE

Why else keep going? We had enough
to get away. From your mother,
Clark, everyone, we had enough
fucking money, why --

WILL

(like a demagogue)

Because a newspaper is not a money-
making machine, Goddamn you! It is
the instrument of the will of
hundreds of thousands, millions of
readers.

(MORE)

WILL (CONT'D)
 Through which power can be exerted!
 And when the Hearst name is in St.
 Louis, Chicago, Chattanooga...and
 Paris and Cairo and Mumbai, power
 will be exerted!

Tessie looks at the total stranger in front of her...

TESSIE
 Were you always this person? Have
 I always known you? No. What made
 (pointing at the thing in
 front of her)
 ...you?

Will sits down, quiet and calm.

WILL
 Did you know, there was a man in
 Chicago who boiled his wife in a
 vat so bad, they couldn't identify
 her body. They tried. But they
 could never prove it. And guess
 what happened to the paper sales?
 I learned that lesson too late, I
 printed my ID.

TESSIE
 ...Guldensuppe? You found him.

WILL
 And killed the mystery. But
 Pulitzer knew: if the case remains
 unsolved, people, they are riveted.
 No more loose ends, they just stop
 caring. But give them a mystery,
 color is far more important than
 fact. They hear and smell the
 sizzle, they forget they've gone
 hungry having been denied the
 steak. Never find the head. Just
 make sure they know you're looking.
 Who made me? You did. And every
 other gutter rat just like you.

ON TESSIE, frozen. And Will, daring her to judge him.

TESSIE
 "Spread the Hearst name." There
 was a time you never wanted
 anything to do with it. Goodbye,
 Mr. Hearst.

She leaves, her dress tearing against the door jam... A long
 moment before he realizes - too late - that she's gone.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL, THE TOMBS - NIGHT

Will, regaining sobriety, totally disheveled - and destroyed - walks to Nack's cell. Finds her reading a love letter. She looks up, surprised. BEAT.

AUGUSTA
The illustrious W.R. Hearst.

WILL
It's you.

AUGUSTA
It is not me. I still think Willy is alive and when he returns --

WILL
It's you.

AUGUSTA
...Your paper says otherwise.

WILL
I don't care. I don't care anymore. It has to be you. You shot him and Thorn did your dirty work. I don't know how I'm going...but it's you.

She comes to the bars, a breath away from his face.

AUGUSTA
If I am convicted they'll say it was *him* did it to me. Not you. You'll have wasted it all. You'll be a laughing stock --

WILL
But I'll know.

AUGUSTA
And you have proof?
(silence)
You have evidence?
(silence)
Well then, good luck, Mr. Hearst.

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S OFFICE, JOURNAL OFFICES - DAY

Will is on the floor, obsessively searching through notes, old issues of the *Journal* and *World*, scraps - a madman on the hunt for...something. Out the office window he SEES --

Everyone on the floor has stopped moving. Will steps out...

MAIN FLOOR

And sees Arthur Brisbane, briefcase in hand.

INT. WILL'S OFFICE, JOURNAL OFFICES - LATER

Will seated at his desk, Brisbane opposite. Brisbane is ready with negotiating tactics, Will's just very tired.

BRISBANE

I am, uh, willing to come work for the *Journal* Mr. Hearst, but I do have some demands.

WILL

Oh?

BRISBANE

I would require an assistant and I should think that --

WILL

How much was he paying you?

BRISBANE

...\$15,000, and I --

WILL

Without a byline.

BRISBANE

(beat)

Mr. Hearst, I don't...I don't give a damn about the money. I'll work for you, be loyal to you on one condition. We report. Investigate. I'm tired of the games.

WILL

Solly!

Carvalho enters, bags under eyes. He shakes Brisbane's hand as only a comrade-in-war can, a bond not even W.R. can know.

WILL

Solly is exhausted running my *Evening*, aren't you Solly?

CARVALHO

Oh yes.

WILL

Maybe you take it over for a while.

BRISBANE

To what end?

Brisbane seems to suddenly notice the mess.

WILL

Your employer chose right - he just doesn't know it. Thorn's not the devil we're after. And any hour now, that jury is going to come down with a verdict, based only on the testimony of a few witnesses, a couple "experts" and the dominating voices of two leading City papers.

(beat)

I want to put her away.

BRISBANE

Why?

WILL

Because I, too, have become tired of the game.

BRISBANE

Tell me what you've got so far...

CUT TO:

EXT. LIBERTY YACHT - DAY

Jabez boards the deck of the ship - ready to cast off again - gathering his composure. A few Christmas decorations.

INT. SILENT ROOM, LIBERTY YACHT - DAY

Jabez finds Pulitzer with Butes...

PULITZER

Jabez! Any word on Brisbane? Our spies in the *Journal* camp have elicited valuable information, the Widow Hearst has stipulated her son will not spend over five million...

JABEZ

Mr. Pulitzer --

PULITZER

The bean counters have scrupulously gone over his pages, I asked them to measure every one of his columns' margins to determine his advertising costs...If Brisbane did defect then he might --

JABEZ

Mr. Pulitzer --

PULITZER
Plus wages, we know he's paying at
least double whatever I offer --

JABEZ
Sir! Lucille, she fell ill again
...she is dead. Typhoid Fever...

Long beat. Impossible to know what the man is thinking.

PULITZER
I asked about Brisbane, Jabez.

JABEZ
He was hired by Mr. Hearst this
morning.

Butes and Jabez go, giving him his privacy.

CUT TO:

INT. WILL'S OFFICE, JOURNAL OFFICES - DAY

Will has just laid it all out for Brisbane.

BRISBANE
You realize what you're saying?

WILL
Yes.

BRISBANE
You put it on Thorn since day one.

WILL
Yes.

BRISBANE
Go after Nack now, you vindicate
Pulitzer, it'll look like he had it
right all along.

WILL
Yes.

BRISBANE
And drive the nail into your
coffin.

WILL
But the story will be right.

BRISBANE
OK then...

ANGLE - MOMENTS LATER

Carvalho slams a box on Will's desk: more clippings. Brisbane takes out his moleskin, a sacred relic of a former age...

BRISBANE
I can't remember the last time I
opened this. Stopped recording
facts some time ago.

He starts flipping through it for clues...

WILL
Can I see that?
(off his look)
Let's switch - fresh eyes...

ANGLE - STILL LATER

Brisbane going through clippings, notes, court transcripts.

BRISBANE
Somehow we need to prove Nack and
Braun are the same person.

Will combs through Brisbane's moleskin until he finds:

"Augusta Nack - Licensed Midwife"

WILL
What is this?

BRISBANE
It was a plaque outside her door.
(noting the irony)
Advertising.

WILL
Midwife. Nack was a Midwife.

BRISBANE
Yeah...so what?

Carvalho enters with more files.

WILL
Braun's farm for young girls...
Nack was advertising herself as a
licensed midwife --

CARVALHO
New York doesn't issue midwife
licenses.

They both look to him - what?

CARVALHO
They don't...twenty years as a
newsman. And father of two.

WILL

No licenses in New York limits, if
you can't operate here, you find
another location --

BRISBANE

(overlapping)

And Thorn had a house in Woodside --

WILL

What about before she met Thorn --

BRISBANE

Wait a minute...

He flips through a few more pages, reads:

BRISBANE

I asked Frank Gartner, from the
Baths - where is it, where is it...
"If I wanted to find him.....get it
from the horse's mouth..." Gartner:
"1671 Eastburn, no wait, he never
moved in there..."

(to Will)

Then why provide it as an address?

A moment - and they're out the door --

WILL

1671 Eastburn. Let's go.

CUT TO:

EXT. DECK, LIBERTY YACHT - DAY

A gray day, the wind has some strength to it as if the whole
world is blowing by. Pulitzer sits with Jabez.

PULITZER

Do you know the worst thing about
growing old and blind all at once?
You lose track of when you're
awake. So you start to fear sleep.
Which is sad, when so much of your
life has been a dream...How long
have you been in my employ, Jabez?

JABEZ

Eleven months, sir.

PULITZER

...I thought it was longer. In
spite of what my enemies spew I do
not, in fact, practice the faith of
my parents.

(MORE)

PULITZER (CONT'D)

But I know their Book equates the blind with the living dead - both call for the same benediction.

"Living-dead": all that means is one who does not contribute. I'll not be that man...anymore. Our republic and its press will rise and fall together. What does it say if neither one has any integrity?

He hands a sheathe of papers to Jabez - barely legible.

PULITZER

Some thoughts I've had on what to do with some of the money...and my name. Find someone to transcribe it properly.

JABEZ

What about the murder case?

(silence, then)

I wouldn't worry about Mr. Brisbane sir, disloyal as he was. I'll even bet it was him that called the police about the head being found.

PULITZER

Brisbane didn't call anyone.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT, 1671 EASTBURN AVENUE, BRONX - DAY

Superimpose: The Bronx

Brisbane and Will are with an old, be-speckled woman named IDA ZIEGLER. You'd think they were cops.

IDA ZIEGLER

Oh yes, it was back in March, I placed an advertiss-ment to rent my room.

WILL/BRISBANE

And did anyone/Was there anyone...

Brisbane allows Will to continue.

WILL

Did anyone come by showing interest, Mrs. Ziegler?

She bumbles around the kitchen, boiling water on the small iron stove's flame.

IDA ZIEGLER
 Let me think...yes, yes there was a
 woman that came by...

Will and Brisbane exchange looks - Will is about to
 interject, Brisbane motions for him to stay silent --

IDA ZIEGLER
 ...She said she was interested but
 she didn't rent here.

BRISBANE
 Did she say why not?

IDA ZIEGLER
 Yes. I remember because it was so
 odd...she said the bathtub was too
 small!

(oblivious to their
 reactions)

Can you imagine a silly thing like
 that? She didn't look like a big
 woman to me. And then she asked me
 about my garden outside.

WILL
 What about it?

IDA ZIEGLER
 She wanted to know if she'd strike
 water, if she dug three feet down.

Will gets close to her now, kneeling to her eye level:

WILL
 Mrs. Ziegler, what was her name?

Ziegler searches through a drawer of clippings, Will's
 anticipation building. We don't see what Brisbane is doing
 in the b.g. --

Ziegler finds a clipping.

IDA ZIEGLER
 Mrs. Braun.

Will is deflated - just as Brisbane pulls the PHOTO he swiped
 of Nack and Guldensuppe from his suitcase:

BRISBANE
 Is this her, ma'am? Is this woman
 Mrs. Braun?

IDA ZIEGLER
 Yes!

INT. PRESSED ROOM, JOURNAL OFFICES - DAY

The doors fling open, Will and Brisbane move in with purpose, climb the stairs as fast as their feet can carry them:

WILL

He thinks she's looking for a new place to operate but she's actually looking for a place to cut him and bury him instead --

BRISBANE

She looks under the fake name "Braun," registers the house in Queens under the same name --

WILL

Wants to rent outside the city, goes to the Bronx, then Queens. The body turns up in Harlem, and Brooklyn and Staten Island --

BRISBANE

All New York's murder...

As they pass the second floor press room, Will screams in:

WILL

Stop the presses, we've a new headline to run!

That same Press Operator leans his head out:

PRESS OPERATOR

Yes, sir, W.R.!

A calamitous shut down...

They climb the stairs, cross the floor, jogging, then running as they head for Will's office, adrenaline racing --

BRISBANE

How do we alert the jury?

WILL

They read this, they'll know the verdict to hand down.

BRISBANE

So let's do it quick. You know how you're gonna write it?

Will nods as they enter --

WILL'S OFFICE

Will sits at a typewriter. Brisbane paces, elated.

BRISBANE
 That's history's greatest
 retraction you're about to print.
 Could kill the paper. You ready?

WILL
 (at peace)
 Yes, I think I am.

BRISBANE
 What will you do next?

WILL
 Buy a ticket to the theatre.
 (and with a laugh:)
 After that, well, I don't know.

BRISBANE
 Well, something tells me you won't
 have to struggle.

A hiccup in Will's excitement. Brisbane doesn't notice.

WILL
 What do you mean?

BRISBANE
 Your name is Hearst!

He leaves. Will sits there. He opens a locked drawer at his knee, pulls out a worn binder full of letters. All addressed to "Father." Then he looks out the window. And this time, we finally see what he's been looking at all these months:

A view of a JOURNAL BILLBOARD shadowed by the *World* tower.

Will starts typing...

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT, HOFFMAN HOUSE - MORNING

Will wakes from a deep sleep, alone. Goes to the window in his silk pajamas. Draws the curtains and looks out --

MATCH CUT TO:

A CROWD Looking up, frozen. A moment before we realize they're not under Will's window but rather at

EXT. COURTHOUSE STEPS - MORNING

Everyone holds their breath. Newsboy bolts out the doors, Moses on the Mount with God's decree: the verdict --

EXT. PARK ROW - DAY

Brisbane walks, content. A mass of people surrounds a hawker shilling fresh sheets. Brisbane picks one up:

JOURNAL HEADLINE: THORN GETS THE CHAIR! NACK GETS NINE YEARS!

A gut punch. Brisbane can't believe it. Neither can anyone else - as he goes, *Journals* are devoured everywhere like the twilight zone. And there's not a *World* to be seen.

INT. JOURNAL OFFICES - DAY

Brisbane enters as Carvalho addresses the staff from atop his desk, champagne bottles for every two men. Only Goddard sits, watching from his corner - not celebrating, not judging.

CARVALHO

W.R. wanted to be here but I told him to get some sleep. But you'll all be happy to know, the *Journal* just reached one million readers. In one day! Congratulations!

Corks pop and fly. Over the sounds of celebration we go to

MONTAGE - A SWAN SONG

A.) Committee Room, Police Headquarters. Counters count paper votes, arranging them into "yay" and "nay" piles;

B.). "Herald Square" Theatre. Will enters, takes his usual balcony seat. *The Girl From Paris* starts.

Tessie is gone. In her place, another girl, MILLICENT;

C.) A *JOURNAL HEADLINE: GREATER NEW YORK!*

Charter Signed by Governor, January 1, 1898 Witnesses Consolidation into one municipality, Will Become the Second City in the World in population and wealth behind London;

D.). Backstage, Theatre. Will makes his way through the wings. Introduces himself to Milliecent the actress;

E.) Lower East Side Docks. Police escort a cuffed Thorn off a ferry. Once packed with people, now only Goddard is here to see him. He grips his collar tight as snowflakes drop;

F.) Eden Musée Wax Museum. The display has changed again: Thorn in the electric chair. The room is as crowded as ever;

G.) Map of New York. Completely blue - the *Journal's* domain.

CUT TO:

INT. JOURNAL OFFICES - BRISBANE - NIGHT

Looking at the map. He sits, alone, nowhere to go. A door opens. GIGGLING. Brisbane sees two young girls (Millicent and her sister) come in, followed by Will giving them a tour.

WILL
And this is where magic is conjured.

Will sees Brisbane. Leaves the girls, sits with him.

BRISBANE
You're not out celebrating.

WILL
That kind of thing usually requires a drink. Thought I'd show a few new friends the place instead.

They both know the 800-pound elephant in the room.

WILL
How could I do it? How could I let her off? Ask me.

BRISBANE
It's your paper, you can do what you want.

But he wants to know.

WILL
People...don't want information. They want entertainment. It's like a magic act, give them the answer they're pining for, they lose interest. They knew who was guilty. But she wasn't the story. Guldensuppe wasn't the story. It was all of them out there, their injustice. That's the drama.

It rolls off his tongue so perfectly.

BRISBANE
That may all be true. But it doesn't mean I have to be a part of it.

Brisbane rises, ready to leave with his dignity.

WILL
And what will you do up there, on the moral high ground?

BRISBANE
Maybe I'll...write the great American novel after all.

WILL

You know it's not as though we could've brought him back. So why labor over fine points when we can just give them a better story?

BRISBANE

What did you say?

MILLICENT

(calling from the back)
W.R. you promised to take us to Sherry's!

WILL

That's all this is: we give them a better story.

(then)

Will I see you tomorrow?

BRISBANE

I honestly don't know, Chief.

WILL

Call me W.R.

BRISBANE

No, I don't think I will.

As Brisbane walks to the door Arnold rushes in, blows passed.

ARNOLD

There's been an explosion! On the *Maine*, down in Cuba. How do you want to handle it?

Will looks to Brisbane, who leaves, as we

CUT TO:

JOURNAL HEADLINE: FEBRUARY 17TH

WHO DESTROYED THE MAINE?

**DESTRUCTION OF THE WARSHIP MAINE WAS THE WORK OF AN ENEMY!
\$50,000 REWARD FOR THE DETECTION OF THE PERPETRATOR!
NOT AN ACCIDENT! MAINE DESTROYED BY A SPANISH MINE!
CONGRESS DECLARES WAR WITH SPAIN!**

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - SERIES OF SHOTS

All New York - Manhattan, Long Island, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens - stands still, enraptured by the words on the page, gripping their copies with clenched fists.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE CLARENCE BUILDING, RIVERSIDE DRIVE - DAY

Superimpose: 1908

Augusta Nack, a decade older, stares up at the brick-and-rusticated limestone behemoth. She looks side to side, expecting someone to notice her. They don't.

INT. LOBBY - DAY

Opulent. A set of elevators on one side, a single on the other for the top floors. Augusta approaches RECEPTIONIST.

RECEPTIONIST

May I help you?

AUGUSTA

I'm here to see Mr. Hearst.

RECEPTIONIST

And you are?

AUGUSTA

...I am Augusta Nack.

Perplexed, Receptionist reaches for a phone...

INT. PRIVATE ELEVATOR

Augusta and Receptionist ride up in silence. Close quarters. Receptionist isn't the least bit worried. Doors open into

ANTEROOM

Receptionist gestures for her to sit, rides back down. A buzzer SOUNDS, Nack opens a door to

INT. HEARST'S BEDROOM OFFICE - DAY

A grand bedroom/office. Filled with a collection of statues, tapestries, camera equipment, the ceiling itself taken from some European castle. Will - a decade older, waist line grander, so let's call him HEARST - sits behind a great desk.

AUGUSTA

Do you recognize me?

HEARST

Of course.

She smiles, pleased (and relieved).

HEARST
You were released, then?

AUGUSTA
A little over a year ago.

HEARST
What have you been doing?

She sees a photo of Hearst and his wife on his desk, picks it up to look at it. And we see:

THE PHOTO: A Husband-and-Wife portrait, Hearst and Millicent.

AUGUSTA
She is a handsome woman.

HEARST
What is it you'd like, Ms. Nack?

AUGUSTA
\$10,000. And in return I will give you an exclusive! My story.

HEARST
Is that so?

AUGUSTA
People will pay to read my account, sir.

He can't help but giggle. It makes her uneasy. She goes on the offensive.

AUGUSTA
Do you know what happened to the last man that laughed at me?

HEARST
I can only imagine.

AUGUSTA
You tried to beat me. To put me away, to have me killed - but here I am seated before you. You couldn't get rid of me - my name was the Headline. Not everyday you meet an adversary, is it?

He looks at her. It borders on pity and shame.

HEARST
Ms. Nack, I have only ever known one adversary. And you are certainly not that. There'll be no purchase of your story. You may go.

She is shocked. Ready to voice objection and throw a fit. But suddenly aware of where she is, she picks up her umbrella with all the dignity she can muster and heads for the door.

HEARST

And Ms. Nack --
(she turns)
Your name may have been the
Headline. But the Headline changes
daily. The Masthead never does.
And as you see, that is where my
name sits.

Bested, she leaves. He sits there. Atop his larger-than-life desk, blueprints for a small bungalow to be built in the California hills; a copy of the *Journal-American*, his flagship paper, as well as 100 other Hearst publications...

He comes out from behind the desk and walks to the window. He is BAREFOOT. High above, Citizen Hearst looks out at New York, the city he now holds in his hand.

FADE TO BLACK.

ARTHUR BRISBANE BECAME A LOYAL EMPLOYEE AND FRIEND TO WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST. HE DIED ON CHRISTMAS, 1936 AND WAS EULOGIZED AS JOURNALISM'S ALL-TIME NUMBER ONE GENIUS... BY W.R. HEARST.

LITTLE IS KNOWN OF TESSIE POWERS' FATE. BOTH HEARST'S MOTHER, PHOEBE, AND HIS COUSIN, ANNE FLINT, ATTEMPTED TO DISCREDIT HER AS A PROSTITUTE.

WILLIAM RANDOLPH HEARST BUILT A MEDIA EMPIRE THE LIKES OF WHICH THE WORLD HAD NEVER KNOWN. AT 55, HE STARTED AN OPEN EXTRA-MARITAL AFFAIR WITH A 22 YEAR-OLD ACTRESS, MARION DAVIES. ONE OF THE RICHEST MEN IN THE WORLD, HE WAS ULTIMATELY PLAGUED BY EXTREME DEBT AND FORCED TO SELL THE MAJORITY OF HIS EXTENSIVE COLLECTIONS. TODAY HE IS REMEMBERED FOR YELLOW JOURNALISM, INSTIGATING THE SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR FOR HIS OWN PROFIT AND IMMORTALIZED AS A LOVELESS, ILL-FATED TRAGEDY IN ORSON WELLES' "CITIZEN KANE."

JOSEPH PULITZER DIED WITHOUT HIS FAMILY ABOARD HIS YACHT, *LIBERTY*. THE NEW YORK WORLD CLOSED ITS DOORS IN 1931. AFTER HIS DEATH, PULITZER BEQUEATHED \$250,000 TO COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY TO START A JOURNALISM SCHOOL, THE FIRST OF ITS KIND. HIS DREAM TO HONOR INTEGRITY AND ACCURACY IN JOURNALISM WAS REALIZED BY THE PULITZER PRIZE.

WILLY GULDENSUPPE'S HEAD WAS NEVER FOUND...