On the WATERFRONT

Starring Hoboken, New Jersey



A publication of the Hoboken Historical Museum

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of the release of the film



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All photographs from the collection of the Hoboken Historical Museum unless otherwise noted. Special thanks: Life *Magazine, Columbia Pictures,* Jersey Journal, *Ken Schultz, and Donald "Red" Barrett.*

Front cover: Pictures from the collection of the Hoboken Historical Museum and Donald "Red" Barrett.
Inside front and back cover: Longshoreman's hook, collection of the Hoboken Historical Museum.
Overleaf: The filming of the climatic fight scene in *On the Waterfront.*
Right: An actual shape-up at Hoboken's Pier No. 3 from May 1954, courtesy of *Life*.
Back cover: Marlon Brando (center) during the filming of the final shape-up scene in *On the Waterfront.*

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Hoboken's *Waterfront*

An Essay by Sada Fretz

A little more than fifty years ago, best-selling novelist and scriptwriter Budd Schulberg started hanging out in Hoboken to soak up background for a work that would become the film *On the Waterfront*. He headed for the shabby bars down near the river and proved himself by keeping pace with tough longshoremen beer for beer. He impressed them with his inside knowledge of the fight game they all followed (he'd once co-managed a prizefighter), and his down-to-earth and clearly sympathetic manner won the confidence of men conditioned to play "d-and-d" (deaf and dumb) with curious strangers. He listened to their beefs about conditions on Hoboken's mile or so of waterfront, where the entire string of shipping piers was then controlled by ex-con and former bootlegger Ed Florio, official of the notorious International Longshoreman's Association (ILA) and close friend of Hoboken Police Commissioner Michael Borelli.

Schulberg knew that Florio was just one individual in an extensive network of corruption on the docks. He became top union boss in Hoboken after his predecessor Charles Yanowski was found dead one summer night in 1948, a dozen stab wounds from an ice pick in and around his heart. Yanowski's rap sheet listed twenty arrests and time in Alcatraz for crimes including bank robbing, hijacking, and other violent pursuits.

Florio was not suspected of Yanowski's murder—probably rivals in the gambling rackets did that one—but killing for a job as boss was no rare event in the New York/New Jersey port. In Hoboken, the year before Schulberg's arrival, a newly designated hiring boss for the lucrative Pier C (then called Pier 3) was shot and killed in union headquarters the day before he was to start the job. Almost exactly two years later, and just months before the film crew started shooting *On the Waterfront*, another Pier C hiring-boss-to-be (or, more accurately, not to be) would be shot dead on the sidewalk before he could report to work.

Competition at the bottom for the heavy lifting work was almost as brutal. Twice a day on every pier the hiring boss blew the whistle for the shape-up, and men gathered round him in a semicircle while he picked the ones who'd work the next four hours. But since as many as 500 men might shape up for, say, 100 jobs, the ones who made the pick were those who signaled their willingness to kick back from their wages to the hiring boss. Another way to guarantee a pick might be to borrow money at outrageous interest rates from union loan sharks. Since the lenders wanted to collect repayments, they'd split with the hiring bosses to make sure the guys who owed them would get work. But overall most of the shapers got so few hours' work they ended up with less than two thousand dollars a year. Out of that came the kickbacks and the loan repayments and whatever other sums the union bosses could extort. For small change the bosses passed a hat on payday and got everyone to toss a dollar in for some unnamed and phony charity; on a larger scale they'd withhold so-called income tax deductions for amounts the IRS would never see.

The dock bosses even got their clutches in the truckers who transported cargo to and from the piers. To move their freight a few feet between the trucks and piers the truckers had to hire Florio's own "public loading" crew.

A Hoboken Historical Museum publication

PERATURES—9 A.M., 69; 10 A.M., 69; 11 A.M., 71.

Full coverage by the United Press and International News Service.

. LX.—No. 89. TUESDAY, MAY 22, 1951 JERSEY CITY OFFICE 2866 Hudson Boulevard | UNION CITY OFFICE 417 36th Street | HOBOKEN (MAIN OFFICE) 111 Newark Street PRICE 5 CENTS

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TUESDAY, MARCH 13, 1951 JERSEY CITY OFFICE 2866 Hudson Boulevard | UNION CITY OFFI 417 36th Street

Call Florio, Dock Crime

EXTRA

Shoot Up Labor Office in Hoboken

Open warfare broke out on the Hoboken waterfront today in gangland style. Three men drew up in a car in front of the headquarters of Local 867, at 204 River street and fired a fusilade of shots into the offices of John Nolan, the local's delegate.

A dockworker, believed to be Nunzio Alutto of West New York, was shot in the stomach and rushed to St. Mary's Hospital. Another man i office, believed wounded, escaped by a rear win

Nolan said that he saw Nunzio fall, ducked behind a desk, escaping the bullets.

Three Held as Witnesses; Hunt Fourth in Probe

Report Pier Boss Issue Led To Hoboken Dockfront Slaying

As tension gripped the uneasy Hoboken waterfront today, police and members of the prosecutor's staff probed deeper into the fatal shooting of a North Bergen stevedore yesterday in a union headquarters at 204 River street and were led to the belief that a fight over a job as pier boss led to the slaying.

In gangland style, 45-year-old Nunzio "Wally" Aluotto, of 911 88th street, was mowed down shortly be-

WORLD NEWS

ALLED



Hoboken Labor Leader, Others Facing Quiz

Editorial

Murder on the Waterfront!

He charged them sky-high rates to swing the forklift, then hit them for more "hurry-up" fees on threat of long delays.

None of these abuses were peculiar to Hoboken's waterfront. Schulberg had already written several articles about lawless conditions throughout the entire Port of New York, especially on Manhattan's Chelsea docks. But compared to other ports on both coasts this one was by far the most corrupt and violent. In 1952 *The New York Times* surveyed the nation's top eight ports and found New York's not only number one in commerce but also the most crime ridden. Other ports had banned the shape-up and the public loading racket, both occasions for abuse; and the value of goods lost to theft here was three times the total stolen from all other ports combined. (This wasn't petty pilferage. Once, according to Virgil Peterson's *The Mob*, ten tons of steel went missing from a New York pier.)

Times readers probably weren't surprised by their home port's dubious distinction. A few years earlier another daily newspaper, the *New York Sun*, had published reporter Malcolm Johnson's extensive and hard-hitting series on what he called "labor gangsterism." Johnson's sub-series on the ILA won him a Pulitzer Prize in 1949 and made it hard for the authorities to look the other way.

"The Port of New York, the greatest in the world," Johnson wrote, "is an outlaw frontier." Having spent two years investigating ILA operations, he told how top union jobs were held by men who had been indicted for murder, kidnapping, rape, and robbery. On the piers they ran elaborate systems for extortion, bribery, kickbacks, blackmail, and padded payrolls. (This last scam, also called short-ganging, involved hiring fewer men than called for in a crew but collecting wages for a full crew by listing "phantom" workers on the payroll.)



ILA president Joseph P. Ryan (left) in his New York office with "Packy" Connolly (right), ILA vicepresident. Courtesy of Life.

They were involved in organized crime activities including smuggling, traffic in narcotics, systematic theft of cargo, bookmaking, and loan-sharking. But, Johnson made clear, the union bosses didn't act alone. Company executives, he said, "work hand in glove with the racketeers," and "police and politicians protect [the crooked system] for a share in the loot."

Johnson detailed these and other charges in dozens, eventually hundreds, of articles on the ILA. There were pieces on the shape-up and the loading racket, on a notorious "pistol local" in Manhattan and on "paper locals" invented to produce the votes the bosses needed. He profiled local bosses like Manhattan's West Side madman John "Cockeye" Dunn, responsible for thirty-seven murders, and told how ILA President for Life Joseph P. Ryan, hobnobber in high places, was paid off by the companies for labor peace while the men were held to five-

Newspaper clippings from an album compiled by Michael M. Borelli.

or-ten-cent "Woolworth raises." To help keep the rank and file in line Ryan recruited hiring bosses out of Sing Sing and he played the red card by hitting up both workers and employers for an "anti-Communist fund" that helped keep him in silk shirts and Cadillacs.

In one column Johnson focused on a dinner honoring Ed Florio in Hoboken. Gathered at the Union Club on Sixth and Hudson were Joseph Ryan and other union brass, some then under indictment but mingling comfortably with shipping company executives and Hoboken officials. Mayor Fred De Sapio was a speaker and Public Safety Commissioner Borelli prominent among the guests. In other columns Johnson praised crusading "waterfront priests," especially the Jesuit John M. Corridan of Chelsea, whose stirring speech about Christ in the shape-up so impressed Budd Schulberg that he used it almost verbatim in one of *On the Waterfront*'s memorable scenes.

In the wake of Johnson's revelations came official probes by city, county, state, and federal governments. Not all of them meant business—New York City Mayor William O'Dwyer put ILA's Joe Ryan on his wishy-washy panel—but the New York State Crime Commission dug deep and made a strong impression with forty days of headlined public hearings. When the Commission turned its spotlight on Hoboken, it had a dream witness in longtime dockworker Anthony (Tony Mike) DeVincenzo, a former boxer like Terry Malloy, the Brando character in *On the Waterfront*, and a former hiring boss on one of Hoboken's piers (fired, he said, because he wouldn't go along with Florio's short-ganging). DeVincenzo had already testified in private sessions and had so many beans to spill he received three death threats before appearing at the public hearing. But the threats just won more headlines for the witness and got him whisked to and from the hearing under New Jersey and New York police protection.



On the stand a gruff-voiced DeVincenzo electrified the audience—and wrote the next day's headlines—with details of how Florio and his union henchmen ran Hoboken's docks. He told how Florio took bribes from company executives to keep the men from striking. He went into how the loan sharks pressed the men to borrow at an interest rate of five percent the first week, ten percent a week thereafter, and how they shared the take with Florio. He described how Florio split the public loading fees with Police Commissioner Borelli and eight others, meeting every Saturday at ten a.m. inside Borelli's club on Jefferson Street. He testified that Mayor DeSapio and Parks Commissioner John J. Grogan (a future Mayor) had their fingers in the loading pie as well. (When DeSapio took the stand the next day he denied the charge but answered so many questions with "I don't remember" and "not to my direct knowledge" that the Commission chairman rebuked him for his "vagueness.") In what must have been a better show than "The Sopranos," DeVincenzo spoke of characters called Fifi, Meatball, Red Stingaree, and Frankie Cheese, and he gave a blow-by-blow account of Florio's lead-pipe beating by a couple of dockers who chose to settle grievances within the ILA tradition.

"I was proud to be a rat," DeVincenzo said years later, but at the time his defiance took its toll. He was barred from working on the docks, ostracized by former friends, shot at while driving through the Holland tunnel, and unnerved by his confining police guards. His son Salvatore, now a resident of Little Ferry, N.J., says his dad was on the edge of a nervous breakdown for six months and lost eighty-three pounds before a doctor friend, a patron of a restaurant the family opened, took him in hand. Still, Tony Mike lived out another thirty years, and he's still remembered as a model for the Brando character in *On the Waterfront.* Budd Schulberg sat through all forty days of the Commission's hearings, and he said later that DeVinceno's testimony inspired what became the focus of his plot. "I had written an earlier *Waterfront* without Terry's testimony," he wrote in a foreword to a recent book of essays on the film. "It was only when I monitored those incredible hearings that I became convinced that the real waterfront was writing our ending for us."

WHOSE LIFE IS THIS, ANYWAY?

It was their own testimony before a different committee that brought *On the Waterfront*'s scriptwriter and director together in the first place. They did their cheese-eating before the U.S. House of Representatives' Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), amid the anti-communist hysteria that marked the decade after World War II. When HUAC's investigative rampage turned to Hollywood and pressured former Communists or "fellow travelers" to name other former party members, witnesses who refused to answer were cited for contempt of Congress and blacklisted by the studios. Some holdouts, known as the Hollywood Ten, were thrown in prison. Like many idealistic artists of their time both Schulberg and director Elia Kazan had been Communist Party members briefly in the thirties, but both soon broke away, and Kazan says he came to "hate" the party. Still, both were called before HUAC (Schulberg in 1951, Kazan the next spring) and both consented to name names of other members.

Kazan especially had agonized about informing, and afterwards he suffered from the snubs inflicted by his liberal friends. (The split was still not healed in 1999, when Kazan's Oscar for lifetime achievement drew protests from within the audience and outside the hall.) In his autobiography *A Life* he tells how he decided to get in touch with fellow informer Schulberg for mutual support.

The two had never met but now they hit it off, decided to do a film together–something with a social content, they agreed–and discovered that they'd both worked on waterfront-based scripts that came to nothing. Schulberg's script *The Bottom of the River*, based on Malcolm Johnson's exposés, was orphaned when the small producer who had recruited him lost his backing, but Schulberg kept the film rights to Johnson's book. Kazan had worked on Arthur Miller's script *The Hook*, but Miller pulled out when the studio they were negotiating with insisted that he make the bad guys Communists instead of the union thugs they were. (Miller, also a former Communist, would also get a call from HUAC, but he refused to name names and would shun Kazan for years for his cooperation.) Now Schulberg and Kazan agreed that Schulberg would start researching a new script in Hoboken while Kazan shuttled back and forth to other, previously committed projects.

In *A Life* Kazan says that when he got back after months of filming abroad he found that "Budd...[ha]d practically lived in Hoboken, had walked the dockside streets, made friends with the dockers, hung out in their bars, drinking even-up with them, amassing an intimate knowledge of their homes, their fami-

lies, their lingo, and their humor, and of how those who'd defied the rackets responded to the threats on their lives. He told me the details of the struggle within their corrupt union, who the longshoremen's enemies were, about the pilfering and the payoffs, where the spoils went, and the secret links to the politicians."

After the Crime Commission hearings Schulberg made friends with DeVincenzo and picked up much detail to fill out the film. In *A Life* Kazan recalls going with Schulberg to Tony Mike's house for a dinner of spaghetti, peppers, meat sauce, and red wine. Salvatore DeVincenzo still remembers the occasion and says that Eva Marie Saint was there too. Brando? He's not sure. (Sal does dispute Kazan's recollection that Tony Mike ate with a pistol on the table, to show the guests that he had had to arm himself to protect his life and his family. "My mother would never allow that," Sal said recently.)

Kazan said later (in an interview in Jeff Young's *Kazan*) that the film "was based on the life story of a guy named DeVincenzo, who I knew, whose house I ate at. He lived through the same goddamn thing that Terry Malloy goes through in the film." But Schulberg has played down the Tony Mike connection. He says he drew on several models for the character of Terry Malloy, and that he had created a Terry Malloy before he met DeVincenzo. The issue came to trial when the film took off and Tony Mike sued the producer and Columbia Pictures for a million dollars for violation of privacy. He settled for about twenty-three thousand, which the company awarded after Brando testified that Kazan had told him to study Tony Mike in preparing for the role.

It has become almost conventional wisdom that Kazan and Schulberg created *On the Waterfront,* with its emphasis on Terry's testimony as a heroic and redeeming act, to justify their naming names to HUAC. Even Brando, who played Terry, has bought into that interpretation. In his 1994 autobiography, *Brando*, he tells how he first turned down the part because he didn't want to work with an informer. (No slave to scruples, producer Sam Spiegel lined up Hoboken's Frank Sinatra for the part, yet continued to woo Brando and then dumped Sinatra when Brando changed his mind. The sweetner for Brando: He could quit work each day at four to go see his shrink across the river in Manhattan.) "I finally decided to do the film," the actor said in *Brando*, "but what I didn't realize then was that *On the Waterfront* was really a metaphorical argument by Gadge [Kazan's nickname] and Budd Schulberg: they made the film to justify finking on their friends."

Kazan himself helped feed that impression. In *A Life* he wrote "I did see Tony Mike's story as my own....When Brando, in the end, yells at Lee Cobb, the mob boss, 'I'm glad what I done–you hear me?–glad what I done!' that was me saying, with identical heat, that I was glad I'd testified as I had.....So when critics say I put my story and my feelings on the screen, to justify my informing, they are right. That transference of emotion from my own experience to the screen is the merit of those scenes....[At that dinner at Tony Mike's] I saw that, in the mysterious way of art, I was preparing a film about myself." Kazan is surely right that his strong feelings and his strong identification with the real-life informer helped give the film its extraordinary resonance and impact. But he has also said (in the Jeff Young interview) that however strong the parallels, "they were not my reason for making the film." And, he acknowledged in *A Life,* "I doubt that Budd was affected as personally as I was by the parallel of Tony Mike's story."

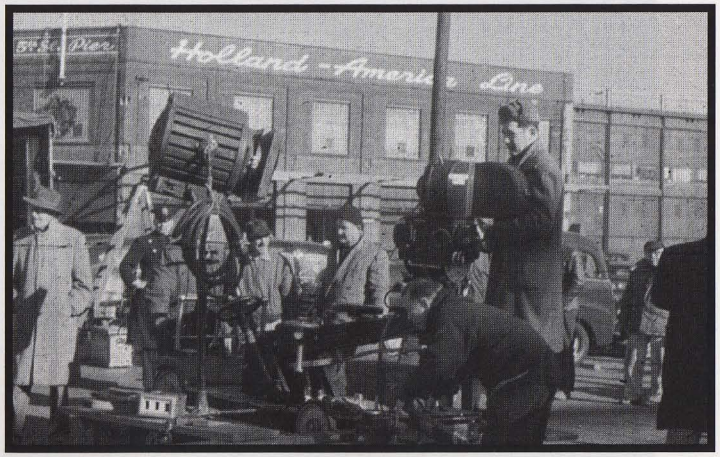
That puts Schulberg's case too mildly. The writer answers Brando's charges with reminders that the testimony issue was inspired by the real-life hearings

and wasn't in his early versions. As the longshoremen realized from Schulberg's rapport with them and from his many articles that pled their cause, his prime concern was for the ill-treated workers.

But the plight of lowly workers wasn't Hollywood's idea of a winning topic. Kazan was then under contract to Darryl Zanuck of Twentieth Century Fox, but when he and Schulberg went out to see the producer for a verdict on the script, Zanuck told them "I don't like it, I don't like anything about it. It's exactly what Americans don't want to see right now. Who cares about a lot of sweaty longshoremen?" Other studio heads agreed. Before they left Hollywood, Kazan reported, they'd been turned down by every major studio. But across the hall from their hotel room was the maverick producer Sam Spiegel (or S.P. Eagle as he then called himself).

As both Kazan and Schulberg have told it, Spiegel asked them over to a party on their last night there, then invited Schulberg back to pitch his script the next morning before leaving on an early flight. The door would be unlocked, said Spiegel, so he wouldn't have to get up to answer it. So it was that Schulberg found himself standing over the producer's bed and running through the story. When he'd finished, Spiegel, still buried under covers, said he'd do the film.

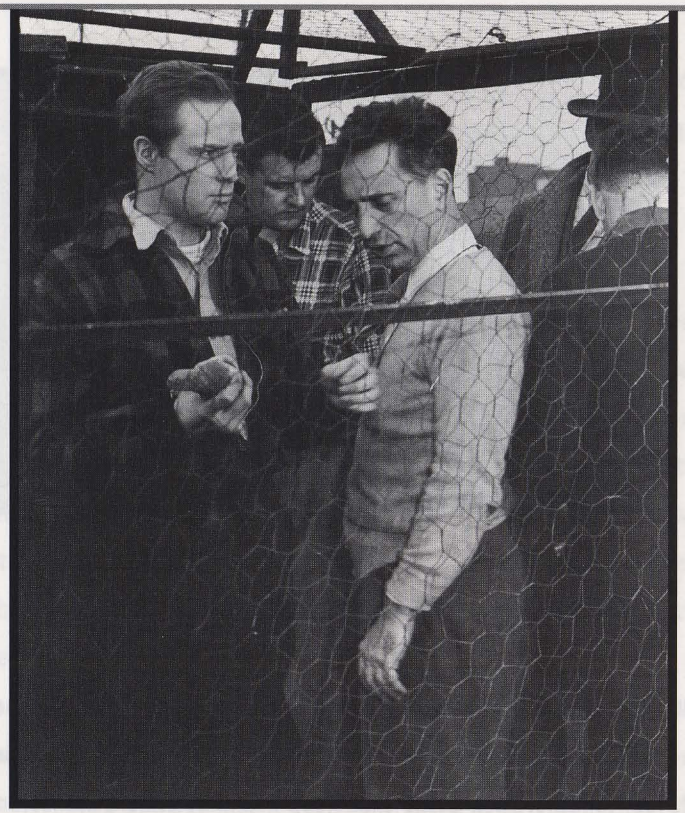
No one had any vision of a hit. "All we were hoping for was to get the picture to the screen," Schulberg has said. It would be a low-budget job, financed by Columbia Pictures for only $830,000 dollars. Kazan and Schulberg both complained that Spiegel pinched every penny of it and mercilessly pushed the crew through a thirty-five-day shooting schedule—but in the end the stingy budget helped by adding to the gritty realism.



SHOOTING IN HOBOKEN

It was the first major American film shot entirely on location; and they could not have chosen a much grittier location. Scenes were shot on working piers with real longshoremen doing their jobs within spitting distance and other dockers working for Kazan as extras. In the first shape-up scene one longshoreman wrote his own line. When Hobokenite Matty Russo called out, "Who do you have to see to get a day's pay around here?" he was, he said later, just drawing on his own frustration with the hiring system. Kazan liked the line and left it in, and Russo went on to other minor roles in other films.

Four of the toughest looking mobsters, though, were not longshoremen but prizefighters that Schulberg had recruited from New York. Kazan welcomed both their tough looks and the muscle they could show off camera. In *A Life*, Kazan recalled that "There were always some members of the mob standing behind the rest of the crowd watching us....One day some hoods pushed me up against



Inside the makeshift pigeon coop on the roof, Marlon Brando (left) and Director Elia Kazan (center) sort out the scene.

a wall and, holding me there, began to berate me, their point being that I was making the people of Hoboken look bad." But his bodyguard Joe Marotta, the police chief's brother, "was never more than six feet away," and when "Joe walked up they walked away." Another time, the extras' pay was late arriving. "Two big gorillas grabbed [Kazan's assistant] and held him over the water off the side of the pier, demanding 'Where's our money?' Just then Spiegel rode up in his limo with the pay-master. They'd stopped for coffee."

Spiegel had his own stories about being held up in Hoboken. Local officials, he said, demanded payoffs for the filming to proceed, and landlords had a way of raising rents once deals were made. For the first day of filming, the production had lined up a strip of tenement buildings for the rooftop scenes. But once they started setting up, the owner of the middle building held out for more money. Spiegel refused to pay, so the crew couldn't cross that roof but had to lug cameras and equipment up and down five flights of stairs to get from one permitted rooftop to another. Then a bar owner raised his per-day rental from a hundred to a thousand dollars once the crew had started shooting there and established it as a location. Maybe that's why one bar scene, where Terry and Edie go for a beer and run into the wedding party, starts out in what is now Frankie and Johnnies on the Waterfront at Fourteenth and Garden, but ends (although no switch is obvious) inside the old Meyer's Hotel that stood at Third and Hudson.

But there are other switches that might baffle viewers who think they know Hoboken. For the inside of Father Barry's church, for example, the film used

Edie's (Eva Marie Saint) first drink. Scene shot in Frankie & Johnnies Restaurant.



the interior of Sts. Peter & Paul at Fourth and Hudson, but when you see the church from outside you're viewing the façade of Our Lady of Grace at Fourth and Willow. In the same way, a park scene will switch between Church Square Park (where OLG is in the background, looking west) and Elysian Park (where you look east and see the skyline). The best guide to how the film used these sites and others, many of them in or on or outside buildings that are gone now, is an article by Nicholas Acocella, based on research by Hoboken historian Leonard Luizzi, in *Hoboken History* magazine #18, 1997. The Acocella article also covers one scene not shot in Hoboken: Because there were no ships available in Hoboken when the scene was scheduled, Father Barry's famous sermon in the ship's hold was shot on piers at Red Hook, Brooklyn.

There is some dispute about the just-as-famous taxi scene, where brother Charley (played by Rod Steiger) pulls a gun and Terry laments "I coulda been a contender." No one disputes that the car was not really moving forward. The Venetian blind in the back window was put up to hide that fact, and a crew member stood outside the car swinging a light to simulate passing traffic. But in *A Life* Kazan says the scene was shot in a "shabby studio," while Luizzi says that Steiger insists it was shot outdoors in a car parked on River Street between First and Second. Has anyone asked Brando?

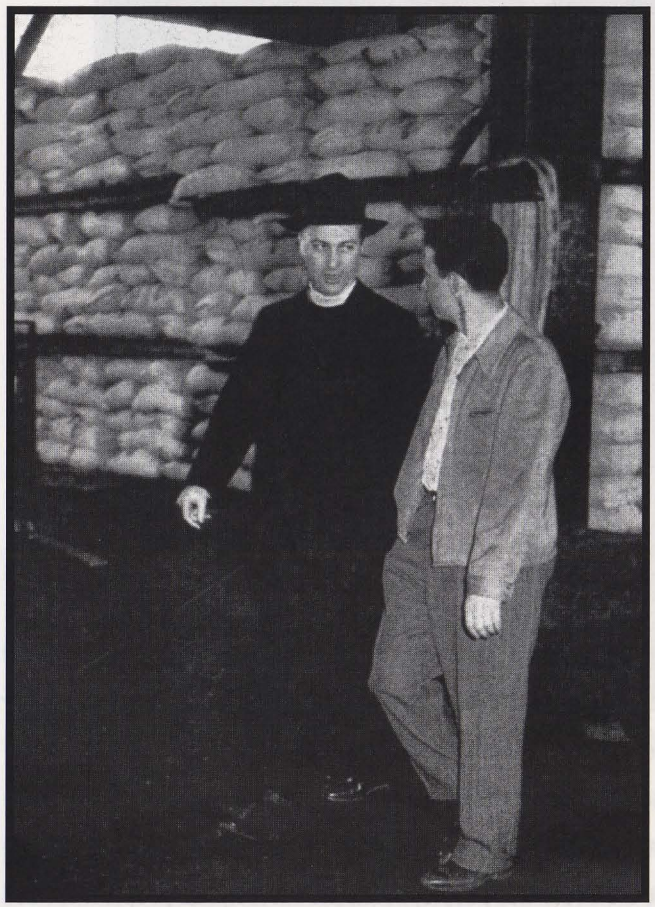
Everyone agrees about the cold. They all worked outside in temperatures near zero all through December 1953. Crew members huddled around 55-gallon metal drums of burning trash. (Besides giving off some heat, fires also produced smoke, a trick devised by cinematographer Boris Kaufman to create a consistent hazy atmosphere.) Steiger, calling up the scene years later, recalled, "We're frozen. They've got two sun lamps on the camera to keep it from freezing." Eva Marie Saint wore longjohns under her clothing, pushing up the arms



The cab scene with Rod Steiger (left) and Marlon Brando (right).

and legs to go before the camera. Hoboken resident Ken Schulz, in high school at the time, remembers asking for her autograph, and getting it, though her fingers were so numbed by the cold she told him "I can hardly write." Brando said, "It was so cold out there you couldn't overact." Kazan agreed. "The bite of the wind and the temperature did a great thing for the actors' faces," he wrote. "It made them look like people, not actors—in fact, like people who lived in Hoboken and suffered the cold because they had no choice."

Schulberg has also written about the "bitter cold." But in a piece for *Holiday* magazine in 1955, he ends with warmer memories: "On New Year's Eve our waterfront film company gave itself a party at the Meyer's Hotel. And I don't think it's hyperbole to say that there may never be such a gathering again. There were regular longshoremen from the Hoboken docks, representing the



Father Corridan, a New York City labor priest, endeavored to secure fair working conditions for longshoremen.

rival factions; there were stevedore officials who had tolerated the very conditions our picture exposed; there was Marlon Brando dancing with the buxom wife of a longshoreman; there were ex-heavyweight headliners drafted as actors–Tony Galento, Abe Simon, Tami Mauriello; there was our producer from Vienna with his elegant European ways; and there was our pint-sized veteran longshoreman born and raised in the Village, drinking the freely flowing spirits 'like it was me last day on oith.'

"There were the local politicians and the police commissioner with his family, and some teen-age hoodlums who crashed the party and got to fist-swinging with some of the actors who played tough waterfront kids in the picture. Our director, Gadge Kazan, a free-wheeling fugitive from Catholicism, had a New Year's drink with Father Corridan, whose sermon to the longshoremen was the prompter for one of our picture's biggest scenes. Guys and dolls, hoodlums and holy men, ex-pugs and literati, honest dock workers, celebrities and gate crashers, city officials, studio 'grips' and 'juicers'–this party had them all."

AFTERIMAGE

No one knew it then, but they were celebrating the creation of a classic. On the day the film came out in April 1954, Kazan was amazed to see 300 people–many of them men, and "tough-looking guys" at that–lined up outside Manhattan's Astor theater at nine a.m. And when the picture won eight major Oscars, he could not help gloating that the former friends who had condemned his testifying and the executives who had turned down the script had got their answer.

But the Oscars weren't the end of it for Schulberg. He has never finished with the waterfront. He has written several times that his script originally looked beyond the dockers to explore the social context of their plight. And instead of focusing exclusively on Terry, he put more emphasis on Father Barry's struggles, with the archdiocese and with his own scruples over sending followers to their death. Also, Schulberg has said, like many of the film's critics he had wanted a more realistic finale. (Even Kazan has since acknowledged that he made that closing march into the pier shed too triumphal.) But Sam Spiegel wanted a happy ending. And Spiegel kept demanding that the script be leaner, tighter, and more focused, which Schulberg came to agree made for a more effective ninety-minute film. But a novel, Schulberg knew, has more time to wander and reflect, and so a year after the film's release he published *Waterfront*, which told the story his way. The psychology was more complex, there was more grit about industry big shots and about dock bosses' "partnership" with the not-so-well-disguised Bohegan City Hall. And Terry dies in the end. Decades later Schulberg wrote yet another version, a stage play that had two readings in Hoboken and a five-week run off Broadway but closed after one performance in a Broadway theater in 1995. Later still Schulberg was toying with the idea of an updated version in which the crooks would be in real estate.

Not that crooks of Johnny Friendly's kind had disappeared, for all the efforts of the priests and writers and insurgents in the union. The New York State Crime Commission hearings led to some significant reforms and convictions. Both ILA president Joe Ryan and Hoboken's Ed Florio were found guilty of accepting bribes from stevedoring companies. The American Federation of Labor expelled the ILA, and a bi-state Waterfront Commission was established to oversee pier operations.

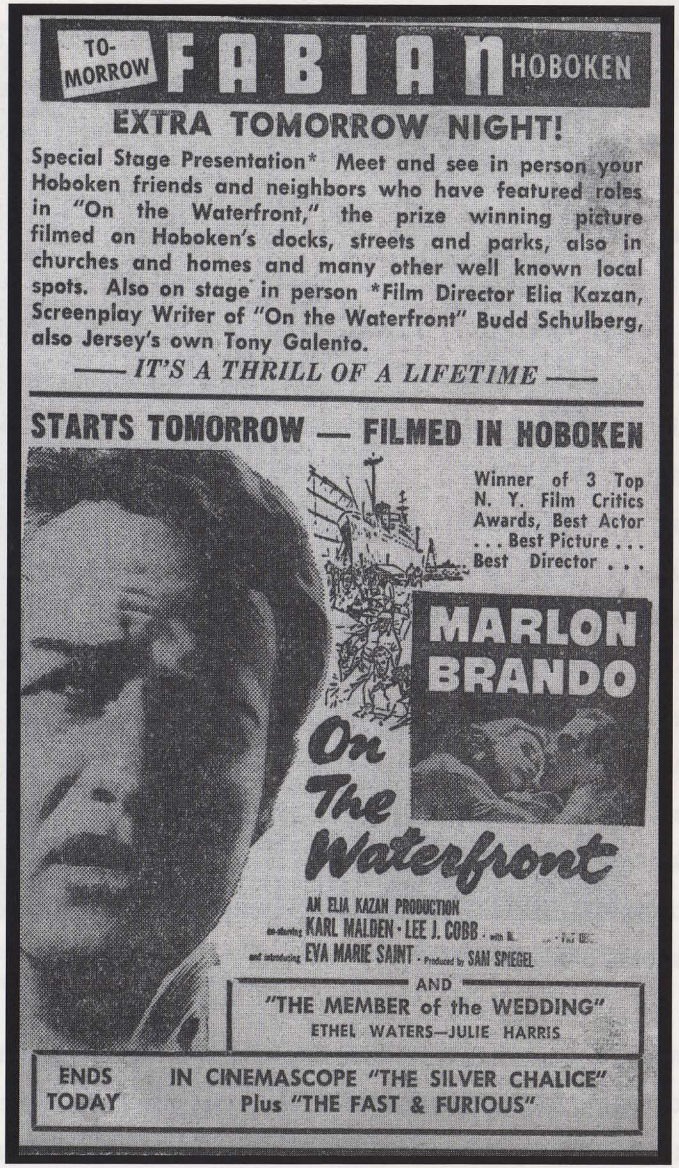
Never mind.

After fourteen months in prison Florio was back in power on Hoboken's docks. A year later Father Corridan lamented that ILA corruption was still firmly entrenched throughout the port. In 1959 the AFL took back the ILA. In the early sixties Austin Tobin, Director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, admitted to Budd Schulberg that "Actually the hoodlums never went away."

Around that time the industry was switching from break-bulk cargo to shipping goods in forty-foot containers that require huge amounts of space for storage and for truck maneuvering. Most of the old piers, Hoboken's among them, were abandoned for more spacious new facilities at Newark and Elizabeth. New union leaders got the men some decent benefits, including a guaranteed annual income to compensate for jobs lost to containers. But to anyone who scans the headlines it doesn't seem that things have changed much on the crime front. Here's how the *Jersey Journal* tagged one lengthy feature on December 15, 2003:

"So Crooked for So Long; Mob's long-held grip on [Bayonne's] ILA 1588 is hard to break." (A caption added that the local was "long a lucrative outpost for the powerful Genovese crime family.")

It's surprising, or maybe not, to see how many newspaper reports of real ILA malfeasance refer to *On the Waterfront*. ("The Mob Loses only in the Movies," went another recent *Jersey Journal* headline.) The film made such a mark it has become a reference point that any reader is expected to relate to. It's also up



Advertisement from the *Jersey Journal*, courtesy of Ken Schultz.

there as a work of art, ranked eighth among the American Film Institute's 100 best American films. And for the people of Hoboken it's still a point of pride and fascination: our brush with fame (*"My uncle was an extra in the shape-ups"*) and glamour (the late Mayor Tom Vezzetti boasted that his brother Frankie, bartending at the family bar, the Madison, once served Kazan and Brando beer) and a peak event in our collective memory, shared now by residents too young or new in town to claim it at firsthand. (One summer night in the mid-1970s, two guys probably born around the time the film was made were standing by the fence around Elysian Park when one was heard to say the words that Karl Malden spoke to Brando at that spot: "Ball games. Don't break my heart." Then they both laughed.)

The collective memory has had plenty of reminders. In the fifty years since Brando graced the bar stool at the Madison, local papers have been running notices of special screenings and commemorations. Perhaps the biggest do, a twentieth anniversary festival in 1973, had Schulberg, Kazan, and Tony Mike all here in person to be honored. Schulberg was back in 2000 for another big event, a reading of the stage play in Sinatra Park. Last year, at age eighty-nine, he came for a bus tour of *On the Waterfront* sites.

But the screening that still resonates occurred in 1982, inside the barn-like Pier C shed that looms large in the picture. The shipping piers were idle then and locked away behind black iron fencing, but that spring the gate was opened for a season of exhibits and events to celebrate Hoboken. Few in the audience had been here when the docks were active, but a borrowed nostalgia seemed to saturate the air. The sound was garbled, the seats were wooden planks, and

the promised speaker, Tony Mike himself, backed out at the last minute. But probably no audience has been so receptive to that surging, no doubt overdone finale where Terry leads the workers through the big garage-style door into the shed—the same shed where we now sat watching. As the door on screen rolled down behind them signaling THE END, the actual door loomed just beyond the screen, a solid ghost of its projected self. No doubt we should have paid more note to Johnny Friendly's threatening "I'll be back!" Yet at the time that plangent interplay of thing and image seemed to confirm some documentary truth: "You *can* bring down the bosses! You *can* flush out corruption! It happened on this very pier and there's the door to prove it."

That door and the entire pier are gone now, and the shape-up yards have given way to corporate offices and luxury apartments. Between the buildings and the river, people who have never seen a cargo hook now stroll or jog along a brick-paved public walkway. Most summers lately crowds have viewed scenes of the old waterfront at outdoor screenings of the film on Pier A, now a park with trees and grass where fifty years ago longshoremen loaded and unloaded ships. And long before the waterfront went upscale, the downtown bars and tenements that the film immortalized were leveled to make room for the Marineview complex. Gone then were the Doyle apartment, Johnny Friendly's tavern, the rooftops with the pigeon coops, and more.

For decades Hobokenites have made a point of recognizing every scene. Now that so many scenes are history, the only way you'll see what Schulberg saw here is to watch the movie.



Most of the waterfront scenes were filmed at the foot of 4th Street and Sinatra Drive. The Holland America Line at the 5th Street Pier is visible in the background (now part of Sinatra Park.)

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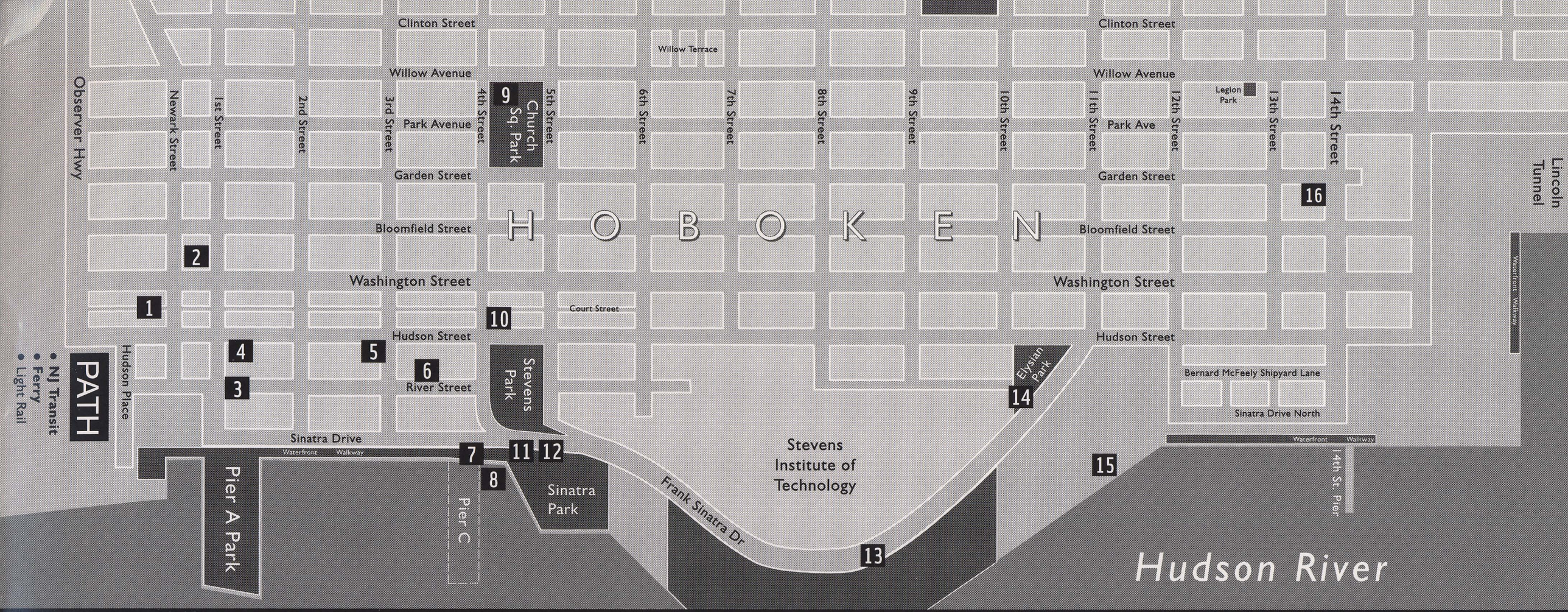
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Film Locations used in *On the Waterfront*

1. **Court Street**, between Newark and Observer Highway
2. **City Council Chambers** at City Hall, courtroom scene shot here
3. **Corner of 1st & River Streets,** cab drops Terry Malloy off here
4. **105 Hudson Street,** location of Edie Doyle's tenement
5. **Meyers Hotel,** Corner of Hudson & 3rd Sts. (wedding reception)
6. **314 River Street,** Johnny Friendly's Bar (Vandenberg's Tavern)
7. **Pier C loading dock entrance,** 4th & River Streets
8. **4th & River Streets,** Shed and Holland America Line in background
9. **Church Square Park,** Our Lady of Grace Church in the background
10. **St. Peter & Paul Church,** 4th & Hudson Streets
11. **Cab scene,** (discussion of 437 River Street)
12. **5th Street Pier,** (Holland America Line visible in background)
13. **River Road,** (Johnny Friendly finds Terry walking here)
14. **Elysian Park,** between 10th & 11th Streets along Hudson Street
15. **Pier at 11th Street,** (Terry confesses to Edie)
16. **Frankie & Johnnies,** Garden & 14th Streets













