

The Great McGinty  
by Preston Sturges

N: This is the story of a guy called McGinty who's tending bar in a joint just south of the border. A story about him and his friends and their brief hour of glory.

Well, here we are and if your eyes can see through the cigarette smoke I'll point out our interestin' characters. Oh yeah, those tough dead pan lookin' mugs at the table playin' poker ...

B: "Come on friend ... get it up!"

N: ... that's the boss ... use to be a big shot political boss up north.

L: "I'm in boss ... "

N: That's Louie ... he carries a rod under his arm and nuthin' under his cap!

P: "I'm in too, boss."

N: That's the politician. And over here, the pale faced young man staring into his drink ... his name is Thompson. He's new down here and very sad.

T: "Where's the door to the patio?"

Mc: "Right behind that potted palm."

N: And behind the bar ...

Mc: "Watch this bar for me, Pedro. I got a hunch about that guy Thompson."

N: ... the Great McGinty himself, about to go into action! Shall we join McGinty in the patio?

Mc: "Hey you! Gimme that gun ... "

T: "No ... no don't ... let me alone ..."

Mc: "Gimme' it ... "

T: "I don't wanna' live anymore!"

Mc: "Shut up! Come on outta' here."

T: "Watch it ... you're breakin' my arm!"

Mc: "Well, are you commin' peaceful?"

T: "Alright ... Why'd ya have to stop me? Why didn't you let me do it?"

Mc:"Here. Have a drink. Hey what's the matter with you kid? What'd ya wanna' go and pull a gun on yourself for?"

T:"I haven't any right to go on living."

Mc:"Nuts! What did you do?"

T:"I was a cashier in a bank up in Montclair, New Jersey ..."

Mc:"So what?"

T:"I had a nice house, nice wife, nice kids ... and I stole 25,000 dollars from the bank ... aw I don't deserve to live."

Mc:"Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! You was the cashier of a bank and you stole ONLY 25,000 bucks? Ha! Ha! Ha! Ha! ... Hey! Get a load of this guy ... and he wants to shoot himself!"

T:"Well, what did you ever do, McGinty?"

Mc:"What did I do? I tell ya ... I ... was the ... governor of ... a state."

T:"YOU governor of a state? How could you ever have been a governor?"

Mc:"Well, how do ya get to be anything? You got to start at the bottom and that's where I started. I got into town under a freight car. It's snowin' and I'm beat and I ain't been eatin' in two days and I'm in a soup kitchin', inhalin' some broth, when the politician ups to me ..."

P:"Good soup, eh? Certianly kind of the mayor to think of the less fortunate on a night like this ... "

Mc:"Never mind the applesauce-bull ..."

P:"Yeah ... how'd ya like ta make a couple of bucks?"

Mc:"Who ya think ya kiddin' ? What'da I gotta do?"

P:"Very simple, my boy. Ya just go down and vote for Mayor Tillinghast and come right back here and collect two bucks!"

Mc:"How 'bout votin' twice ... "

P:"That's four bucks."

Mc:"What's the jail sectence for repeatin'?"

P:"Who said anything about repeatin'! Where do ya think this is? Hicks Corners? Some people is too lazy to vote, that's all; they don't like this kinda' weather. Some of them is sick in bed and can't vote. Maybe a couple of them croaked recently! That ain't no reason why Mayor Tillinghast should be cheated out of their support. All

we're doin' is gettin' out the vote!!"

LATER BACK AT CANDIDATE HEADQUARTERS -

M-1:"HEY! Pipe down you guys ... the boss'll be here any second! Now what was you sayin' about that bum?"

P:"I said the bum just voted 37 times and I need the dough to pay him off!"

M-1:"I don't believe a man can vote 37 times!"

P:"I just said he voted 37 times!"

M-1:"He couldn't vote 37 times!"

B:"Who voted 37 times?"

P:"Oh ... oh ... good even' boss ... good even' Mr. Mayor ... That lug there, cramin' in the free lunch."

B:"Pay him off ... See Mayor the kind of service we're givin' you? Hey you, lug ... "

Mc:"Heh?"

B:"Come in here. We want to look at you."

Mc:"Me?"

B:"Yeah you. Don't you know you ain't supposed to vote more than once?"

Mc:"Who are you?"

B:"Tough guy, huh? I guess you don't know where you are."

Mc:"No. And I don't care neither."

B:"This guy kills me. Hah! He thinks he's me!"

BACK TO THE LITTLE BAR - SOUTH OF THE BORDER-

Mc:"I didn't know it but he was the big political boss of the town. I guess he took a likin' to me because he gave me some dough and I got a shave and a manicure and I bought me a new suit ..."

THE BOSS' OFFICE -

L:"Okay boss ... here's the lug ... "

Mc:"I got a new suit."

B:"Yeah ... some suit."

Mc:"Heh? "

B:"Looks more like the suit got you!"

Mc:"Listen you ... "

B:"Suppose you listen, for a change ... The reason you're alive and walkin' around in that horse blanket ain't because I like you, see ... It's because I can use some nerve in my business. In the mean time, if you want to do some collectin' for me, you've got a job. You've got 20 per cent. I pay the hospital bills."

Mc:"Gimme' the list and shut up."

B:"Now look ... your job is to collect for the protection I've been giving you."

Mc:"I'll collect and when I do I get 20 percent and don't you forget it!"

IN THE BOSS' CAR AFTER A DAY OF "COLLECTING" -

B:"In here! In here, mug! You can take it easy now. I've been following you. Me and Louie, up there driving.

Mc:"Okay ... move over."

B:"You collect anything except that black eye?"

Mc:"Here's your dough. Two fifty and five and four hundred ... that's eleven hundred and fifty bucks. Count it ..."

B:"So you collected after all. I guess you think you're kinda' hot stuff, huh, because you beat up a few guys? Alright. Keep the change."

Mc:"Keep what change? I got 20 percent commin'."

B:"I said keep the whole wad. I never expected to collect it anyhow."

Mc:"Huh ... Then what's the idea of sendin' me out?"

B:"I'm glad you didn't dissapoint me."

Mc:"What?"

B:"For a minute I thought you was gonna' say thank you."

Mc:"Me?"

B:"You're a card, you are. Yesterday you were a bum in a bread line. Today you got a thousand berries and a new suit. If you can keep on like you started today there's no tellin' where you'll be tomorrow. This is a land of great opportunity ... "

Mc:"Hey. What makes this bus so quiet? You don't hear nuthin' in here ..."

B:"It's armored ... don't interrupt ... And if you think I'm not the boss, you try and cross me up some time!"

Mc:"You got me all a tremble ... I bet you're scared to death of yourself."

B:"Alright! You asked for it!"

Mc:"Yeah? I'll break your neck, tired as I am."

B:"Yeah? Here's where you get yours!"

BACK TO THAT BAR - SOUTH OF THE BORDER -

Mc:"Yeah ... he always was a little muscle bound. I could beat him to the punch, ya know? Ha! Yeah but boy did we have some branagin ... "

T:"I thought you said you were the governor of a state. Sounds like you were just a cheap crook."

Mc:"Well, ya gotta' crawl before ya walk don't ya? I collected the chicken feed for awhile, see, and then the guy makes me an alderman and I move in on the second floor ... "

THE BOSS' OFFICE -

B:"Hello ... hello! I thought we was cut off. As I was sayin' Tillinghast is dead as a door nail. We need a new face. Clean. Typical American. Upright. Dependable. Somebody they don't know too much about. What do you think of McGinty? Eh? Never heard of him, huh? Well, that's just what I'm talkin' about!"

ALDERMAN MCGINTY'S OFFICE - LATER THE SAME DAY -

M:"A Hundred Thousand Dollars?"

Mc:"That's what they tell me."

M:"That's a confounded outrage, Mr. Alderman! Even in the days of Boss Herman we didn't have to pay that much for franchises. Not even in the days of Bath House Jake! Those boys were treasures compared to this mob!"

Mc:"Oh you don't mean that, Mr. Maxwell. You got to remember

everything's gone up. Living expenses is higher ... there's an income tax ... Well you're dealing with a better class of men than Bath House Jake."

M:"Now look here ... I will not pay graft! Millions for defence but not one cent for tribute!"

Mc:"You could call it advertising."

((RING))

Mc:"Yes?"

B:"Come over here. I want to talk to you. I got something important."

Mc:"Be right over. Well, I'm sorry Maxwell but that's the way it is. Catherine?"

C:"Yes, Mr. McGinty?"

Mc:"I've got to go over and see the boss. I'll be back about four."

C:"Alright, Mr. McGinty."

M:"Now just a minute McGinty!"

THE BOSS' OFFICE -

B:"Well, you got here, huh?"

Mc:"Yeah."

B:"Sit down. Have a cigar."

Mc:"Are you kiddin'? I know them ciggars."

B:"Listen. You want to be reform mayor?"

Mc:"Reform Mayor ... "

B:"That's what I said."

Mc:"Well what da ya mean 'reform mayor'?"

B:"What do you think it means? Don't make me say everything twice, will you! I said do you want to be reform mayor of this city? Mayor!"

Mc:"What you got to do with the reform party?"

B:"I am the reform party? Who do you think?"

Mc:"You're the reform party."

B:"Why do you make me say everything twice?"

Mc:"Since when?"

B:"Since a long time ago. In this town I'm all the parties. You think I'm gonna' starve everytime they change administrations?"

Mc:"Well then where does the reform party come in?"

B:"They come in the back door every Wendsday ... I ask you if you want to be reform mayor. You give me a plain answer."

Mc:"Well, sure, I guess so."

B:"Good. You're in. You'll have to kiss a lot of babies. Meet a lot of guys. And wear your old clothes. They don't want no dudes after that last one. And oh, you'll have to get married right away."

Mc:"What do you mean, 'get married right away'?"

B:"What do you think it means? Do I have to say everything twice? Women vote. Maybe they don't know it. They don't like bachelors."

Mc:"Oh, they don't huh? Well, if they don't like 'em they can lump 'em."

B:"What's the matter with you? Are you nuts?"

Mc:"No. I'm just playin' hard to get."

B:"Dan, you, don't you know what marriage is? Don't you know that marriage has always been the most beautiful ... the most beautiful set-up between the sexes? Don't you know it's the coat without the pants? Like a pig without a poke. Marriage is the most ... the most ... "

Mc:"Then why don't you try it?"

B:"'Cause I ain't runnin' for mayor!"

Mc:"Well, I ain't neither ... poke that in your pig!"

THAT LITTLE SOUTH OF THE BORDER BAR -

MC:"You want another shot of this?"

T:"Yeah. Well, did ya get married?"

Mc:"Yeah. Yeah, I made the mistake of talking it over with my secretary first and then I was a gonner."

ALDERMAN MCGINTY'S OFFICE -

C:"Oh, I'm so happy for you Mr. McGinty."

Mc:"What are ya talkin' about? I told him to go fly a kite! Can you see me tellin' some dame where I've been 'till 2 o'clock in the mornin' and ... and how did you get that lip rouge on your hat?"

C:"Well, I certainly feel the same way as you do about it Mr. McGinty but you need the woman's vote and if you had a wife ... uhh ... What I mean to say, Mr. McGinty, is that I've been married before and, well, I'd be willing to marry you ... Mr. McGinty."

Mc:"Huh?"

((RING))

C: "Hello, Mr. McGinty's office. Who's calling? Oh, it's for you Mr. McGinty."

Mc:"Yeah ... oh what the ... tell him I'm dead or somethin'. I ... I got to go into the office and ... think this over ... careful ... "

RIGHT AFTER THE "BIG DAY" -

C:"I suppose we're legally married. Aren't we? Really married?"

Mc:"That's what the guy said."

C:"Mr. McGinty, I don't want you to think I've been concealing anything from you."

Mc:"Heh?"

C:"There's no reason why I should. It's just that in the excitement ... "

Mc:"What?"

C:"Sit down, Mr. McGinty."

Mc:"What's on your mind?"

C:"It's just that, well, I think you ought to know; if we're all going to have to live in the same house ... "

Mc:"Uhh ... who's all?"

C:"I've been meaning to tell you that ... well, I have two of the loveliest little children and they have the cutest little dog. That's that I knew you wouldn't mind; being mayor and everything ... I don't suppose that you'll be home much anyway."

BACK TO THE BAR -

Mc:"Well, they got me alright. Being married was a synch to get elected. Catherine wasn't a bad wife at all for any guy's dough ... even though we didn't work at it for awhile. But being mayor was a synch but when I got to thinkin' of bein' married ... that was a lot



tougher."

CATHERINE'S BEDROOM -

((KNOCK-KNOCK))

C:"Come in. Oh, Bessie, put it on the bed. Bessie, did you wash out those other stockings?"

Mc:"Not yet."

C:"Oh. Mr. McGinty. What are you doing in my room?"

Mc:"Well, you know, Catherine, why don't ... why don't you ... we ... have dinner together some time?"

C:"Why I'd be very glad to Mr. McGinty. Anytime."

Mc:"Ya know ... if you'd told anybody that we'd been livin' here like this for six months and neither one of us ever givin' the other one a thought ... huh ... they wouldn't believe it!"

C:"That's right. Even if it was true, they wouldn't believe it."

Mc:"Heh-heh ... well, it's silly."

C:"Yes it is."

Mc:"I never even kissed ya."

C:"No, Mr. McGinty."

Mc:"That's silly ... isn't it?"

C:"Yes ... Mr. McGinty ... "

Mc:"Well, what's the use of bein' silly? I'm your husband, ain't I, Catherine?"

C:"Ohhh ... Mr. ... McGinty ... ((sigh))"

THE MAYOR'S LIVINGROOM -

Mc:"... But they had to get up pretty early to be smarter than Peter Rabbit because he was as full of brains as a dog is full of fleas. Our old friend didn't even stop to think. He took a hop, skip and a jump and started to cross the clover field as fast as his little fat legs would carry him. Just as he got to the edge of the field by the old split rail fence a shadow fell across his path. And who do you suppose it was? I'll give you three guesses and three more and three more. You will never guess who it really was because it was none other than our old friend ... "

C:"Darling ... "

Mc:"Huh ... ?"

C:"The children are asleep now."

Mc:"Huh ... that's good ... just a minute while I finish this thing. It was none other than our friend Muggely Wump the ToiToi ... Well, what da' ya know? That's who I thought it was all the time."

C:"Darling, the children love you so and admire you. It hurts some times. They think you're George Washington and Abraham Lincoln rolled together only finer.

Mc:"Hey, have you been drinking catnip?"

C:"No, darling. No I haven't. I know you and I believe in you. You'll be strong enough some day, Dan, and then you'll wash clean of graft and crooks and theiving politicians and really deserve your title ... 'The Honorable'."

RALLEY FOR GOVERNOR -

P:"McGinty for governor! And you don't be makin' no mistakes ... friends and I'll tell ya somethin' else, last year alone he put 40,000 men to work! 40,000 lunch pails, my friends! 40,000 happy families! Money! Circulation! Prosperity! And that men is Daniel McGinty!!" (((CHEERS)))

M-2:"Hey! It's over folks! And McGinty's our new Governor!!"  
(((CHEERS)))

THE GOVERNOR'S HOUSE -

C:"Oh, I'm so proud of you, Dan. You're strong enough for anything now."

Mc:"Heh?"

C:"You're governor. Governor of the state. Now you can keep your promise."

Mc:"Look ... I'm governor ... you're the governor's lady now. Everybody don't get to be governor. Isn't that good enough for ya? Why don't we leave well enough alone?"

C:"Dan ..."

M-3:"Oh, Mr. Governor ... the reception committe is waiting to see you, Sir."

Mc:"Aw, well, show 'em in. Honey you go with that guy. Find another room for awhile. I'll be with you when I get rid of these bums."

B:"Well, well, well. We did it, eh, McGinty?"

Mc:"What are you doin' in here? I'm expectin' the reception committee."

B:"He's expectin' the committee. Listen, punk, you got it. I'm the committee. What a wonderful opportunity, Daniel. The state needs everything. They've had honest governors so long the whole place is in wreck and ruin."

Mc:"Is that so?"

B:"Fantastic! New roads, for instance. They're in terrible condition. In case of war we'd be at their mercy."

Mc:"How could an enemy ever get to here?"

B:"How do I know? Am I a general? Now we'll start off with a new state capital building. Maybe white marble ... or do you like pink?"

Mc:"What do we need it for?"

B:"Need it for? (((BANG-BANG-BANG))) This one's got a crack in it."

Mc:"I like it. And I got to live in it."

B:"What are you tryin' to pull, Lug?"

Mc:"Look, there ain't gonna' be no dams and no bridges and no buildings that people don't need. From now on."

B:"The people? Hah! Are you sick or something?"

Mc:"I feel fine."

B:"Then what are you trying to pull over, you cheap double-crossing rat? After I spent 400 grand to put you in here."

Mc:"Look. Here's the key to my safety deposit box. I'll pay ya the rest outta my salary."

B:"What's all this talk? You're spouting like a woman. Ah ha, your wife! That cheesecake you married."

Mc:"Leave her outta' this!" (((PUNCH))) "There, I told ya."

B:"You skunk. You double crossing skunk. I'll give it to you for this."

Mc:"Oh no you don't ... I'll bust your skull ..."

B:"Ahhh, hit me with a chair will you?"

M-3:"Mr. Governor ... Mr. Governor, where are you?"

M-4:"There he is, under the table on top of the big guy!"

M-3:"Was on top!"

PB:

EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT! STATE HOUSE SCANDAL!

D:"Governor ... Governor McGinty ..."

Mc:"Yeah?"

D:"I'm afarid I've got bad news for you Governor. You're under arrest."

DOWNTOWN JAIL -

G:"Put him in cell number 6 right next to the other one."

SOUTH OF THE BORDER - THE BAR -

Mc:"Oh, boy, that turned out to be somethin'. I said he tried to kill me he said I tried to kill him. He said I was a crook I said he was. And, well, anyway ... hehehe ... there we were sittin' on the hot seat in the cooler, side by side ... "

THE DOWNTOWN JAIL - CELL NUMBER 6 -

C:"Oh, Dan, I'll stand by you. I'll fight for you night and day. We'll lick them if it takes 20 years!"

Mc:"Sure, sure. Thanks for tryin', Honey."

C:"Well, goodnight, Dan."

Mc:"Goodnight, Honey. And don't you worry about me."

B:"Well, you're still here."

Mc:"Who asked you anything?"

B:"I hope you're satisfied, you rat! The first time I catch you alone I'll bat your brains all over the yard!"

Mc:"You and your little brother!"

P:"Hey! How about a little quiet down there? Why don't ya shut up!"

B:"Shut up your own trap!"

Mc:"Stick a cork in it!"

B:"Yeah!"

Mc:"Cheeze it ... the gaurd's commin'."

P:"Here, here quiet in there. Who do you think you are, you guys?"

Mc:"Holly smoke ... it's the politician. How did he get in that suit?"

P:"Shut up!"

Mc:"What's the big idea?"

P:"Anymore noise and I'll put ya both in solitary! I got all the keys here and it'll be very simple."

B:"He's got all the keys!"

P:"You said it!" Now be quiet! Wait 'till it gets dark if ya wanna yell!

OUTSIDE THE JAIL - AT A PAY PHONE -

B:"Come on. Come on, Lug. You want we should get caught now after the politician sprung us? And got us this car and outside?"

Mc:"I'll be right with ya, Horseface, just let me finish this phone call. Catherine, I ... I can't talk much. I got two mugs waitin' for me I ... I couldn't stay in the jug it wouldn't look right for you to have to tell the kids. I ... ah, I think you're wonderful, Honey and I wanted to tell ya I left ya a key to the deposit box there's somethin' there I held out on ya. So long, Honey ... "

B:"Come on! We got a boat to catch!"

Mc:"I got ta hang up, darlin'. I'm sorry it didn't work out but you can't make a silk purse out of a pig's ear ... ah, kiss the kids for me will ya ... "

B:"Come on, I said!"

THE BAR -

T:"So why didn't he kill ya?"

Mc:"I never could figure that out."

T:"Yeah, maybe it's because you're a big liar and what ya told me never happened at all."

Mc:"Heh, heh, heh ... Aw, well, have it your own way, kid. And that'll be two bucks for the drink. Thanks!" ((RING))

B:"I saw you ... you lug!"

Mc:"Saw me what, Pig Face?"

B:"Don't make me say everything twice! I saw you put those 2 bucks in

your pocket and ring up no sale! I'm going to teach you, once and for all, to be honest!"

Mc:"Yeah? Get your ham hand off my bar!"

B:"You asked for it!"

Mc:"So'd you and here's where you get it!"

L:"Hey it's so quiet in here ... nothin' but that music. What's goin' on at the bar?"

P:"Nothin', Louie. McGinty and the Boss are at it again."

L:"Heh, heh, heh ... Boys will be boys ... Ah, I got 4 aces ... what you got, politician?"

P:"Not bad ... I got 5 kings. Sorry, Louie ... "

THE END

CAST CODE: Narrator/N, Daniel McGinty/Mc, The Boss/B, Catherine McGinty/C, The Polititian/P, Louie/L, Thompson/T, Mr. Maxwell/M, Deputy/D, Prisoner/P, Paper Boy/PB, Man #1/M-1, Man #2/M-2, Man #3/M-3, Man #4/M-4

This transcription was taken from the radio broadcast of THE GREAT MCGINTY on "Academy Award Theater" aired before a live audience on 4/20/46. The Paramount film was written for radio by: Frank Wilson. PHOTO CREDIT: Opening photo from the book "The Hollywood Hissables" by Gregory William Mank, Chapter 5, Page 269, Pub. by The Scarecrow Press, Inc. / 1989. Color photos from MCA Home Video Lazer Disk Jacket (including Pictures on Opening Home Page).