

MANKIEWICZ AND BRADEN**Yablonski, Like RFK, King,
Sought Justice, Reaped Hate**

WASHINGTON — The man is murdered now, along with his wife and daughter, and except for those now engaged in dusting walls for fingerprints it is useless to speculate about who did it. But there is a reason why the murder of Joseph "Jock" Yablonski cries out for public attention. It is that Joseph Yablonski was a public man in the same sense that Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King were public men. True, his constituency was smaller.

Mechanization has reduced the number of men in the mines from the half a million of a few years ago to 144,000 today. Nevertheless, Yablonski was appealing to the same instincts that made people follow Kennedy and King, and if he had lived long enough they might have come to know it.

Justice was what Yablonski lived for — justice for union men whom he thought ought to know that when a great union is corrupted all are endangered.

It was the United Mine Workers that Yablonski found corrupt. He knew that president W. A. Boyle and other officials of the union spent large sums annually to pay salaries and expenses for relatives who performed no commensurate work.

Yablonski knew that his union was convicted of conspiring with large coal companies to freeze out smaller ones, and he charged that it worked with coal companies to prevent higher safety standards in the mines.

He charged that Boyle and other officials secretly withdrew \$1.5 million from the union treasury and set it aside so that they could pay themselves 100 per cent of their salaries upon retirement, although they had contributed nothing to the pension fund.

During the campaign, he charged

that Boyle and his associates withdrew large sums of money—a million dollars or more, so it is said—to finance Boyle's election campaign.

He said all this and he said he had the evidence, which is not to say that this is the reason he was killed.

The history of the United Mine Workers is a violent history, and Yablonski's battle for the union presidency stirred up the kind of emotion which may derange violent men.

Nevertheless, there have been many in the union who profited from union corruption. In 1962, the union had total investments of \$30.753 million. By 1968, this had dwindled to less than \$24 million. During a time when most corporate investments boomed, it is hard to believe that business conditions or even bad luck accounted for the disappearance of so large a sum. Yablonski may have known a good deal about what happened to that \$7 million.

It is difficult to account for Yablonski's sudden change. He was, after all, a member of Boyle's immediate official family. But Americans cannot deny a change of heart without denying conscience, and in his election campaign Yablonski behaved like a man who had been relieved of an enormous burden.