

WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION
by Dennis Corcoran

The witness entered the dock ... took the oath ... then sat, waiting for the first question from the prosecutor ... who arose ... all eyes on her, as she gazed down ... her torso bent, its weight borne by her palms, laid flat on the desk in front of her ... a long, tense silence ensued.

Slowly she raised her head ... gazed forward ... the jury's eyes darted ... from the judge, to the prosecutor, to the judge again ... who, now leaned forward, suspended in anticipation of her words ...

... which did not come.

The bailiff stood ... next, the defense counsel ... soon, after a seeming senseless span of time, all in the courtroom stood ... their eyes fixed on the young woman through whose hands the state would present its case.

She finally turned her head, slowly ... to one side, then the other ... as if to take in the spectacle which her actions had created.

All waited ... only the sound of their breathing, barely audible, could be heard over the beating of each one's heart ...

She, too, now erect, inhaled ... every motion of that breath a still-framed photo. Her lips, moist, glistening in the courtroom's light, parted ...

*I will NOT prosecute this woman ... this "case" ...
I will not represent this state in its attempt to deny her the right of self-defense ...
I will not accuse her ... nor impugn her...
Nor will anyone here presume to judge the rightness or wrongness of an act
which she, in despair and anguish, was driven to make.*

Silence ensued, again. Then ...

*I have said all I care to say ... I will stand here, in silence, in protest, until this
mockery of justice is made to go away.*

They eventually removed her ... not a word from that day 'til this. I visit her, at times, in her empty, gray-green cell. She looks on me, then ... always the same ... she says ...

Is it still the same?

I nod. She falls silent ... this is all there is ...

Thus, I bear witness for the prosecution.