

# Framed?

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## O'Kicki tells national reporter of 'injustice'

By Linda Hudkins  
Staff Writer

**EBENSBURG** — A reporter from a nationally syndicated news show toured the Cambria County Courthouse Thursday with suspended President Judge Joseph O'Kicki, sitting briefly in a courtroom, near the judge's portrait.

What are your feelings, Rick Kirkham of New York City based "Inside Edition" asked O'Kicki.

"Empty. Disillusionment ... very shocked to find injustice — not having justice administered to me when I need it most," he said.

And when Kirkham was questioned about his covering the story, he expressed indifference about "whether he (O'Kicki) did or did not commit the acts" he was accused of. But the reporter did, after reading some of O'Kicki's notations on the transcript of the trial, call it "one-sided."

"Certainly, the story of a judge who allegedly dictates notes only partially clad makes for good tabloid television, but the evidence thus far in our investigation suggests not only that those allegations may be false, but they may have been made in an effort to discredit a small fish in a much larger ocean of pollution," Kirkham said.

O'Kicki was found not guilty following a trial of the charges

that he called female workers into his chambers while wearing undershorts, but he was found guilty on six of 10 charges.

Kirkham referred to himself as the "advance scout for the hunting party that is getting ready to move in here with cameras" within a couple weeks. And what he is hunting for are facts, he said.

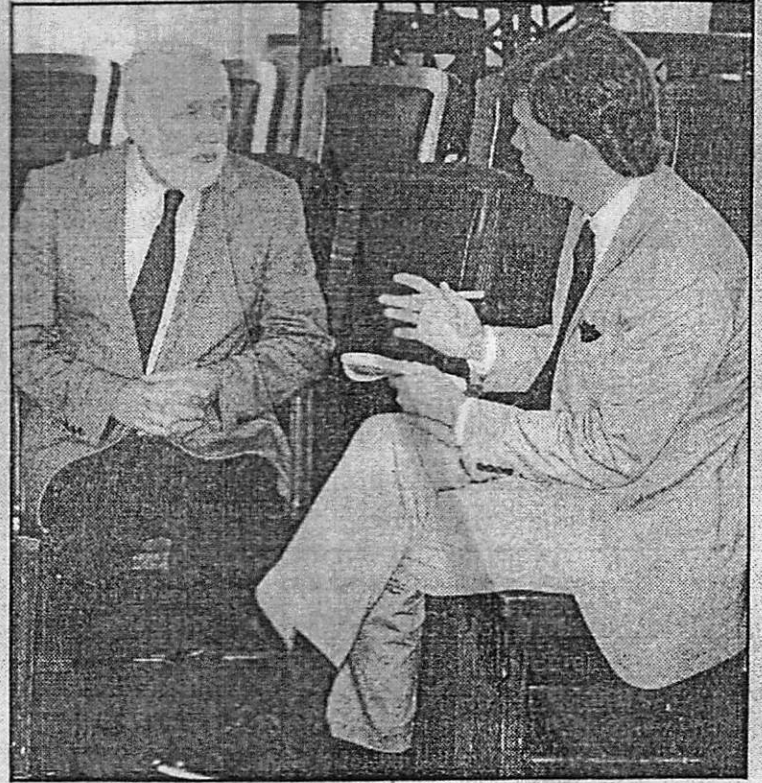
"Whispering," he said is so obvious and people are not willing to talk unless they are assured of confidentiality. He said, "It is a fascinating tale, but outside of Johnstown, we have to deal with facts."

One person Kirkham is looking at is W.E. "Wid" Schonek, father-in-law of lieutenant governor Mark Singel and godfather of Brenda Nasser, who testified against O'Kicki. He said he is interested in "the belief by Judge O'Kicki that Wid Schonek plays a major role in his ouster."

O'Kicki, who will continue to collect his \$80,000 a year salary until he is sentenced, probably in June, said his legal fees have reached \$59,000.

"The irony of it is that even if you win, you lose. There is no way you can get your legal fees back," he said. "The attorney general is immune from suit."

The judge chastised himself for not being a good salesman for the truth in his own story, but said he believes, "The truth will prevail ... The truth will set me free."



Mirror photo by Linda Hudkins

**CAMBRIA COUNTY'S** suspended and convicted former president judge Joseph O'Kicki found a familiar place to sit Thursday while being interviewed in a courtroom by a reporter, Rick Kirkham, from a nationally syndicated television news program, "Inside Edition." The program airs daily at 11:30 p.m. on KDKA. O'Kicki has spent much of the last two weeks in the clerk of courts office reading the transcript of his trial, either standing or sitting in his own lawn chair because he was denied a seat in that office.

# Buses to ease festival parking crunch

By Allan J. Bassler  
Staff Writer

Officials of the Blair County Arts Festival said today there are solutions available to avoid parking problems and maintain the event's atmosphere when the festival is moved to 11th Avenue downtown Altoona this year.

Locating the festival in the downtown area will promote commercial revitalization and show people how the city can look "when art graces its public places," stated a press release from the Blair County Arts Foundation, which is the sole

"We want to showcase what we've got, physically, in the intown area," Thomas W. Klevan, festival coordinator, said.

The officials also promised parking won't be a problem, although the avenue will be blocked to traffic.

Klevan said the organizers are working with Amtran officials to arrange reduced-price shuttle bus runs to the festival from the parking lots of the Station Mall and Roosevelt Junior High School at 6th Avenue and 14th Street.

"There will be adequate parking and transportation in and out," said David Andrews, president of

The event will be held rain or shine May 18-20, with 11th Avenue blocked to vehicle traffic between 13th and 15th streets. The festival will coincide with two other community events on Saturday, May 19: An Armed Forces Day parade down 12th Avenue and a flag-raising event on Gos Hill.

In 1989, the event was held in Lakemont Park before that, in the area of the Altoona Area High School for two years, and before that at the Altoona Campus of Penn State University.

There will be some changes to the event this year, Klevan said, including a poetry contest, author participation events and an overall focus