

Guilty by Suspicion

WRITTEN BY PIYA SINHA-ROY

ON THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF HIS BLACKLIST DRAMA *GUILTY BY SUSPICION*, PRODUCER IRWIN WINKLER REFLECTS ON WRITING IT AND CASTING TWO FAMOUS FRIENDS.



Even though it was his first time writing and directing a film, Irwin Winkler felt comfortable taking the reins on *Guilty by Suspicion*. Winkler, who began his career in 1967, had already produced more than 30 films over two decades including *Rocky* and *True Confessions*, always being on set every day to watch his movies come together.

"I wrote the script, and because Marty Scorsese and I are friends, I sent it to him to just take a look at and he encouraged me to direct it," Winkler says. "He also gave it to Bob De Niro and said, 'Irwin should direct this and you should star in it,' and De Niro liked it as well.

"So this photo is of me directing two icons—Martin Scorsese and Bob De Niro. We were talking about how the scene was going to be played. Scorsese was playing a director that was going to leave the country because he was blacklisted, and De Niro was questioning him about leaving."

Scorsese was so committed as an actor that he even shaved off his years-old beard for the role, after Winkler told him it was unlikely that a 1950s director would have sported a beard.

Scorsese, De Niro and Winkler have come together multiple times, beginning with 1977's *New York, New York*, then 1980's *Raging Bull*, 1990's *Goodfellas* and most recently on 2019's *The Irishman*.

"We're all very comfortable and supportive together," Winkler says. "Frankly, when we talk in shorthand, it's based on 40 years of commitment and friendship." ■

Read more of Winkler's stories from his prolific career in his book, *A Life in Movies: Stories from 50 years in Hollywood*.