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# Zmierz Prezydenta

(Death of the President)

(POLISH-COLOR)

*Variety* — 2-22-78  
Warsaw, Feb. 1.

A Film Polski Production, Warsaw, Film Group Kadr. Features entire cast. Directed by Jerzy Kawalerowicz. Screenplay, Boleslaw Michalek, Kawalerowicz; camera (color), Witold Sobocinski, Jerzy, Lukaszewicz; editing, Wieslawa Otocka; ets, Wojciech Krysztofiak, Adam Nowakowski; music, Adam Walacinski. Reviewed at Film Polski, Warsaw, Jan. 30, '78. Running time: 144 MINS.

Cast: Zdzislaw Mrozewski (President Narutowicz), Marek Walczewski (Eligiusz Niewiadomski), Czeslaw Byszewski (Prime Minister Nowak), Jerzy Duszynski (Jozef Pilsudski), Zbigniew Krynski (Stanislaw Thugutt), Tomasz Zaliwski (Rataj), Erwin Kohkund (Isselin), Hans-Gerd Kuebel (Wysling), Henryk Bista (Father Lutoslawski), Edmund Fetting (Jozef Haller), Kazimierz Iwor (Libermann), Julian Jabszynski (Przedziecki), Wlodzimierz Saar (Stanislaw Stronski), Jerzy Sagan (Wicinty Witos), Roman Sikora (Tarpeczynski), Janusz Sykutera (Stanislaw Car), Marek Dowmunt (Polkowski), Lucjan Dytrych (Daszynski), Marian Godlewski (Prof. Limanowski), Andrzej Krasicki (Kamienski), Leszek Kubanek (Barlicki), Marian Nosek (Piotrowski), Tadeusz Sabara (Kozlowski), Jozef Zbirog (Lancucki), Antoni Lewek (Sadzewicz), Marek Prazanowski (Narutowicza), Jacek Reknitz (Delagneau), Mieczyslaw Szargan (Dr. Thon).

The period in European history between 1918 and 1939 marked the rebirth of historic Poland, achieved to a great extent by the efforts of General Jozef Pilsudski who held political power up to 1922 and again in 1926 as a dictator after a coup d'etat. In the short period in between, Polish democracy was given a severe test when the newly organized National Assembly elected Gabriel Narutowicz, a professor returning home from Switzerland to enter public life, as the first President in the history of the Polish Republic.

Kawalerowicz's "Death of the President" focuses on the turmoil leading up to Narutowicz's election by a National Assembly divided between Polish Nationalists and the minorities of Germans, Ukrainians, White Russians, and Jews comprising one-third of the population. The engineering professor's election to the presidency came as a surprise: his candidacy, supported by the Left Wing of the Peasant Movement, the Central Party, and the National Minorities, infuriated the Right-wing supporters of Pilsudski. A few days after the election, the President was assassinated by a fanatic Nationalist while opening an art exhibit.

Pic recounts the drama in November and December of 1922 leading up to the assassination in the style of an on-the-spot tv-docu, covering the important events day-by-day. It's an historical document coming to life. The assassin, Eligiusz Niewiadomski, appears throughout the story as a connecting link, his defence-speech in the courtroom proposed as a "portrait" of fascist thinking sweeping Europe at that time.

Film reps Poland at this year's Berlin Film Festival. —*Holl.*