

Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of Psycho

by

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Based on the book *Alfred Hitchcock and the Making of Psycho* by Stephen Rebello

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LEGAL NOTICE

ALTHOUGH THE FOLLOWING STORY DRAMATIZES EVENTS SURROUNDING THE MAKING OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S "PSYCHO," IN ALL SCENES DEPICTING THE ACTUAL PRODUCTION OF THE FILM, CREW MEMBERS AND EQUIPMENT WILL BE VISIBLE AT ALL TIMES.

NO CAMERA ANGLES OR CAMERA MOVES FROM THE FILM WILL BE DUPLICATED NOR WILL WE EVER SEE A SET THAT IS FULLY BUILT OR DRESSED. ANY ARTWORK, STORYBOARDS, PROPS OR SET DRESSINGS THAT APPEAR WILL ALSO ONLY SUGGEST BUT NEVER DUPLICATE THOSE IN "PSYCHO." NO ACTUAL DIALOGUE OR STAGE DIRECTION FROM THE "PSYCHO" SCREENPLAY WILL BE SPOKEN JUST AS NO LINES FROM MR. HITCHCOCK'S RECORDED PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS RELATING TO THE PICTURE WILL BE UTTERED OR REPLICATED IN ANY WAY.

THANK YOU

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FADE IN:

EXT. MARSHLAND - DUSK

Clumps of grass smolder near a patch of pines. We move across the embers and see dirt being shoveled on top to extinguish them.

SUPER: PLAINFIELD, WISCONSIN, 1944

HENRY GEIN (O.S.)
We're just lucky it didn't reach
the trees...

We find HENRY and ED GEIN sweating away as they shovel out the flames. Both are in their forties, wearing flannel shirts and overalls. Ed wears an Elmer Fudd hat.

HENRY GEIN (CONT'D)
There's gonna be a lot more jobs at
that factory by Milwaukee come
June. I could put in a word.

ED GEIN
You can't leave us, Henry. She
needs both of us--

HENRY GEIN
Can you stop being a momma's boy
for one second? Look at yourself,
Eddie. She's got you twisted.

Henry looks at Ed and he shrinks back.

HENRY GEIN (CONT'D)
I'm not trying to hurt you but
Jesus you got to live your own life
someday. That woman can take care
of her own goddamn --

CLANG. Henry is hit by the shovel in the back of the head and goes down.

Ed steps slowly forward and puts down the shovel. The look on his face isn't anger. It's BLANK. He pulls at the flaps of his Elmer Fudd hat... then calmly walks away.

The camera pans until we discover :

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

in his trademark black Mariani suit. He's been watching the whole thing, standing in the smouldering field only a few feet away, sipping at a cup of tea...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He sets down the cup on a tree stump and turns to look into the camera.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Good evening. Brother has been slaying brother since Cain and Abel, yet even I did not see that coming. I was as blind-sided as poor Henry over there.

He pulls out a Monte Cristo cigar and lights it.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Apparently the authorities shared my naivete and believed the young man's tale that Henry fell and hit his head on a stone and died of smoke asphyxiation.

He elegantly exhales...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Of course if they hadn't believed him, Ed never would have had the opportunity to commit the heinous acts for which he became famous... and we wouldn't have our little movie. Instead, we'd have more nice, safe, predictable ones like these...

CUT TO:

A RAPID MONTAGE OF CLIPS

from various Technicolor Films of the era: *Peyton Place*, with Lana Turner and Betty Field. *Pillow Talk* with Doris Day and Rock Hudson. *A Summer Place* with Sandra Dee and finally --

THE ROBE

Richard Burton in toga and sandals.

RICHARD BURTON

Every man makes enemies.

JEAN SIMMONS

All of your enemies seem to be within.

RICHARD BURTON

(pointedly)

Yes.

EXT. MARSHLAND - AS BEFORE

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Mere Technicolor baubles.

He shudders with distaste. As if on cue the sky THUNDERS LOUDLY above him. He looks up.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
A bit of doom and gloom. Now,
that's more like it.

As the RAIN starts to bucket down we --

CUT TO :

EXT. MARQUEE OF UNITED ARTISTS THEATER, CHICAGO - NIGHT

Equally torrential rain lit up by rotating KLEIG LIGHTS as they scan a MARQUEE: "WORLD PREMIERE! NORTH BY NORTHWEST. DIRECTED BY ALFRED HITCHCOCK." JOSTLING CROWDS run the length of the block.

SUPER: JULY 8, 1959.

A PUDGY HAND discreetly squeezes a tiny, delicate one.

ALFRED AND ALMA HITCHCOCK

Step out into a sea of FLASHBULBS. Hitch basks in the limelight while Alma, his razor-sharp, charming wife of over 30 years stands in the background, uncomfortable with all the attention.

Hitchcock's agent LEW WASSERMAN, 45, dynamic, charismatic, comes into view.

LEW WASSERMAN
This thing is going to be gigantic.
I wish I had twenty percent of the
take.

Lew hustles them through the throng of REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS under their BLACK UMBRELLAS.

REPORTER ONE
Does tonight's incredible reaction
surprise you, Mr. Hitchcock?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
No, when I was planning *North by Northwest* I could already hear the
screams and laughter.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
(then, to a BEAUTIFUL
BLONDE REPORTER)
Any questions, my dear?

The blonde reporter, giggling, shakes her head 'no.'

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
A pity.

The reporters crack up. Alma manages a polite smile as Lew helps her into the limo, leaving Hitchcock alone for a moment...

REPORTER TWO
Mr. Hitchcock, you've directed
forty-six motion pictures. You host
a hit TV show seen around the
world. You're the most famous
director in the history of the
medium... but you're sixty years
old. Shouldn't you just quit while
you're ahead?

HOLDING ON HITCHCOCK

motionless and quietly devastated as FLASHBULBS CRACKLE over his face. The whiteness transforms into...

INT. THE HITCHCOCKS' BEL AIR HOME - BATHROOM - MORNING

THE GLEAMING WHITE TILES of a bathroom. We move past chrome fixtures that evoke those in *Spellbound* and *Psycho* and arrive at that same pudgy hand pouring CHATEAU CHEVAL BLANC '53 into a cut crystal glass.

HITCHCOCK

soaks in the tub. The champagne glass beside him, his corpulent frame is covered only by the *London Times* he's reading. Even in this deeply vulnerable state, he maintains the air of a haughty mischievous emperor.

At the sound of a bedroom bureau being opened, Hitch's eyes shift to the FULL-LENGTH MIRROR on the bathroom door.

IN THE MIRROR

We catch fleeting glimpses of Alma in a white half-slip and matching bra. She takes out some NYLONS and holds them up to the light.

Hitchcock watches enthralled. He puts down his glass and shifts a little in the tub, causing the water to lap against the sides.

INT. BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Alma pauses when she hears the small splashes. Neither upset nor amused she continues about her business, taking a skirt from the drawer.

ALMA

Muhammad had the eyes of peeping
Toms gouged out with arrows.

Hitchcock clears his throat and sinks further behind his paper, as if he had been reading the whole time.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

There were no peeping Toms in
Muhammad's time. He lived in a tent
-- unfortunately lacking in windows
and keyholes.

ALMA

But didn't Muhammad also have some
sort of a phobia, so that anytime
he did anything "unclean" he bathed
immediately?

Hitchcock indignantly rattles his paper.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Did you read Mr. Weiler's review in
the New York Times? Apparently, he
found "the climax" to be -- and I
quote -- "overdrawn."

ALMA

I doubt whether Mr. Weiler has had
a climax in years.

Alma steps into her skirt.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

How about this little grenade?

(reading)

North by Northwest reminds us of
Hitchcock's earlier, more
youthfully inventive spy
thrillers."

(beat)

And just to drive the nail into the
coffin, there's a handy
accompanying guide to the new
masters of suspense.

Hitchcock zeroes in on the photographs. They're all young.
Thinner. And with hair.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Why do they keep looking for new
masters of suspense when they still
have the original?

He catches his reflection in the mirror again and sinks
further down into the water to hide his protruding belly.

ALMA

Don't be maudlin. You know how much
it aggravates me.

Alma comes in, puts down the TOILET SEAT and sits on it.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Tell me, dear. Am I really too old?

ALMA

Yes. A true relic. And lest we
forget, a notably corpulent one.

She reaches over and kisses the top of his head.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

You always know precisely where to
plunge the dagger, don't you?

ALMA

Right between the shoulder blades.
I learned it from your pictures.

She moves off to the mirror to apply lipstick.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Where are you off to?

ALMA

I'm seeing Whit for brunch after I
drop you off at the studio. Why
don't you join us?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

We've just established that I'm
corpulent.

ALMA

You'll feel better as soon as you
find a project. Hasn't Peggy
unearthed any decent books yet?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Sleeping pills with dust jackets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Alma steps back to inspect herself in the full-length mirror. Today's outfit is, we sense, rather more stylish than what she would ordinarily wear.

ALMA

Well?

Hitch's gaze never leaves the photo gallery of his younger rivals.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Very presentable.

ON ALMA

As she elegantly masks her hurt.

ALMA

Hurry up, darling. You're pruning.

She leaves. Hitch grumbles and tosses his paper aside. He rises from the depths but suddenly loses his balance and grabs onto the SHOWER CURTAIN, wrenching it from the METAL RINGS on the rod.

A GOD'S EYE view, looking down, as Hitchcock stares up at the metal rods SPINNING NOISILY on the metal rod.

EXT. THE PARAMOUNT STUDIOS, BRONSON GATE - DAY

The FAMOUS MOUNTAIN TOP icon looms large. TWO GUARDS snap-to for the arrival of Hollywood royalty.

FIRST GUARD

Mr. Hitchcock. Mrs. Hitchcock.

Alma waves from the wheel of a GLEAMING BLACK 1955 LINCOLN. Hitchcock sits next to her. He has his two SEALYHAM TERRIERS on his lap. He nods, awaiting more.

FIRST GUARD (CONT'D)

(to the dogs)

Sirs.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S CAR - TRAVELLING - DAY

The Lincoln pulls up at the Producers Building. She notes Hitchcock's look of frustrated envy as CREW MEMBERS bustle in and out of STAGE 15. It's a hive of activity.

ALMA

There's a story out there waiting for you somewhere, Hitch. I promise.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He gives her a good-bye peck and opens the door.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Don't forget your lunch.

Alma hands him a compact Fortnum & Mason basket and pats him on his girth. He opens it to discover CELERY AND CARROT STICKS wrapped in Saran.

INT. HALLS OF PARAMOUNT- DAY

Hitchcock scowls as he carries his lunchbasket past framed portraits of the studio's kings and queens: Martin & Lewis, Elvis, Hitchcock himself, and finally Grace Kelly.

We stay on GRACE KELLY'S PHOTO as he passes; a moment later, a pudgy hand slips back into frame, unable to resist giving it a tilt.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Luxurious, wood-paneled and very British. Hitch sits restlessly behind his desk, receiving his morning shave from his PRIVATE BARBER. His longtime assistant, PEGGY ROBERTSON, 40s, crisp, British, fiercely protective of her boss, is going through a list of potential projects.

PEGGY
Fox is offering you *The Diary of Anne Frank* again.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
The audience would spend the entire picture waiting for Miss Frank to discover the corpse I'd hidden in the attic.

He reaches for a carrot stick and CRUNCHES it.

PEGGY
MGM wants you for the Ian Fleming book, *Casino Royale*, with Cary Grant. Definitely your style.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
I just made that movie. It's called *North by Northwest*. And "style" is merely self-plagiarism.

The Barber opts to wait until Hitch finishes his carrot, then recommences the shave.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
I'm treading water, Peggy. I need something fresh. Something different with no Cary Grant or Kim Novak to pretty it up. Something with bite.

Hitch suddenly tilts his head back.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
A nice, clean, nasty little piece of work.

The Barber hurriedly dabs away a speck of BLOOD.

PEGGY
I'll see what I can find.

Hitch motions for the barber to hold up the mirror. The image of his face overflows the small frame. Repulsed, he leans back his head and makes a hand motion for the Barber to SLIT HIS THROAT.

CONTAGIOUS LAUGHTER (PRE-LAP)

INT. CHASEN'S RESTAURANT - DAY

Alma lunches with screenwriter-novelist WHITFIELD COOK. "WHIT," 50s, is Hitchcock's physical opposite -- dashing, razor-sharp and sophisticated. In fact he'd be at home in one of his movies.

WHITFIELD COOK
... Thank God I had a pocketful of pretzels. I was hiding in that props cupboard all night.
(then)
That'll teach me to use a bedroom set instead of the real thing.

ALMA
Serves you right.

They laugh uproariously again, quite at ease with each other.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Hitch always said your private life was in danger of being more entertaining than any of your plots.

He pours Alma another glass of wine, not remotely insulted.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHITFIELD COOK

I can't believe he let me have you
to myself for a whole afternoon.
Especially looking this beautiful.
(re : her outfit)
And that doesn't look like Macy's.

ALMA

Bontemps.

He clinks her glass.

WHITFIELD COOK

Tres chic.

Alma turns to look at the menu again.

ALMA

All this relentless sycophancy is
giving me indigestion.
(a smile)
What are you after?

He laughs, his eyes straying to a PRETTY WAITRESS passing by.
Alma notices.

ALMA (CONT'D)

And how *is* your wife?

WHITFIELD COOK

Elizabeth?
(his eyes return to Alma)
Over the moon since I promised her
the dedication in my new novel.
So what are you working on these
days?

ALMA

Hitch is going out of his mind
looking for his next project. You
know how unbearable he is when he
doesn't have something lined up.

WHITFIELD COOK

Almost as unbearable as when he
does.

ALMA

(laughing)
Almost.

WHITFIELD COOK

I meant you. What are you working
on?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALMA

I'm satisfied spending time in my garden.

WHITFIELD COOK

That is one lucky garden.

Whit brings out a set of galleys and slides them across the tablecloth to her.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

Actually, I was hoping you might be able to apply your considerable pruning skills to this.

She looks down and reads the cover page. "Taxi to Dubrovnik. By Whitfield Cook."

ALMA

Ah. All is finally revealed.

He touches her hand, affectionately.

WHITFIELD COOK

The most fun I ever had was working with you.

She removes his hand, affectionately, and looks through the opening pages... taking her time... giving nothing away... enjoying making him wait...

ALMA

I suppose I could give it a look.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Hitchcock peeks avidly through the blinds at a PASSING COUPLE outside. The Man puts his hand tenderly on the woman's waist but alas they move out of sight.

Hitch turns back with a sigh towards his desk, covered with discarded newspaper clippings and boring story proposals.

He sweeps them off his desk into the trash.

OUTER OFFICE - A MOMENT LATER

A SHADOW looms over Peggy at her desk as she sifts through another round of story ideas. It's Hitchcock, with a glass in his hand.

PEGGY

Is that water or do I need to call Alma?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It's water. He drains it playfully.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Anything? Anything at all?

He starts to sift through her tray.

PEGGY
Nothing suitable.

But something has already caught his eye. A circled review of Anthony Boucher's column "CRIMINAL MINDS" in the *New York Times Review of Books*. He picks it up.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Boucher says this "Psycho" book by Robert Bloch is 'fiendishly entertaining'.

PEGGY
It sounds ghastly. Everyone else in town's already passed. The story department finished the coverage this morning.

She unearths it from the pile on her desk.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
Here - "Shocking even to a hardened reader... Impossible for films."

His eyebrow arches.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Is this the one based on Ed Gein, the serial killer?

He takes the coverage and reads for himself.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
"Graphic elements of brutal violence, voyeurism, transvestitism and incest."

He gives a grunt of approval.

PEGGY
You're kidding.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Peggy, my dear. This is no run of the mill maniac. This is the boy who dug up his own mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He looks out the window, his imagination starting to turn...

INT. GEIN HOUSE, PLAINVIEW, 1945 - NIGHT

Ed gently places the corpse of his mother on the bed.

We follow him to the dresser. He picks up a slip, perhaps lingering too long before putting it aside and picking out a cotton nightgown. Out of focus, in the bed behind, is Augusta Gein.

Ed turns and we stay on his face as he dresses her.

He tucks the blanket around her ghoulishly swollen face. Still wearing his jacket, Ed takes off his shoes, gets into bed and crawls up next to her.

ED GEIN

Don't be afraid, ma... I'm here...

He puts his arm around her and pulls her close.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

ON HITCH

Completely engrossed as he sits reading "Psycho" in a chair by the fire of his elegant Bel Air home. He takes another gulp of wine when he hears Alma enter and slides the wine glass out of view.

ALMA

Hungry?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Famished.

ALMA

If you're good, maybe you can have a grapefruit later.

She notices the title of Hitch's book -- some trash called "Psycho."

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

How was your meal with Mr. Cook?

ALMA

Same old Whit.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Yes, but what did you eat? Please.
In luscious detail --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA

He gave me the galleys of his new book. I've already got some ideas on how you could adapt it. It's elegant, sophisticated, full of intrigue --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

The book or Whit?

She taps Hitch's book dismissively with the galleys of "Taxi to Dubrovnik."

ALMA

This might be the one, Hitch.

He looks up, nods in deference to her taste.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Leave it on the night stand.

As she leaves she points to Hitch's 'hidden' wine glass.

ALMA

There are calories in that, you know.

He makes a face as she leaves, then goes back to reading his book excitedly.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Whit's book galley sits on the night stand still untouched as Alma gets ready for bed.

She looks down the hall and sees Hitch on his feet, book in hand, pausing to imagine. He picks up a croquet mallet and practices a stroke, pausing to imagine some more...

She can see obsession building in his far away look.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

A slant of moonlight finds Alma fast asleep until a FINGER nudges her awake. She lifts her satin sleep mask to see Hitchcock holding out his copy of "Psycho."

ALMA

Oh God.

The look on his face unmistakable.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Read the bit in the motel bathroom.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She puts on her glasses and reads from the opened page.

ALMA

"Mary started to scream, and then the curtains parted further and a hand appeared, holding a butcher's knife. It was the knife that, a moment later, cut off her scream... and her head."

(handing him back the book)

Charming. Doris Day should do it as a musical.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Just imagine. An ordinary secretary steals a large sum of money, drives many miles to surprise her lover and stops for the night at a motel run by an odd man with a sick old mother. Out of nowhere, the secretary gets hacked to ribbons while taking a shower -- apparently by the crazy old bat.

ALMA

It sounds like low-budget horror movie claptrap to me.

She turns off the light again and goes back to bed. A deep voice sounds from the darkness...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

But what if someone really good made a horror picture?

EXT. HITCHCOCK'S GARDEN - MORNING

The Hitchcocks eat breakfast on the terrace watching the GARDENERS trim the bushes and rake leaves from the pool.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Just think of the shock value. Killing off your leading lady halfway through.

Alma can feel Hitch looking at her, waiting for a response. Clearly he isn't going to let this one go.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

You're intrigued. Admit it.

She butters her toast, casually taunts him by adding a large spoon of marmalade.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA
Actually, I think it's a huge
mistake.

Hitch falls silent, a chastised schoolboy.

ALMA (CONT'D)
You shouldn't wait till halfway
through... Kill her off after 30
minutes.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Hitchcock, in suit and tie, follows Lew Wasserman,
PHOTOGRAPHERS and a PUBLICIST in front of a racing track
backdrop.

LEW WASSERMAN
Nevil Shute's new book is a corker.
I could close the deal by the end
of the day.

Hitchcock hands Lew his copy of "Psycho."

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Get me this.

Stage Hands wheel over a GO-CART and put it in front of the
backdrop.

LEW WASSERMAN
This thing stinks and everybody in
town knows it. If there's a movie
in it, it's strictly for the drive-
in crowd.

The Publicist helps wedge Hitchcock into the cart and he hams
it up for the photographers.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
You know who goes to drive-ins,
Lew? Young people, men with their
mistresses -- all of them willing
to pay to have the bejesus scared
out of them.
(beat)
Some of them, more than once.

Lew ponders the wisdom of his client's proposal as the
photographers finish grabbing their shots.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Now that I'm in this bloody thing,
how the hell do I get out?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The Publicist, the Photographers and Lew all struggle to extract Hitchcock from the cart.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE - DAY (LATER)

A PARKER PEN busily makes little sketches we can't see.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Peggy, I want you to summon your
minions...

PEGGY
Minions. Certainly. And they
are...?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Get them started buying copies of
"Psycho."

PEGGY
How many do you need?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
All of them. I want every copy,
nationwide. Have them scour every
book shop and library. "Psycho" is
my next picture, and I don't want
anyone to find out the ending until
they see it in the theater.

Peggy shakes her head.

PEGGY
All that celery's affecting your
brain.

A RESEARCHER arrives with a thick, manila envelope. Hitch
can't wait to open it and spread out the contents.

A Look Magazine headline screams: "HOUSE OF HORRORS STUNS
NATION." Stark black and white photographs expose the
nightmarish decay of the Gein house littered with corpses and
severed body parts.

PEGGY (CONT'D)
Are you sure about this? This is so
unlike you.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
That's exactly the point.

Peggy watches uneasily as Hitchcock pores over the horrific
images with delight.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S LIVING ROOM - A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

SERVERS pour champagne and cocktails for DINNER PARTY GUESTS chatting beneath Paul Klee paintings while a PIANO TRIO plays a swing version of Al Jolson's "My Mammy."

Hitch holds court as INVITED GOSSIP COLUMNISTS, including a Hedda Hopper type take in the LOOK MAGAZINE article and its GORY IMAGES, which Hitchcock has laid out in an elaborate display.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

... And when the Wisconsin Police department raided his farmhouse in Plainview, they opened the door to discover ten female heads with the tops sawn off, a dozen masks of human skin and a pair of lips on a drawstring for a window shade.

Hitch looks up sweetly at the circle of quietly horrified expressions.

GOSSIP COLUMNIST

Is this really going to be you're next picture, Mr. Hitchcock?

Hitch nods, jauntily tapping the photo of ED GEIN.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Now, if only he'd looked more like William Holden and less like Elmer Fudd.

The other columnists scribble down the quote.

GOSSIP COLUMNIST

Am I the only one who finds this offensive?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Well, I was hoping everyone would.

There is some laughter but it's uneasy. Servers arrive with more *hors d'oeuvres* from the kitchen.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Try the finger sandwiches -- they're real fingers.

Hitch toddles off, leaving them to peruse the photos. He snags a martini and collars Peggy while he's at it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Peggy. I'm going to need some
research detailing a typical
unmarried 30-year-old secretary
from Phoenix, Arizona.

He looks to the shuttered kitchen pass through, where Alma
can be glimpsed working on dinner.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Her monthly rent, what she wears,
what she reads, which perfume she
prefers...

Hitch sees WHIT lean into view and innocently whisper
something into Alma's ear making her laugh.

PEGGY
... How she deals with a demanding
boss when she's trying to relax on
her weekends off?

Hitchcock doesn't notice the joke. He now only has eyes on
the kitchen ahead and forges on through the guests only to
get waylaid by Lew. It is a classic Hitchcock moment, a
character needing to get someplace being held up by someone
who wants to chat --

LEW WASSERMAN
(re: the faces of the
gossip columnists)
I think you may have outdone
yourself this time, Hitch.

Hitch extricates himself and heads on to the kitchen --

INT. HITCHCOCK'S KITCHEN - (SIMULTANEOUS)

Whit leans against the stove watching Alma expertly prepare
the next round of *hors d'oeuvres*.

WHITFIELD COOK
Now, if this were a Hitchcock
picture what would two characters
like us, married to other people,
be saying?

ALMA
You don't have to pretend you're
not upset he hasn't read it yet,
you know.

WHITFIELD COOK
I'm a big boy. I can take it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA

Well, I loved it. What terrific fun
it must have been to research.

WHITFIELD COOK

Certainly more fun than reading
those reviews.

(gesturing to the other
room)

As a matter of fact, I don't know
how you can let him consort with
the enemy like this.

Suddenly, over Whitfield's shoulder, Alma sees Hitch looming
in the doorway. Whit notes the tiny change in her eyes and
turns.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

Speak of the devil.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I'm often mistaken for him.

Hitch tries to read Alma but she turns and busies herself
over the stove, hiding an almost imperceptible blush.

WHITFIELD COOK

I have to admit, Hitch, I ran all
over town looking for a copy of
"Psycho" but couldn't find a single
one.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I wonder how that could have
happened.

Hitch sips his martini, a picture of innocence.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Well, don't stop looking on my
account.

The old friends share a smile. Peggy appears in the pass-
through and beckons Hitch back into the living room.

Hitch returns to see the other GUESTS are now passing around
the GEIN PHOTOS. They look utterly confused and horrified...
a couple of them are even gathering their coats.

PEGGY

I told you it would be too much.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
But they can't stop looking, can
they?

He slurps his martini, sharing a smile with Lew.

INT. PARAMOUNT BOARD ROOM - DAY

Paramount President BARNEY BALABAN, 70s, ferocious,
righteous, commands the head of a large table; FOUR
CONSERVATIVELY-ATTIRED EXECUTIVES in suits flank him on
either side.

Hitchcock and Wasserman sit across from them.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Audiences want to be shocked,
Barney. They want something
different. And this is it.

He gestures to the untouched copy of "Psycho" in front of
Balaban.

BARNEY BALABAN
The truth is, Hitch, every time you
want to do something "different"
like *The Wrong Man* or *Vertigo*,
someone loses money.

Hitchcock blinks, his jowl quivering. Wasserman puts his arm
across Hitch, making sure he says nothing.

LEW WASSERMAN
So we should stop trying to give
them something new?

BARNEY BALABAN
You owe Paramount one last picture,
Hitch. Can't you do something like
North by Northwest but for us this
time instead of for MGM?

Hitch's stare remains glacial.

BARNEY BALABAN (CONT'D)
We've offered you dozens of
perfectly good properties.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
(imperiously)
"Psycho."

Wasserman gives Balaban the same glacial stare. The Paramount
executives shift uncomfortably.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARNEY BALABAN

No one respects the name Hitchcock more than Paramount. But even a talented man sometimes backs the wrong horse.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Are you telling me "no?"

Hitchcock waits, seething. Balaban maintains a calm, pleasant front.

BARNEY BALABAN

Absolutely not. I think you know me better than that, Hitch. I would never say "no" to you.

A long pause... but Balaban says NOTHING.

INT. PARAMOUNT CORRIDOR - DAY

Hitch and Lew walk down the corridor passing all the Paramount movie posters.

LEW WASSERMAN

What a putz. You know what his family did before they built those movie palaces? Ran a grocery store.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

My father ran a grocery store.

LEW WASSERMAN

Exactly. That's what I'm saying. He should show some respect.

They stop at the elevator. Lew hits the button. They wait.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

They think I've lost my touch, Lew. My association with television has cheapened me.

LEW WASSERMAN

Are you referring to that deal I got you where Bristol-Meyers pays you twenty-nine grand an episode and you own the negative? That's my kind of cheap.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

They just want the same thing over and over.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

They've put me in a coffin and now
they're nailing down the lid.

Lew puts a comforting hand on him...

LEW WASSERMAN

Hitch, I will never let that
happen.

Hitch doesn't respond, Lew sensing the true depth of his
friend's melancholy.

LEW WASSERMAN (CONT'D)

How much do you think you can make
this picture for?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

... Eight hundred thousand. Give or
take.

Lew digests the figure as the elevator doors open.

LEW WASSERMAN

I have whisky in the car.

EXT. THE HITCHCOCKS' SWIMMING POOL - A FEW DAYS LATER

ALMA does afternoon laps in the pool. A contemplative
Hitchcock takes in some sun wearing his business suit and
tie. He watches Alma.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Doing laps for the two of us, I
hope, dear.

She gets out and towels off.

ALMA

I'm disappointed you didn't give
Whit's book a chance.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Is he?

ALMA

He knows you well enough.

She sits down next to him, noticing a tiny hole in her
swimsuit. It's starting to look a little threadbare.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Enjoy the pool now. We might not
have it for that much longer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks off cryptically.

ALMA
Out with it.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Paramount refuses to finance the
movie. Imagine -- The studio that
brought you Martin and Lewis and
The Greatest Show On Earth
considers *Psycho* distasteful.

He brushes some fallen leaves off his chair.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Lew can't find the money. Not
quickly enough at least.

ALMA
Why not wait?

He doesn't reply. She knows him well enough too and doesn't
question him further.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
We're going to have to go it alone,
old girl.
(beat)
We'll finance the movie ourselves.

ALMA
Are we going to have to sell the
entire house or just the pool?

She looks at Hitch but he's not joking. She turns to survey
their beloved home and gardens.

A long pause.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Tell me and I won't ever ask
again. Why this one, Hitch? It's
not just because so many people are
telling you 'no,' is it?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Not just.

ALMA
Then why?

He turns to face her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Remember the fun we had when we started out and there was so little money and time? We took risks, we experimented. We invented new ways of making pictures because we had to.

(beat)

I want to feel that kind of freedom again.

He looks into her eyes and we glimpse the real Hitchcock. Someone even his wife doesn't see that often...

EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - DAY

The famous gates and the executive building beyond it.

LEW WASSERMAN (PRE-LAP)

Barney, we're about to propose a restructured deal for "Psycho"...

INT. BALABAN'S PRIVATE OFFICE - DAY

Balaban watches Hitchcock and Lew closely. Hitchcock is tense and silent. An Assistant takes notes.

LEW WASSERMAN

One that ought to make you very happy, and very rich.

He waits a dramatic beat. Then :

LEW WASSERMAN (CONT'D)

Hitch waives his directing fee. We finance it. Independently.

BARNEY BALABAN

In exchange for...?

LEW WASSERMAN

Sixty per cent of the profits. Paramount only distributes it.

A long silence.

BARNEY BALABAN

Interesting. But tell us, what exactly is Paramount distributing? Is this still a picture about a queer killing people in his mother's dress?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEW WASSERMAN

What this picture is about is the reputation of Alfred Hitchcock.

BARNEY BALABAN

No-one's arguing that.

LEW WASSERMAN

Barney, it's very simple. This is Mr. Hitchcock's next film. Are you in or are you out?

A longer silence this time.

BARNEY BALABAN

Well, obviously you have a lot of passion for this project. Let me talk it over with a few people internally and I'll get back to you.

LEW WASSERMAN

No. Now.

Balaban takes in their inscrutable stares. Not unimpressed by their chutzpah, he leans back and puts his hands behind his head, a king in his counting room.

BARNEY BALABAN

Fine. We'll take that deal.
(a wry smile)
If you can get the money...

Finally, Hitchcock speaks up.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

We've already got it, Barney.

He pulls out his PERSONAL CHECKBOOK and opens it on the desk.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Mind if I borrow your pen?

Barney watches as Hitch takes the onyx fountain pen from its mount.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Who do I make it out to?

INT. BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Hitch and Alma lie side by side in their separate beds. All traces of Hitch's bravado are gone...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

If this picture fails, Alma, we'll
be in for a long, humiliating bout
of crow-eating.

ALMA

The movie will be splendid.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Are you sure?

ALMA

Of the movie? Not in the least. But
of you? Unquestionably.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE - DAY

PUDGY FINGERS part the slats of the blind. Hitch stares out
hoping for some human moment to spy on. He's restless...

PEGGY

Lew keeps saying this writer Joe
Stefano's going to tickle you.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Not if he's another of those dreary
Playhouse 90 types.

ALMA

Hitch. You may as well meet him.
He's already here.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

He is twenty minutes late.

JOE STEFANO

Can be seen pacing out in the reception area.

PEGGY

He's young, he's hungry.

Hitch still says nothing, squinting harder outside.

ALMA

And cheap.

After a moment, the blinds SNAP back into place.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S PARAMOUNT OFFICE - DAY

Peggy ushers Stefano, 30s, into Hitch's office. He's
appealingly brash and cocky, with an East Coast accent.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOSEPH STEFANO
Joe Stefano. Good to meet you.

Hitchcock leaves Stefano's hand dangling in mid air.

JOSEPH STEFANO (CONT'D)
Sorry I was late. My shrink session
ran overtime. I see him every day
and it's still not enough.

PEGGY
I thought only director's
assistants needed psychiatrists.

Stefano laughs off the barb as Peggy slips out of the office
with Alma, closing the door behind them.

The two men stare at each other but Stefano's not remotely
intimidated.

JOSEPH STEFANO
Do you see a shrink, Mr. Hitchcock?

Hitch's eyes follow a plume of cigar smoke curling up to the
ceiling...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
No.

His gaze remains pointedly fixed on the ceiling.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
I must say it boggles the mind to
imagine what you and your "shrink"
could possibly talk about daily.

JOSEPH STEFANO
The usual: sex. Rage. My mother.

Hitchcock lowers his gaze, suddenly intrigued.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE - A FEW DAYS LATER

PAGES OF THE BOOK and SCRIPT PAGES, all annotated, strewn
around the office. They're on a roll...

Hitch is now so engaged he's on his feet acting out the
murder with Stefano as the corpse.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
But if Norman folded the shower
curtain this way...no blood would
leak out at all.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

With a brisk knock Peggy enters the office.

HITCH

looks up and freezes as if literally caught in the act,
presiding over 'Mrs. Bates' body on the floor.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Do you mind.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S STUDY - DAY

Alma sits with the Hitchcocks' ACCOUNTANT going over the books.

ACCOUNTANT

There's still the upkeep of the vineyard... the federal income tax payments... the property taxes... Not to mention the absence of any salary while he's actually *making* the film...

ALMA

Stop waffling, Donald. Give it to me straight.

The Accountant takes off his glasses, plucking up the courage to look his favorite client in the eye.

ACCOUNTANT

Hitch wasn't exaggerating. If the film's a flop, you're going to have to sell the house.

Alma digests this.

ALMA

Where do you suggest we cut?

ACCOUNTANT

Anywhere you can.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S STUDY - NIGHT

Alma sits at the desk with the dogs sleeping at her feet, sorting through the accounts herself. Now her face is filled with concern.

Hitch enters, holding out some typed pages. Alma covers her worry.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I got Joseph to write out the first
few scenes. Why don't you take a
look?

Alma closes the books and sits down to review Stefano's
pages.

Hitch hovers, watching. After a moment she takes out a pencil
and starts to scrawl the occasional note on a page.

When she furrows her brow so does he. When she smiles, he
leans forward expectantly... only for the smile to evaporate.

Finally she puts down the pages.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Well?

He can't bear the suspense a moment longer.

ALMA

Hire him.

A BLANK PAGE

Fed into a Corona typewriter. FINGERS pound out "*PSYCHO*"

BY JOSEPH STEFANO.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S HOUSE - MORNING

Alma looks over Hitch's appearance before he heads out the
door.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

The only thing worse than a visit
to the dentist is one to the
censor.

She makes a final adjustment to his tie.

ALMA

Whatever you do, don't lose your
temper.

INT. MOTION PICTURE PRODUCTION CODE OFFICE , HOLLYWOOD - DAY

The intimidating plaque for "THE MOTION PICTURE PRODUCTION
CODE OFFICE" on the wall.

Stefano's TITLE PAGE is tapped angrily by GEOFFREY SHURLOCK,
70s, the much-feared administrator for the Motion Picture
Production Code.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He sits at the head of a big table with TWO ASSISTANTS. Sitting opposite are Hitchcock, Peggy and several silent PARAMOUNT EXECUTIVES.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK

The Code will absolutely not permit you to show a knife penetrating a woman's flesh.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I assure you, Geoffrey, my murders, as always, are models of taste and discretion.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK

Is there any improper suggestion of nudity in this murder scene in the shower?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

She's an American woman in the bath. She couldn't be nude. She's wearing a shower cap.

Shurlock makes a note. A man utterly devoid of any sense of humor.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK

We might accept a shot from outside the bathroom window with Marion in silhouette above the shoulders -- provided the glass is frosted.

Hitch greets the suggestion with barely concealed contempt. Shurlock turns the page.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK (CONT'D)

Then -- this scene with the toilet.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

It's completely necessary. Marion flushes evidence later found by the boyfriend. It's a clue to the girl's disappearance.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK

No American movie has ever found it "necessary" to show a toilet, let alone to flush it.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

What if I have it take place in France and use a bidet instead?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Silence. In this boardroom, not even the assistants are susceptible to Hitch's witticisms.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK
If this office denies you a seal,
and we're certainly heading in that
direction, your movie will not be
released in a single theater in
this country. Will you be making
jokes then, Mr. Hitchcock?

Hitchcock looks ready to unleash a tirade but somehow manages to hold his tongue.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK (CONT'D)
Good. Now why don't we go all the
way back to page two...

ON HITCH

Boiling with rage as we hear the flurry of script pages --

INT. PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE, BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Sunlight filters through sheer curtains revealing Hitchcock trying his best to recline on an ANALYST'S COUCH.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Everyone in Hollywood resents me.
I make them millions... and yet I
sit at those award show dinners
waiting for them to say, just once,
"You're good."

He looks around the luxurious office in despair.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
They take sadistic pleasure in
denying me that one little moment.
It hurts me. Deeply.

Hitch fumbles for a handkerchief to mop his brow.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
You'll have to excuse me. I'm not
used to this... process.

ANALYST'S VOICE
Take your time.

Hitch loosens his tie and claws at his top button. It's sweltering in here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
It's just that, more and more
lately, I've been having these...
impulses.

The analyst's MONTBLANC pen makes a note on a pad. We notice that his hands are surprisingly coarse.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
What kind of impulses?

Hitchcock stares up at the ceiling.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Strong ones.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

A FRIDGE DOOR SNAPS OPEN to reveal Hitchcock's FACE in the darkness. He's in his pajamas. His hand trembles next to a stack of chicken breasts and moves to an upturned GRAPEFRUIT HALF at the back of the shelf.

He pulls it out to reveal a hidden stash of *foie gras* under the hollowed out grapefruit.

He's about to devour it when he catches sight of his DISTORTED REFLECTION in the chrome shelving.

He backs away, disgusted at this monster before him, the light of the fridge illuminating his expression.

He moves to the center island, grabs a GIANT CELERY STALK and slaps it down on the counter. With pent up frustration he draws out a LARGE KNIFE and WHACKS it down VIOLENTLY.

INT. DEN - NIGHT

A door is quietly shut and locked. The bottom drawer of a filing cabinet is inched open. A hand rummages deep inside and teases out a bulging MANILA FOLDER. A hidden stash of some kind.

The DESK LIGHT is switched on revealing HITCH. He carefully extracts the contents of the folder and lays them onto the desk.

A MASS OF PHOTOS OF ALL HIS BLONDE LEADING LADIES

A personal collection lovingly kept. He settles in to study it, picking out his favorites, arranging them in order. They're all in the same pose, all with hair pinned up into a perfect bun.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He looks at each image with intensifying desire. He's created all of them. Every detail.

But it's no longer enough...

THE ROW OF GLOSSY PERFECT BLONDES

DISSOLVES TO:

INT. CASTING OFFICE CORRIDOR - DAY

A ROW OF PERFECT DARK-HAIRED MEN

Sitting in a row, clutching headshots and resumes.

INT. CASTING OFFICE - SAME TIME

HITCH inspects them through a gap in the door. He turns back to Peggy and Alma and pulls a face, Ugh.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Send them all back to Glendale.

Hitch returns to the table to ponder yet more headshots. Peggy shares a glance with Alma, then slides over RODDY MCDOWELL'S HEADSHOT.

PEGGY

The Lazar Office tells me he's crazy to work with you.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Well, tell "Swiftly" he shouldn't have overexposed his client on television.

ALMA

Unlike certain people we could mention.

Hitch ignores the barb. Undeterred, Alma pushes her ace card: a photo of ANTHONY PERKINS, radiating offbeat sensitivity and teen idol looks.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Think of the duality he could bring to Norman. The rage lurking behind that little-boy-lost grin. The winsome charm he uses to keep from being found out.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Madam, are you hinting that young Mr. Perkins is -- ?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hitchcock slowly raises his pinky finger. Alma nods without judgement. Hitchcock ponders.

INT. CASTING OFFICE - NEXT DAY

Anthony Perkins now sits across from Hitchcock, blossoming under the Master's attention.

ANTHONY PERKINS

I can't count how many times I've seen *Strangers On a Train and Rope*.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Well, Norman is the logical extension of the boys in those movies. Appealing, sensitive, suffering the terrible burden of being forced to pretend to be something he is not.

Hitchcock's deeply-felt remark lands with Perkins.

ANTHONY PERKINS

Not to be prudish, but how far do you plan to push Norman's relationship with his mother?

Hitchcock blows out a large smoke ring and pokes it suggestively with his cigar.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Further than you can possibly imagine.

EXT. HITCHCOCK'S GARDEN - DAY

Hitchcock's RED SWEATING FACE as he grunts and heaves. He's dressed in gardening gear, laboring in the full bloom of the rose garden. Alma pushes a WHEELBARROW.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I'm getting blisters just looking at you.

ALMA

Stop grumbling. A bit of fresh air and exercise is exactly what you need.

He holds his PRUNING SHEARS menacingly over a deep red Sydonie rose.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
If only Grace would play the girl,
they'd let me get away with
anything.

ALMA
She's a princess now, Hitch. That
makes her permanently unattainable.

Hitchcock beheads the ROSE.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
And therefore all the more
desirable.

His shears are now poised over a yellow specimen.

ALMA
Lew suggested Deborah Kerr.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Too... Scottish.

Hitchcock cuts it too and moves on to the stem of a perfect
pink rose.

ALMA
What about Janet Leigh? She's
always the 'good girl' but she did
awfully well in *Touch of Evil*. Lew
brought her up. Remember how you
always remark on her figure at the
Wassermans' parties?

As the shears hover on the stem, unsure whether to cut...

MATCH CUT TO:

THE SLENDER WAIST AND AMPLE BOSOM OF JANET LEIGH as she
elegantly enters the dining room of Chasen's.

INT. CHASEN'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Hitch stands to greet her, seeing her in the flesh for the
first time. His eyes follow her across the room in some
private rapture,

Alma watches as Hitch shakes Janet's gloved hand and guides
her to the spot right next to him.

INT. CHASEN'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Hitch flirtatiously dotes on Janet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Of course the real secret of Mrs. Simpson's appeal to the Duke of Windsor was that she could make a toothpick feel like a cigar.

This is so outrageous Janet cracks up.

JANET LEIGH

You know, I've been so immersed in preparing to play Marion I'd almost forgotten how to laugh.

Hitch summons the waiter with a snap.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Now, you must try the banana shortcake.

JANET LEIGH

Nothing for me, thank you. I'm watching my figure.

Alma watches all this with a fixed smile.

ALMA

You're not the only one.
(to the waiter)
We're fine, thank you.

Hitch levels a look at her but she doesn't yield. He pointedly shifts to face Janet.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

So do tell me, how else have you prepared?

Janet shyly hesitates.

JANET LEIGH

I've written a complete history for her... It seems silly, but it helps me.

She turns to pull a LEATHER NOTEBOOK from her handbag, Hitch's gaze locks onto her silken blonde hair, tied immaculately into a classic 'Hitchcock bun'. Alma notices...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

It doesn't sound silly at all. Tell me one of her deepest secrets.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JANET LEIGH

She leads a double life. For instance, when she works at the Lowery office, she wears Tweed perfume. But, when she and Sam are together, she recklessly breaks out her one expensive bottle -- "My Sin" by Lanvin.

Hitch turns to his wife as if to say, 'Now, isn't that impressive?' Alma smiles 'politely'.

JANET LEIGH (CONT'D)

I do have a concern or two. I'm an actress but I'm also a wife and mother first, so I'm wondering just how you'll do that shower scene.

ALMA

You and the Shurlock Office.

JANET LEIGH

It's just...even if you shoot me from here --

(she indicates a spot just above her bosom)

-- well it's not as if my figure is boyish.

Hitchcock looks down at her torso, as if noting it for the first time.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Allow me to put your mind at rest.

Alma reacts as Hitch reaches over and gives Janet's hand a reassuring squeeze.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

I plan to shoot quick bits of film from various angles. Cut together, these shots will suggest nudity and violence but nothing will actually be shown.

Hitch pulls out his folio case to show Janet the storyboards (which we don't see). Janet studies them, deeply impressed. And relieved.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

And having you in the shower will make it all the more -- how shall I put it? *Tit-illating*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALMA

If you'll excuse me.

Alma's had enough. She gets up and heads to the restroom. Janet's smile falters. She's unsure of what just happened but Hitch carries on regardless, either entirely oblivious or not caring at all...

INT. LADIES' ROOM - NIGHT

Alma enters and looks in the mirror, quietly devastated. She looks up to find another reflection in a mirror behind her.

FULL LENGTH MIRROR

Alma is SUDDENLY TRANSFORMED into a Technicolor Hitchcock blonde. In a beautiful Edith Head gown, her skin is velvet perfection, her hair blonde and impeccable.

ALMA

Oh, come off it, old girl.

A bitchy STUDIO HEAD'S WIFE snaps Alma out of her reverie, joining her at the sink to powder her face.

STUDIO HEAD WIFE

Alma, dear, how lovely to see you.

ALMA

Hello Lillian.

STUDIO HEAD WIFE

You're looking a little pale. No wonder with that thing your husband's working on now. You can't possibly approve.

She's had a drink too many but the throwaway comment still hits Alma hard.

STUDIO HEAD WIFE (CONT'D)

Why are you letting him do something so tasteless?

ALMA

Don't upset yourself, darling. It's only a bloody movie.

EXT. HITCHCOCK'S GARDEN

PERFECT PINK ROSEBUSHES

Like in a Douglas Sirk movie. The same roses that are the 'color' of Janet Leigh.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alma hovers with her secateurs for a moment and then starts SNIPPING off their heads with a Caligula-like lack of mercy.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S KITCHEN - MORNING

A vase of flowers, none of them pink, in the center of the table. Hitch STARES into a refrigerator filled with health-conscious snacks.

Alma comes in and sets a handwritten LIST down on the kitchen table.

ALMA

I've made a list of places where we
can tighten our belt.

She tugs at his waistband.

ALMA (CONT'D)

It wouldn't hurt for us all to
learn the art of self restraint.

Hitch picks up the list and reads.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

The gardeners only once a week?
Weekends off for the driver? No.
Absolutely not. We'll find other
places to cut.

ALMA

There aren't any.

She snaps the list out of his hand.

ALMA (CONT'D)

And they'll be no more shipments
from Maxim's either. We can't
afford it. The *foie gras* at
Chasen's is more than adequate.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

But those geese are from *Barstow*
not *Marseilles*.

She heads to the doorway.

ALMA

We all have to make our little
sacrifices for the greater good,
don't we, Hitch?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She leaves Hitch to resume contemplating the contents of the fridge...but there's nothing there to satisfy his growling hunger. He SLAMS the fridge and --

INT. ED GEIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Suddenly we're moving through an empty living room, prowling, just like in a Hitchcock movie as we hear CLUNKING, then move over to catch a glimpse of Ed as he drags A WOMAN'S BODY, feet-first up the stairs. The clunking is from her head on the steps, which is wrapped in her dress.

BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

Ed approaches the shower curtain, then yanks it open with a METALLIC SCREECH. He pushes the body into the tub. Pulls the dress off her head and drops it on the floor.

ED GEIN

Stay here. I'm going to get the knives.

We pan to REVEAL HITCHCOCK standing in the corner. He looks terrified but completely enthralled -- he can't resist creeping forward for a thorough inspection. Hitch's POV as he steps closer to the tub and glimpses the woman's blood-spattered WHITE BRA and GIRDLE.

Suddenly -- FINGERS CLUTCH the rim of the tub.

DEAD WOMAN

Help me.

Hitch recoils but she LURCHES UP and GRABS his throat.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Ed! Ed!

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hitchcock bolts upright in bed, face beaded with sweat in the moonlight. He takes a moment to get his bearings.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Am I making a mistake?

Alma stirs in her bed, lifts her sleep mask.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

What if it's another *Vertigo* or
Trouble with Harry?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She gets out of bed and tucks him back in.

ALMA

Get the first take under your belt
and you'll be fine.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I read the reviews. I heard what
they said to my face...

EXT. UNIVERSAL-REVUE, BACKLOT -- DAY

A sign posted outside a soundstage reads, "PRODUCTION 9401.
ABSOLUTELY NO VISITORS!" It only makes passing TOURISTS,
REPORTERS AND WORKERS more curious.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Inside, it's a hive of quiet purposeful activity. An A.D.
escorts VERA MILES across the far side of the stage. She's
30, a classic blonde porcelain beauty in the Grace Kelly
mold.

PEGGY

I still can't believe you cast Vera
Miles as the sister.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I've still got her under contract.
I may as well get something out of
it.

He watches intently as VERA is led into a fitting room.

PEGGY

Rather a thankless role, don't you
think?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

For an utterly thankless girl.

Hitch heads for the production office weaving effortlessly
past the crew.

PEGGY

Shurlock's office called again.
They want to know when you'll be
making the changes to the script.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

The more we frustrate them the more
their interest will wane.

An eager beaver P.R. FLACK intercepts him.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
How did you slip through security?

FLACK
Please, Mr. Hitchcock, every press outlet is already driving us crazy for photos --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
The more we frustrate *them*, the more interested they'll be... as the French whore used to say.

INT. BEVELRY HILLS STORE - DAY

CLOSE ON A RAIL OF SWIMSUITS. Alma browses through them carefully. They are all perfectly nice, if a little staid.

Her eyes suddenly catch a COLORFUL SWIMSUIT on the end of the rail. It's striking, even a little risque. She looks at the price tag. It's insanely expensive.

She turns to go... stops... then impulsively turns back and grabs it, heading into the changing room and closing the door behind her.

IN THE DARKNESS

light blasts through A TINY HOLE in the wall. An EYE positions itself in front of the peephole.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S PRIVATE BATHROOM, PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

We hear the VOICES of two women quietly conversing on the other side.

HITCH

Strains to get a better view.

THROUGH THE HOLE

We catch teasing glimpses of golden girl Vera Miles stripping down to bra and panties.

INT. WARDROBE FITTING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

HITCHCOCK'S EYEBALL fills the frame as he peers through the tiny hole. We reveal Vera with sharp, bohemian costumer RITA RIGGS, 27, who drapes taupe-colored fabric to Vera's contours.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VERA MILES
Break it to me gently. Am I playing
a lesbian librarian?

RITA RIGGS
(re: the fabric)
He chose it himself and had it
imported from Paris.

Vera laughs dryly at a WIG on a dummy head.

VERA MILES
If I wear that, I'm going to look
like George Washington.

RITA RIGGS
Wait until you see the
undergarments he picked out for
you.

Vera tosses off her shirt.

VERA MILES
I just have to keep telling myself,
one more picture and I'm free as a
bird.

She unhooks her bra and crosses to hang it on a hook right
near the HOLE where we just saw Hitchcock's eye. His eye is
gone, only darkness from the other side. Vera feels a chill
and instinctively covers her breasts with her arm.

VERA MILES (CONT'D)
Is there a fan blowing somewhere?

Rita returns with a punitive bra and girdle.

VERA MILES (CONT'D)
Wow. The old man really is unhappy
with me, isn't he?

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Hitchcock emerges from his production office with a furtive
tweak to his tie to be greeted by Anthony Perkins --

ANTHONY PERKINS
I want to thank you again for this
opportunity, Mr. Hitchcock.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
It's just "Hitch," Tony. Hold the
cock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Janet Leigh, dressed in a crisp, sexy white shirt, greets Tony with a gracious peck on the cheek. Hitchcock notes their interaction.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Look at you two. America's favorite
boy and girl nextdoor...

ANTHONY PERKINS
And we're about to move to a whole
new neighborhood.

VERA MILES
Morning Janet. Morning Tony.

They turn to see Vera Miles, striding towards them in a frumpy tweed suit and wig.

VERA MILES (CONT'D)
"Thanks" for the wardrobe.

She does a little twirl for Hitchcock.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
That's hand-woven imported camel
hair from *Rodier*. Don't you
approve?

VERA MILES
You're the genius, Hitch.

She checkmates him with a ravishing smile.

VERA MILES (CONT'D)
One thing, though. My script is
missing the last ten pages.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Everyone's is. Until Alma finishes
the revisions.

He steers her towards a line of laughing CREW MEMBERS forming alongside the rest of the cast.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
You're just in time for the oath,
Vera.

VERA MILES
The what?

He motions her to join her coworkers and officiously raises his right hand. The cast and crew duly follow suit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
I solemnly promise...

CREW
I solemnly promise...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
That I will not divulge the plot
nor the many secrets of *Psycho*...

CREW
That I will not divulge the plot
nor the many secrets of *Psycho*...

WE SEE VERA'S CROSSED FINGERS BEHIND HER BACK

Then tilt up to Peggy's admonishing look. Vera uncrosses them, 'busted', whispering "Spoilsport."

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
To friends, relatives, trade
reporters or columnists -- not
even to outgoing President Dwight
D. Eisenhower, God bless him.

Everyone cracks up. Hitchcock nods his approval, and Janet, Tony and the crew hop to it followed by Vera who pokes out her tongue at Peggy.

PEGGY
I caught Vera trying not to take
the oath.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Quelle surprise.

But Hitch couldn't care less. He only has eyes for his beloved new blonde and her ample figure gliding off toward wardrobe ...

INT. HITCHCOCK'S STUDY - SAME TIME

ALMA sits at the desk typing away at the revisions for "Psycho."

A tiny solitary figure with nothing for company but a vase of wilting flowers...

She pauses, takes off her glasses and pushes aside her corrections, suddenly fed up with the all the work.

She looks out at the swimming pool, sparkling in the sunlight... then turns to the expensive-looking SHOPPING BAG half-open on the side...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

We hear a LOUD SPLASH --

EXT. POOL - DAY

As Alma plunges into the water wearing her striking new swimsuit. She breaks into a front crawl. Her strokes are vigorous, surprisingly so.

She drives the length of the pool, her arms slashing through the water with increasing speed, her feet kicking out with rising intensity... harder and harder... faster and faster...

INT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS SET - DAY

Hitch guides Janet and Tony across the sound stage to the set of Norman's parlor.

ANTHONY PERKINS

Now, Hitch, explain to me why I'm watching Marion undress?

JANET LEIGH

I feel like I should take offense at that.

She and Tony laugh. Hitch's eyes light up at this first display of mischief from her.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Perhaps as a boy, Norman secretly watched his mother preparing for her nightly bath. Maybe there was a transom over the bathroom door. One he could access with a chair so long as he was stealthy.

Janet shoots a furtive look at Tony.

ANTHONY PERKINS

So, I'm reliving the past, repeating a ritual with Marion.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Precisely. A boy's first glimpse of a naked woman is usually his mother. By seeing this young woman in her place, in a way, you're betraying that deep and sacred trust.

They arrive at the set wall, where Hitch removes a painting to reveal the PEEPHOLE.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANET LEIGH

But why is the hole much larger
this side?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

All the better to see through it at
the greatest possible angle in case
she walks out of view.

Janet presses his face to the hole.

JANET LEIGH

Wow. You really do your homework,
don't you?

Hitch carefully hangs the painting back just so, revelling in
the compliment.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (PRE-LAP)

The truth is... I'm only happy when
I'm working...

INT. A PSYCHIATRIST'S OFFICE, BEVERLY HILLS - DAY

Hitch lies on his Analyst's couch.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

... and if I'm not working then I'm
nothing. I'm not even a person. I'm
just a collection of molecules. A
useless cylinder of ugly flesh.

The Analyst circles one of his notes on a pad with his
Montblanc. Again, we notice how rough-hewn his hands are.

ANALYST'S VOICE (O.S.)

What about your mother? Let's go
back to her.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

My mother?

Hitch looks over at the unseen analyst and considers him.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

She was an extraordinary person.
She exposed me to Ibsen,
Strindberg, Shaw. She hoped I would
go into engineering -- carry a
lunch pail, gold watch at fifty.

ANALYST'S VOICE (O.S.)

She didn't approve of your career?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
To her, movie people were akin to
thieves and prostitutes.

He turns back to look out the window.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
If I misbehaved, she'd make me
stand at the foot of her bed and
discuss how I planned to become a
better boy.

The Analyst leans forward and we see his dirty, worn-down
fingernails.

ANALYST'S VOICE (O.S.)
Have you ever considered that your
deep desire to gain the approval of
your industry represents a
textbook case of transference?
(then)
The Oscar is your mother.

REVEAL THE ANALYST

It's ED GEIN. In his Sunday best, his shovel leaning against
the mahogany-pannelled wall in the background.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
You're a fine one to talk.

THE GLEAMING BLACK LINCOLN

Makes its way through the UNIVERSAL GATES and pulls up to the
production office outside the stage.

EXT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - DAY

Alma collects the script pages off the front seat and walks
into the production office just missing Whit as he strolls
back towards the writers building with a couple of pretty
SECRETARIES.

Whit pauses when he spots the Hitchcocks' BLACK LINCOLN.

WHITFIELD COOK
You girls go on ahead.

The PRETTIEST ONE stops to make Whit light her cigarette
before catching up with the others.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S UNIVERSAL-REVUE OFFICE

Peggy reads the final pages while Alma inspects the production boards.

PEGGY

If you ask me the credits should read "Screenplay by Joseph Stefano and Alma Reville."

ALMA

The people who matter know. That's all that counts.

She makes a few more changes to the schedule.

Peggy continues reading and her face tightens. Clearly it's strong stuff.

PEGGY

I'd hate to see Shurlock's face when he reads this.

She puts the pages down.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Alma, you always know the answer. Is this really going to work?

A candid moment between the two women... but Alma doesn't answer, just leaves.

EXT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Alma emerges into the sunshine and looks across at the soundstage, wondering whether she should go over there...

WHITFIELD COOK

Hello, stranger.

She turns to see Whit leaning against the Lincoln.

ALMA

Whit.

WHITFIELD COOK

Where have you been hiding yourself?

ALMA

I've been doing Hitch's revisions.

WHITFIELD COOK

And how is the old boy?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA

In a state of unbridled ecstasy now
that he's back on the set.

WHITFIELD COOK

And you?

She considers the question.

ALMA

Not bad. I've got eight hundred
words to do for *Reader's Digest* on
what it's like to be married to a
man obsessed by murder.

WHITFIELD COOK

I've got a better idea.

He looks at her a moment.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

Why don't we drive out to Santa
Barbara sometime? Have Emilio fry
up a juicy steak or two at El
Encanto.

He steps closer, playfully tugging at her sleeve.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

No shoptalk ... No gory magazine
articles...

Alma's expression gives away nothing as we pan over to the
WINDOW of the production office and notice the tell-tale BEND
in the blinds.

INT. PRODUCTION OFFICE - SAME TIME

Hitch looks out at Whit and Alma through the window, just
like he did with the other couple earlier. Except this little
interaction is far from dull.

A.D. HILTON GREEN

We're ready for you on the set, Mr.
Hitchcock.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I'll be right there.

But Hitch doesn't move.

A.D.

Mr. Hitchcock?

INT. HITCHCOCK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

ALMA enters the silent, empty house. She walks through to the kitchen and puts the grocery bags down on the counter. She listens. The house is eerily quiet, until, from behind --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Was there a line at the market?

Alma looks up, but doesn't turn round, well used to Hitch's cryptic ways.

ALMA
Actually, I'm back sooner than I
expected.

She puts on an apron and gets to work, preparing dinner.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Cocktail?

He heads for the liquor cabinet.

ALMA
No. And you shouldn't either.

Hitchcock stops. Pulls out the CELERY from one of the bags.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
I was filming all day today with
John Gavin -- a good-looking chap
but, really, plywood is more
expressive. His love scene with
Janet may be the most horrifying
thing in the picture.

He takes a BITE, searching her face for some tell-tale sign of guilt.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
He's not even as suave as our
dapper little friend Whitfield
Cook.

ALMA
You should tell Whit. He'd be
flattered.

She gets to work preparing a salad. Hitch studies the back of her tiny, vulnerable neck, the delicate sinews and muscles as they rise and flex.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hitch arranges his pillows and settles into bed while Alma finishes getting ready.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
 Maybe I was too dismissive about
 Whit's new book. Perhaps he and
 Elizabeth could come over this
 weekend and he can walk me through
 it.

Alma's radar activates but Hitch continues oh-so-nonchalantly.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
 Lovely woman, Elizabeth...

He carefully folds his blanket as if wrapping a murder victim. She's not exactly sure what he's implying but she knows she doesn't like it.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
 I was hoping you could come by the
 set tomorrow.

ALMA
 I'll see how my day shapes up.

She turns onto her side away from him. Pulls the blankets around her, her eyes still WIDE OPEN.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (PRE-LAP)
 You think you can get away with it
 but you can't...

Alma's eyes become HITCHCOCK'S EYES, staring ahead intently.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - CAR SCENE - DAY

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
 ... You think they can't tell...
 but they can. They know. It's all
 closing in on you. The noose is
 tightening...

As he continues, we pull back and see:

THE REAR-PROJECTION SET

IN ANGLES COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE IN *PSYCHO*, Janet emotes for Hitchcock's CAMERA while "driving" a PARTIAL CAR, being rocked by STAGE HANDS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peggy and other CREW time and mark the takes. ELECTRICIANS AND GAFFERS turn mounted lamps that rake across Janet's worried face like car headlights.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
You could return the money
secretly, but what would be the
point? It's too late.

He wipes his brow, getting more intense...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
You. The prim and proper girl who's
always been so respectable. So
perfect. Well, they know all about
your dirty little lunchtime trysts,
don't they? Yes, your boss could
smell the sex on you--

SUDDENLY THE REAR SCREEN film breaks and a frame burns.

It's a good thing because Janet is blushing. As technicians yell and hustle, Hitchcock turns to Peggy --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Circle that.

INT. JANET LEIGH'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Janet Leigh changes out of her sexy secretary outfit and 'bad girl' underwear. Vera Miles watches a little enviously.

VERA MILES
Have you talked to him much about
your personal life?

JANET LEIGH
Not really...

VERA MILES
I'd keep it that way if I were you.
(Off Janet's look)
He starts by choosing your
hairstyle and clothes and then he
wants to choose your friends and
decide how many children you should
have.

Janet finds this a little hard to believe. Vera leans in, lowering her voice.

VERA MILES (CONT'D)
That poor, tortured soul Jimmy
Stewart played in *Vertigo*?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VERA MILES (CONT'D)

That's Hitch, only younger, slimmer
and better-looking.

They both turn, sensing something -- and see HITCHCOCK'S
DISTINCTIVE SHADOW PROFILE in the hallway. The shadow
lingers, then recedes like in a scary ghost story.

VERA MILES (CONT'D)

(whispers)

See? He's always watching.

They laugh nervously.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Alma, her hair still wet, settles on the sofa with some lunch
on a tray, a circled copy of *TV Guide* next to her.

On television -- the 1950 Hitchcock classic *Stage Fright*.
The credits come up: "Screenplay by Whitfield Cook,
Adaptation by Alma Reville."

Alma watches, thrilled at the sight of her name and Whit's
together.

ON THE TV

The words "DIRECTED BY ALFRED HITCHCOCK" overwhelm the small
screen. Alma puts down her fork, no longer hungry.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

ALMA heads back to the kitchen, only to pause at the open
door to Hitch's study -- there's something on the desk.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S STUDY - CONTINUOUS

THE HITCHCOCK BLONDES

Hitch's personal collection. Alma enters and starts to go
through them. Each photo is turned over a little more roughly
than the last. It's hard to tell whether she's more angry at
the photos or the fact that they've been deliberately left
for her to find...

Alma takes off an earring, picks up the phone and starts to
dial...

INT. SET - SAME TIME

As the crew prepares the car set to go again, Hitch strides
over to PEGGY who's dialing a phone.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
What's the hold up?

PEGGY
It's still engaged.

He takes the phone himself just as Vera Miles emerges from her dressing room, script in hand.

VERA MILES
Hitch, I'm stuck on Lila's first scene. I don't know how strongly I should confront Sam and the detective and I --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
(acidly)
Fake it.

He turns his back on her and dials. The ENGAGED TONE blares in his ear. His eyes narrow at some crew members fussing with bits of LIGHT and SOUND EQUIPMENT.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Does it really require two men to carry a light stand?

A.D. HILTON GREEN
I'll take care of it right away,
Mr. Hitchcock.

The A.D. rushes off to fix it. Off Peggy's questioning look.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
It's different when their pay is coming out of your own pocket.

He raps the receiver button, more intensely this time, and redials.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S DEN - DAY

But Alma's still on the phone to Whit, basking in his charm. Her feet are up. There's a drink in her hand.

WHITFIELD COOK (ON PHONE)
Leave it to me, dear heart. I've got just the thing to cheer you up.

ALMA
What would I do without you?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She hangs up, toying with her earring, feeling better already when the PHONE rings again. She picks up without even thinking --

ALMA (CONT'D)
(laughing)
What did you forget now?

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

Pudgy fingers clench the coiled PHONE CORD as we move up to Hitch's face. He's silent as a burglar, not even daring to breathe...

ALMA (ON PHONE)
Whit? Is that you?

The blood drains from Hitch's face as he very slowly and carefully replaces the receiver. His mind starts to spin. He's got to get out of there...

CROSSING THE STAGE

Hitch lurches towards the production office, starting to sweat, but his path is blocked by GRIPS laying cables. He turns to find another route but more grips are moving a ladder, an ARCLIGHT swivels and blinds him. The set is suddenly a cacophony of noise and chaos.

Peggy's face comes into focus.

PEGGY
Are you okay? You've gone very pale.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Stop trailing me like a puppy dog and get me something long, cool and wet.

PEGGY
It's not even three.

He pushes past her, leaving her flat.

ACROSS THE STAGE

HITCH finally rounds the corner only to find the humorless face of BARNEY BALABAN blocking his office door.

BARNEY BALABAN
Hello, Hitch. How's the picture?
I'm hearing interesting things...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

It's a wonder you can hear anything
over the noise coming from the
Shurlock office.

Balaban offers up his handkerchief. Hitchcock waves it away
even though he's now covered in sweat.

BARNEY BALABAN

I shouldn't be in a position of
just hearing things, Hitch. It's
time you showed me some footage.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Why?

BARNEY BALABAN

To see if you're making a picture
Paramount can actually release.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

As you well know, Barney, my
contract guarantees me final cut.

BARNEY BALABAN

Your contract also says Paramount
isn't required to distribute any
film that could cause us
embarrassment.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

As opposed to what, the last five
Martin and Lewis pictures?

He slams the door in Balaban's startled face.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Hitchcock loosens his collar and catches a glimpse of himself
in a mirror. He's unraveling and it shows.

BARNEY BALABAN (O.S.)

I demand to see some footage,
Hitch.

Hitch lowers the window blinds over Balaban's face and
fumbles for the phone.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Connect me to Maxim's of Paris.

Ignoring the INSISTENT KNOCKING at the door --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
(on phone)
Yes, it's Alfred Hitchcock in
Hollywood, California, Jean-Claude.
I need five pounds of *foie gras*
sent on the next flight out.
(then)
That's correct. Five.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY

A majestic view of the coastline as Whitfield Cook's MERCEDES 280se, zooms along, top down. Alma wears white-rimmed sunglasses and a head scarf. Whitfield, in true Hitchcock leading man style, has the perfect amount of wind blowing through his hair.

ALMA
It's so nice not to have to take
care of someone, even if it's just
for an hour.

She takes in the sparkling scenery whipping past.

ALMA (CONT'D)
You still haven't told me where
we're going.

Whit just smiles as he jams the acceleration and the car
ROARS off down the highway.

EXT. UNIVERSAL-REVUE OFFICE - DAY

Hitch stands in the empty parking lot tapping his foot
impatiently. A car horn TOOTS. He turns to find Janet Leigh
at the wheel of her VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE.

JANET LEIGH
What happened to your driver?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
I've been asking myself the same
thing.

She smiles politely.

JANET LEIGH
I can give you a ride if you want.

Hitchcock raises an eyebrow at the tiny car, and then, with
great effort inches his massive frame through the open door.

INT. CAR - MOVING - DAY

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Did you know Adolf Hitler sketched
the design for this car on
Ferdinand Porsche's cocktail napkin
in a Berlin beer garden?

JANET LEIGH

I didn't.

She turns to see Hitch strapped into his seatbelt, a killer
whale caught in a net.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

It's only now that I truly
appreciate just how diabolical Herr
Hitler was.

She notices him eyeing the half-eaten bag of CANDY CORN on
the dashboard (the kind Norman Bates enjoys throughout
"Psycho".)

JANET LEIGH

I pinched them from Tony's dressing
room. Help yourself.

Hitch takes one and chews it curiously.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

So this is what they eat at the
drive-ins...

He eyes the bag again.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

May I?

She nods. He takes the whole bag and sets to work, popping
them in one after the other.

JANET LEIGH

I thought you only ate Fauchon
chocolate.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Needs must when the devil drives.

He's so deadpan there's no way for her to tell if he's joking
or not. He goes back to demolishing the candy.

EXT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE - DAY

The sun is setting on the Hitchcocks' driveway. The VW pulls to a stop in front of the front door.

INT. CAR - DAY

Janet looks over -- decides to risk it.

JANET LEIGH

So what did happen between you and Vera?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I was going to make her star. But she chose the life of a housewife.

He stops chewing. We push in as his features turn reflective.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

I cast her as the lead in *Vertigo*. Then two weeks before filming she told me was pregnant.

He screws up the empty bag of candy and looks over at Janet. Then, almost like a child --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Why do they do it? Why do they always betray me?

EXT. SANTA BARBARA BEACH - SUNSET

TWO PAIRS OF FEET

nesting in the sand. Alma and Whit sit out watching the sunset. It is warm and friendly. The water laps over their toes.

ALMA

I don't mind that he uses his obsession to fuel his art. I just don't like it when he uses it against me.

WHITFIELD COOK

He's like any great artist. Impossible to live with but worth the effort.

(he throws a rock into the sea)

Michelangelo wasn't exactly a walk in the park either.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA

Did you know when we started out I was his boss? He didn't even dare ask me out until he'd worked his way up to assistant director.

Whit watches as she picks up some sand, lets it run through her fingers...

WHITFIELD COOK

What do you think of that place over there?

He nods to a SMALL BEACH HOUSE up the way.

ALMA

It could use a coat of paint I suppose, but it has potential. Why?

WHITFIELD COOK

It's mine.

She looks at him askance. Is he joking?

ALMA

I just saw Elizabeth. Why on earth didn't she tell me?

WHITFIELD COOK

She doesn't know about it.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA BEACH - SUNSET

Alma enters the beach house cautiously and looks around. It is old and falling apart with only a few functional furnishings.

WHITFIELD COOK

I'm just leasing it for the offseason. A place to get away from the wife and kid and write.

ALMA

Very Bohemian.

WHITFIELD COOK

You might find that room interesting.

Alma looks. The door is partially open -- she sees the one conspicuously new item of furniture. A double bed.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA

Whit. I hope you haven't got the
wrong idea.

He gives her a rakish grin, then pushes the door open further
to reveal the deck beyond.

TWO MAUVE CORONA TYPEWRITERS

Sit on a table facing each other.

WHITFIELD COOK

If you were serious about helping
me adapt my book, I thought it
would be the perfect hideaway.

She lets this sink in, entranced by the incredible view and
the crashing surf.

Then, she steps out onto the deck and up to one of the
typewriters. Gives the key an approving TAP.

INT. HALLWAY, HITCHCOCK'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Hitch enters the empty house. The dogs greet him. He listens
a moment... then walks through to the study.

INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Hitch pours himself a brandy and downs it in one. He goes to
pour himself a second, when he notices something on the desk.

It's his collection of PHOTOS by the TELEPHONE. They're all
neatly stacked.

With a SINGLE GOLD EARRING on top.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hitch lies in bed, his thoughts racing as he waits for Alma
to come home.

Finally, the sound of the car comes up the driveway.

He turns onto his side and pulls up the blankets, listening
to the sound of the front door ... and Alma's footsteps down
the hall.

She quietly slips into the bathroom and shuts the door before
turning the light on. He watches her shadow through the strip
of light at the bottom of door.

When the bathroom light switches off again Hitch hurriedly
closes his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alma emerges in her nightgown and stops at his bedside, peering down on him. She's not completely sure that he's actually awake, but she suspects.

LATER

Hitch eases himself up and looms over Alma to make sure she is safely asleep.

He silently picks up her HANDBAG and takes it to the window. Using the moonlight he searches its contents. Car keys. Lipstick. Purse.

And the first few pages of a story outline:

"TAXI TO DUBROVNIK"

The pages vibrate in his hand as his gaze lowers to reveal the rest of the TITLE PAGE: "STORY TREATMENT BY WHITFIELD COOK & ALMA REVILLE."

INT. HITCHCOCK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT (LATER)

A GLISTENING MOUND OF FOIE GRAS spooned into Hitchcock's mouth straight from the MAXIM'S OF PARIS tin. Hitch stands in the glare of the open fridge, a beast feeding in its cave, shoving in mouthful after mouthful. It's almost pornographic in its indulgence.

We hear the civilized CLINK of cutlery against china...

INT. THE HITCHCOCKS' DINING ROOM - DAY

Hitch and Alma sit at the table having lunch. Alma eats a pork chop while Hitch 'enjoys' his salad. Neither speaks.

Hitch calmly pours Alma a glass of water, then pours one for himself and takes a small sip.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
So I read your finished treatment.
Care to hear my thoughts?

ALMA
Naturally.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
There's no other way of saying it.
It's stillborn.

Alma blinks, unable to hide her shock.

ALMA
How so?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Hitch chomps away merrily...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

The plot's a muddle. Some of the jokes are awfully like things we've already done better in *The Lady Vanishes* and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. And your villain is weak. But the biggest failure is that relationship between the hero and heroine.

He jabs his fork into a tomato.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

If you weren't so smitten with Whit you'd see that.

Alma is entirely stunned. Hitchcock has delivered the killer blow he intended.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

How would you know what really goes on between a man and a woman?

He pushes away his plate and goes over to the french doors.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Women never really care to face the truth when their hearts are involved, do they?

He exits into the garden.

EXT. GARDEN - CONTINUOUS

Hitch searches his pockets for his lighter but can't find it. His annoyance only increases when he notices the SCATTERED LEAVES 'contaminating' the surface of the pool.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Look at this mess.

He grabs the net and starts scooping them out.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Bloody belt-tightening.

He can't get the net into the inflow filter so he gets down on his hands and knees and starts PULLING OUT the leaves with his hands.

ALMA

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

watches from the window... then turns away.

HITCH

Pulls out handful after handful of wet leaves, clawing away at them like a madman...

A TEMPERATURE DIAL INCHES INTO THE RED

INT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS - SET

Stage hands and engineers test a row of HOT WATER TANKS installed on the set.

WE FOLLOW the sound of rushing water through a PIPE as it snakes across the set floor and passes through a fake wall to

A SHOWER HEAD

Unleashing a stream of STEAMING HOT WATER. The SET HAND gives the thumbs up.

A.D.

Tell the boss we're ready.

INT. UNIVERSAL STUDIOS SET - DAY

Peggy and the A.D. exchange a glance as Hitchcock paces up and down in the corridor, red-faced.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

What's the hold-up? Call time was two hours ago.

Peggy nervously knocks on Janet's door and peers inside --

INT. JANET LEIGH'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Rita Riggs is hard at work molding MOLESKIN PATCHES to Janet's nipples.

JANET LEIGH

And you're sure this moleskin will stay put?

RITA RIGGS

Mr. Hitchcock promised.

Neither woman looks convinced but they proceed with blind faith.

JANET LEIGH

It better. I'm going to be taking a shower all week.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Janet slips on her robe, a MOLESKIN TRIANGLE PLOPS onto the floor. Rita and Janet share a worried look.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - SANTA BARBARA - DAY

Alma sits at her typewriter while Whit stares off, looking a little uncertain.

ALMA

Forget what Hitch said. He's
fixated on his own movie.

(then)

He's just feeling his age. He'll
come around.

WHITFIELD COOK

But he's right. It does need more
feeling.

Alma ponders the problem. Finally --

ALMA

So let's put some in.

She gets to her feet and starts to pace.

ALMA (CONT'D)

All we need is a better catalyst.
Some innocuous little trigger to
release all that underlying
emotion.

The soothing sound of the ocean gives way to the relentless
HISS of SHOWER WATER --

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - MOTEL SHOWER SET

Janet nervously removes her bathrobe and steps into the MOCK
SHOWER STALL.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Janet. This way.

He takes her hand and guides her awkwardly into position.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Are you quite sure you're ready for
this?

JANET LEIGH

My mother always said, "Have
confidence in yourself and you can
lick anything."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hitchcock takes Janet's hand, and with tremendous sincerity :

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
My mother used to say the same
thing.

Around them, the crew frantically finalize the CAMERA and LIGHT SETUPS. MALE CREW MEMBERS look uncomfortable and excited by the unprecedented sight of a virtually nude movie star.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Now, where is our murderess?

Into frame steps Anthony Perkins' FEMALE DOUBLE, MARGO, wearing a gingham dress, silver wig and BLACK MAKEUP TO MASK HER FACE. She wields a large PROP KNIFE and almost blocks our view of Janet in the white-tiled stall.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Let's go for a take. Action.

Over and over, Margo attacks with the knife and Janet tries deflecting the blows but both women are timid and Janet is clearly guarding her modesty and covering her body.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
More intensely. Let's go again.

Margo's KNIFE comes at Janet uncertainly and every which way. Naked and exposed, Janet defends against the knife blows as they come at her but Margo's still pulling her punches--

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
No. It needs to be more angry. You
are possessed with unbridled
homicidal rage.

He leaps up and charges over to Margo to demonstrate the savage stabbing gesture he demands.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Does no one understand what I'm
trying to accomplish here?

Everyone falls silent, unsure how to respond. Hitchcock HOLDS OUT HIS HAND. Margo places the knife in Hitchcock's palm.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Bring in more blood.

A FEMALE MAKEUP ASSISTANT squirts more CHOCOLATE SYRUP "blood" onto Janet from a PLASTIC BOTTLE OF BOSCO.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Roll camera.

As the scene is marked, we see Hitchcock's anxiety. There is NO SOUND except Hitchcock's ragged breathing.

CREW MEMBER

Ready, sir.

Hitchcock nods. The camera whirs. Hitchcock hoists the knife into the air with terrifyingly convincing power and malevolence.

THE SHOWER CURTAIN GETS YANKED BACK --

We see in the shower from Hitchcock's POV not Janet but GEOFFREY SHURLOCK. Hitchcock SLASHES the censor a killer blow that sends him reeling.

THE SHOWER CURTAIN GETS YANKED BACK AGAIN --

Shurlock is replaced by BARNEY BALABAN. Hitchcock stabs him with unleashed fury and hate.

THE SHOWER CURTAIN GETS YANKED BACK AGAIN --

WHIT turns, he's naked and smiling. Hitch plunges the knife into his back, and he drops, revealing ALMA, arms around his waist.

THE SHOWER CURTAIN GETS YANKED BACK AGAIN --

We're back in the real moment -- JANET LEIGH SCREAMING as she gives the 'performance' of a lifetime.

Hitchcock stops stabbing. His heart pounds. He's soaked with sweat. The only sound is the drip-drip-drip of the shower...

ON HITCH

As he realizes EVERYONE is staring at him. He straightens his tie, attempting to regain some semblance of control.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

We have it.

He exits quickly.

Rita escorts the shaken and exhausted Janet off set, passing Vera who's witnessed the whole thing. Janet gives her a look as if to say 'Now I understand.'

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Hitch shuts his office door and leans back against it. He closes his eyes, nauseated and dizzy. He doesn't even need to open them to know who's there, waiting for him.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Not now, Ed. It's really not a good time.

He staggers towards the water cooler only to crumple exhausted to the floor.

Ed brings him some water, pats his shoulder.

ED GEIN

You just can't keep this stuff bottled up.

A TELEPHONE

starts to ring.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

It is inside the beach house, and partially drowned out by the sound of the crashing waves. Alma and Whit are on the deck, acting out the scene as they write, too engrossed to notice.

WHITFIELD COOK

What if Helen and Michael try and get into the cab at the same time?

ALMA

Even better, what if they reached for the cab door at exactly the same time?

Alma demonstrates so that their hands touch.

ALMA (CONT'D)

That way, we could start close on the hands...

(tracking the movement)

... and then tilt up to the eyes.

They stare into each other's eyes, lips just inches apart...

WHITFIELD COOK

That feels better already.

Finally, the phone intrudes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA

Are you going to get that?

With some effort, Whit goes inside and picks it up.

WHITFIELD COOK (O.S.)

Hullo?... Yes... Hold on.

He comes outside, holding out the receiver for Alma.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

It's for you.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE - DAY

Peggy grips the phone, her face full of concern.

PEGGY

I know you told me only to call in
an emergency, but I'm not sure how
else to describe this.

Hitch lies slumped on the office sofa. A compress over his forehead. His head lolls to one side as he slips in and out of consciousness...

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. UNIVERSAL REVUE, SET - DAY

Disarray on the set.

ANTHONY PERKINS, SAUL BASS and the MARTIN BALSAM all argue about the best way to proceed with the shot at the top of the stairs. Hitch is conspicuous by his absence.

SAUL BASS

I already boarded out this entire
sequence. You just have to follow
my shots.

Perkins and Balsam roll their eyes.

SAUL BASS (CONT'D)

Has it ever occurred to anyone that
I may have some better ideas than
Hitch?

Perkins has heard enough. He walks away, sharing a look with Peggy as she arrives holding out a PHONE.

ANTHONY PERKINS

It's official. The inmates are
running the asylum.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peggy couldn't agree more. She pointedly hands Bass the phone.

PEGGY

Saul. I have Mr. Hitchcock for you.

Bass looks acutely uncomfortable as he takes it -- did Hitch hear any of that?

SAUL BASS

Hey there, Hitch. Everyone misses you.

INT. BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Hitch, in bed and sick as a dog, has the script, notes and boards on a bed tray. The phone receiver is pressed to his ears.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I've told Peggy and now I'm going to tell you. The A.D. will not shoot this staircase sequence the way you boarded it. You're tipping off the big surprise. And that, Saul, is the end of that!

Hitch slams down the phone. Alma touches his forehead.

ALMA

No more phone calls. You're burning up.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Burning up our money. We're two days behind and here I am stuck in bed.

Hitch swings his legs out of the bed.

ALMA

Where do you think you're going?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

The set. First Joe Stefano is going around claiming the script is all his own work and now Saul Bass is telling the world he's the one directing the film.

ALMA

Be happy they're fighting for credit. If it were going badly they'd be blaming you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

It is going badly. That's why I've
got to get over there.

He shakily tries to get to his feet.

ALMA

You stay in bed. I'll deal with it.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I'd hate to take you away from your
writing partner.

She pushes him back against the pillows. He's too weak to
resist.

ALMA

Under the blankets. Now.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Crew members sit around eating donuts. Saul Bass sits in
Hitchcock's chair arguing with assistant director Hilton
Green and cameraman Jack Russell. They've clearly had it with
Bass.

Then Alma steps in the door, and everything stops. Every crew
member snaps to attention as Alma passes by. It's like the
school principal arriving after the substitute teacher has
lost control.

ALMA

Don't stop work because of me. I'm
only here as one of the two people
paying your salaries.

She glances at the A.D. who barks order to crew members who
suddenly start busting their asses. Saul Bass forces a smile,
then starts gathering up his things.

Alma takes a seat in Hitch's DIRECTOR'S chair. As her eyes
dart around the set, it's clear that she IS TAKING EVERYTHING
IN. Peggy flanks her.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Scene?

PEGGY

Seventy-four.

ALMA

Storyboards?

Peggy hands the boards to Alma.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She and Hilton quickly review the boards, then Hilton sets ANTHONY PERKINS into place. Peggy mouths Alma a silent "THANK YOU" for restoring order.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Hitchcock lies in bed, tossing and turning, the fever only making his thoughts darker and more obsessive. Suddenly he notices A SHADOWY FIGURE standing at the end of his bed.

ED GEIN
You forgot to look in the bathroom.

Hitch blearily sits up and sees Gein's impassive rustic face.

ED GEIN (CONT'D)
A man like you... Missing the vital
clue like that...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
What do you mean?

Gein steps over to the bathroom and pushes open the door.

ED GEIN
My mother always said if you're
going to do a job, do it right.

IN THE BATHROOM

Hitchcock enters the immaculate white and chrome room and inspects it... but nothing seems out of place.

ED GEIN (CONT'D)
Check the floor.

He looks down but again, nothing.

ED GEIN (CONT'D)
Closer.

Hitch gets down on his hands and knees. He runs his fingertips across the smooth white tiles. They start to collect --

GRAINS OF SAND

Sprinkled all over the floor.

ED GEIN (CONT'D)
You still think they're just
writing together?

Hitchcock's face hardens. His lip trembles.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED GEIN (CONT'D)
So what are you going to do about
it?

Hitch gets up, opens the medicine cabinet and takes out a
BOTTLE OF BAYER ASPIRIN.

He empties the tablets into the sink and very carefully,
sweeps the SAND into the aspirin bottle. He caps it, slips it
into his robe pocket and turns off the light.

INT. SET - SAME TIME

Saul Bass is about to slink away when Alma strides over and
corners him.

SAUL BASS
Well handled, Alma, If I may say so-

ALMA
If Hitch chooses to allow you the
privilege of returning to the set,
you will remain in the background.

He looks stunned but unapologetic. The whole crew is now
watching.

ALMA (CONT'D)
My husband is a genius with you,
Mr. Bass, and he's a genius without
you. He may not be the sort who
spreads credit easily but I'm not
one to stand by and let you take
it.

SAUL BASS
Alma, let me explain --

ALMA
We all contribute. But on a
Hitchcock picture, there is only
one director.

He's about to argue, but Alma's level stare warns him he
won't win.

STRAVINSKI'S RITE OF SPRING

Blares deafeningly...

INT. HITCHCOCK'S STUDY - DAY (LATER)

On the stereo. Alma finds Hitch on the sofa swaddled in a
blanket and eating ICE CREAM.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA
May I turn that down?

She silences the stereo. Hitch doesn't react.

ALMA (CONT'D)
You'll be pleased to know order has
been restored.

He still doesn't look at her, masticating loudly.

ALMA (CONT'D)
A thank you would be nice.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
We're still two days behind and
sixty thousand over budget.

ALMA
I already cancelled the wrap party.
That'll save us forty thousand
right there. And you won't be
tempted by any champagne and cake.

She pulls at the bowl of ice cream. He refuses to let go.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Beware -- all men are potential
murderers.

She yanks it from his grip.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
With good reason.

ALMA
What's that supposed to mean?

He slowly pulls the ASPIRIN BOTTLE from his robe pocket,
building suspense as he unscrews the lid and pours SAND into
a tiny pile on the coffee table in front of him.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Spending a lot of time at the
beach?

He puts down the bottle, looking for a reaction.

ALMA
That's where Whit and I are
writing. He's rented a place.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Hardly the ideal setting to avoid
distractions.

ALMA
Actually, it's very conducive to
creative collaboration.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
I already told you -- that
treatment is a non-starter.

ALMA
Didn't everyone say the same thing
about "Psycho"?

She reaches for the ASPIRIN BOTTLE to throw it away but Hitch
grabs it first --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Are you and Whit having an affair?

ALMA
Don't be absurd. He's working on
something new and needs a little
help, that's all.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
What a coincidence. I'm working on
something new and I could use a
little help too.

ALMA
What do you think I've just been
doing? This is my house too.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Then why are you spending all hours
of the day and night with him?

ALMA
Because it's fun.

He quivers, livid.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
I am under extraordinary pressures
on this picture, the least you can
do is give me your full support.
Instead you're gallivanting out at
the beach replaying *Tea and
Sympathy* with some overage
talentless mamma's boy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

Alma's eyes flash with unaccustomed hurt and fury.

ALMA

Might I remind you that I have weighed-in on every aspect of this film so far, as I have done on every picture you've done in the last three decades. When you finish shooting this one, I will edit right alongside you night and day. I will listen to every scoring and sound session. The first time you show the film, it will be my notes that you want first. When you're out promoting it around the world, I will stand beside or, rather, slightly behind you, smiling endlessly for the press even when I'm ready to drop, being gracious to people who look through me as if I were invisible because all they can see is the grand and glorious "Alfred Hitchcock."

Hitchcock is stunned and silent.

ALMA (CONT'D)

I celebrate with you if the reviews are good and cry for you if they are not. I host your parties and put up with those fantasy romances with your leading ladies. Now, for the first time in years, I dare to work on something that isn't "an Alfred Hitchcock Production" and I'm met with accusation and criticisms. This work I'm doing with Whit gives me pleasure and purpose. And even though that takes absolutely nothing away from you, please consider this a reminder: I am Mrs. Alfred Hitchcock, not one of the contract blondes you badger and torment into bending to your oh-so-specific direction.

She turns and, with great dignity, leaves Hitchcock sitting in the gathering gloom. He's not the only one who can deliver a killer blow.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE SET - DAY

ON HITCH

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

with that same lost expression on his face, only now dark shadow and harsh light alternate across his features.

A NAKED LIGHT BULB dangles from the ceiling as STAGE HANDS prepare the film's climactic scene in the cellar.

Hitch watches as VERA reaches out to touch the shoulder of Mrs. Bates. We zoom in on her as she reacts in silent horror, her HAND flying up to hit the light bulb, throwing crazy shadows all over the set.

We push in on Hitchcock's face as the strobing light briefly illuminates the image of

A SMALL BOY

at the foot of his mother's bed.

INT. VERA MILES' DRESSING ROOM - LATER

A WIG on a stand. A frumpy woman's outfit on a hangar. Vera Miles hands over her detested wardrobe to Rita for the last time and gathers up her belongings.

VERA MILES

Free at last.

She removes her coat from the hook, pausing briefly over the small hole in the wall. She's just about to inspect it further when Hitch enters.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Well done, Vera. You make it look so easy.

VERA MILES

It was nothing, Hitch. I just faked it.

She gives him a dazzlingly ambiguous Miss America smile.

VERA MILES (CONT'D)

Well, I guess this is good-bye.

She offers out her hand but Hitch doesn't take it, lost in his thoughts...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Why didn't you stay with me? I would have made you as big a star as Grace Kelly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She considers the question and the man asking it, sensing something different about him now, something almost conciliatory...

VERA MILES

Unlike Grace Kelly, I can pick up
my dry cleaning. I've got a family,
Hitch. A home. That will always
mean more to me than all of this.

(then)

That blonde woman of mystery you're
after? She's a fantasy. She doesn't
exist.

He studies her, like she's some rare species.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

There was a time when I thought I
understood you so completely --
understood women. The things you
want, the things you need...

Hitch trails off. Vera turns to go, a little more slowly this time, struck by his rare show of vulnerability.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE - DAY

Wind blows sand off the dunes. Alma sits in the parked car outside the beach house, contemplating the typed pages on the seat next to her. An inkling that they may not be as magical as she had hoped.

No matter. She checks her reflection in the rearview and applies some lipstick, readying herself.

She collects the pages and heads up the steps to the deck. She sees two typewriters and paper, but no sign of Whit. Something doesn't feel right.

She turns and in the bedroom, through the window, she sees Whitfield Cook making love to a young woman -- it is the pretty SECRETARY from the studio lot. Alma and Whit's eyes meet. Whit is horrified at being caught.

Alma ducks her head, wheels around in shock.

ALMA'S CAR

She yanks open the door and gets in. Whit runs half dressed from the house...

WHITFIELD COOK

Alma, I thought you were coming
later tonight.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA

I thought you rented this place so
we could write.

WHITFIELD COOK

I did. I swear -- this just
happened.

She struggles to get the key in the ignition. He puts his
hand desperately on the car door.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

You won't say anything, will you?

ALMA

Don't worry. I won't tell
Elizabeth.

WHITFIELD COOK

I mean to Hitch.

Whit smiles feebly.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

We can't all be geniuses.

Alma tries to hide what a body blow this is.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

Alma -- you're incredibly talented.
But, after all... we want him to
read the script with an open mind.

ALMA

I wouldn't worry about that, Whit.

She starts the car and drives off.

Whit watches, deflated, knowing he's ruined everything, his
receding figure swallowed up by flickering white light...

INT. SCREENING ROOM - DAY

WE PLAY THIS SCENE ONLY OVER THE FACES OF A SMALL INVITED
AUDIENCE -- THEIR EXPRESSIONS TELL US THAT THE FOOTAGE THEY ARE
SEEING IS NOT GOING OVER WELL. NOT AT ALL.

Lew sits with Barney Balaban and two executives. Lew
discreetly checks his watch out of boredom. Shurlock and his
two Assistants look appalled. Composer BERNARD HERRMANN, late
40s, prickly, sits in the back row looking suicidal. He
glances back at Hitchcock who stands near the screening room
door looking worse, if that could be possible.

INT. STUDIO SCREENING ROOM - LATER

Shurlock exits and approaches Hitchcock who's waiting in the foyer.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK
You're going to have to cut all
that nudity.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
What nudity? It was suggested.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK
I definitely saw that knife jabbing
her.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
We did no such shot.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK
I'd stake my reputation on it.
We're denying your seal.

Hitchcock is livid but holds his tongue.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
I'll go over it frame by frame and
set up another screening.

But Shurlock is already walking away...

Wasserman emerges from the screening room conversing with
BALABAN. Hitch searches their expressions for some indication
but Balaban strides off without saying a single word to him.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
What's the verdict?

LEW WASSERMAN
Let's just say it was a four-letter
review and it wasn't 'good'.

The harsh reality devastates Hitchcock.

LEW WASSERMAN (CONT'D)
Screw him. It's too late for
Paramount to back out no matter
what Balaban says.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
All that planning, all that work...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LEW WASSERMAN

The other route is to recut it as a two-parter for the TV series. Because of the budget and the Hitchcock name, we stand a good chance of breaking even.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

But it doesn't play, Lew.

LEW WASSERMAN

Look, I made Jimmy Stewart a millionaire of *Winchester 73* and that was a dog. At least I could sit through your picture.

Hitch stares bleakly off. He can't help noticing the COUPLE he spied on earlier outside, hand in hand and kissing.

LEW WASSERMAN (CONT'D)

More importantly, what does Alma think?

INT. HITCHCOCK'S STUDY - DAY

Alma sits with the Hitchcocks' ACCOUNTANT going over the books again, looking at the revised figures. They close the books and sit back and look at each other.

ALMA

Is there anything else we can do?

Silence. This time he can't bring himself to look her in the eye.

ACCOUNTANT

We'll just have to wait and see how the movie turns out.

Alma gets up and crosses to the window. Stares out at the pool reflecting a leaden sky... and the clumps of dead leaves floating across its surface...

ALMA

Well, it is only a house.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

The dogs, GEOFFREY and STANLEY, lap away at a water bowl in the study. A splash or two of something is added to the bowl from above. It's being poured from Hitch's brandy glass.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HITCH

pours himself another glass, leaving the dogs lapping happily away as he goes over to the Steinway Grand. There's a bank of silver-framed PHOTOS on top. He pauses to take a proper look at them.

His and Alma's life together in movies. Smiling at Premieres with Cary Grant and Grace Kelly. On vacation with Jimmy and Gloria Stewart. At a black tie event with Ingrid Bergman and Gregory Peck.

But it's the PHOTOGRAPH tucked away at the back that he wants to see most.

A BLACK AND WHITE PUBLICITY STILL taken on the set of *The Mountain Eagle* in 1926. He picks it up and looks at it:

The young Hitchcock in front of the camera, dramatically calling "Action!" on his first film. His eyes don't have to move far to find ALMA, standing just behind him, making notes on her clipboard, the same intense, serious look on her face.

They look so young...

Hitch turns to look out the window, thoughtful -- Hitch's POV. It's SNOWING outside.

INT. GEIN'S BASEMENT DEN - NIGHT

We pull back to discover the window is now in a basement lit by a single oil lamp.

We find Gein sitting at his workbench. Hitchcock is perched on a stool nearby watching him.

Trash and newspapers are piled everywhere. There is grime and dark stains on the cabinets and counters.

ED GEIN

This is my favorite place. I just
shut the doors and leave the world
behind.

Hitch watches Gein as he threads a needle, stitching something expertly together. He notices there's no hint of a tremble in Gein's hands.

ED GEIN (CONT'D)

Pass me that bag, will you?

Hitch passes over the shopping bag... then pulls up his coat, feeling a chill.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Don't you get lonely out here
sometimes?

ED GEIN
I can always talk to my mother.

HEADLIGHTS SUDDENLY RAKE THE ROOM

As we hear CARS pull up -- a lot of them. The sound of MEN, shouting. Flashing RED AND BLUE LIGHTS. LOUD KNOCKING at the door --

ED GEIN (CONT'D)
That's strange.

Gein unhurriedly goes up the stairs to answer it. Hitch gets to his feet and follows for a couple of steps, freezing at the FOOTSTEPS thundering above him. DOZENS OF OFFICERS fan out all over the house.

CAPTAIN SCHOEPHOERSTER (O.S.)
Jesus Christ.

Hitch hears the sound of SHOCKED reactions and horrified GASPS.

CAPTAIN SCHOEPHOERSTER (CONT'D)
I think we found his hiding spot.

With the CAR HEADLIGHTS blasting through the window, Hitchcock finally sees the basement room properly for the first time; KNIVES of all shapes and sizes...JARS OF PRESERVED BODY PARTS...and TWO SEVERED HANDS, FOLDED IN PRAYER.

FROM UPSTAIRS the sound of splintering wood.

ED GEIN (O.S.)
You can't go in there! That's my
mother's... room!!

Ed starts to blubber pathetically as the DOOR is broken open.

WE PUSH IN ON HITCH'S FACE

As the bleak reality of Gein's lair hits him. It's more profound and horrible than he could ever have imagined.

A lush ROMANTIC SCORE starts to SWELL, mercifully drowning it all out...

INT. HITCHCOCK'S STUDY - NIGHT

Titles from a dark 1946 romantic melodrama fill the screen.

"THE SECRET HEART"

"SCREENPLAY BY WHITFIELD COOK."

Alma sits watching the afternoon movie alone, brushing the dogs on the sofa next to her.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

From the doorway, Hitchcock reads Alma's fragile emotional state and enters. He sits down beside her and studies the screen for a moment.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
An odd little movie. Of course,
Colbert is wonderful.

Alma nods. They watch for a beat longer.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
How was the beach?

ALMA
Cold and miserable.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Just like Barney Balaban's face.

He indicates the over-ripe dialogue coming from the TV.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Whit isn't worth a damn when he's
not working with you.
(pause)
And neither am I.

Alma takes in his reflective expression, but says nothing.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
I didn't pull off the picture this
time. It just sits there, refusing
to come to life.
(then)
There's no other way to say it...
It's stillborn.

ALMA

turns away.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hitch sits there bereft in the lonely silence.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
I let you down, lovey.

He moves closer and takes her hand. Gives it a small squeeze.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
You deserved better.

She still doesn't move. After a moment Hitch gets to his feet.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
I'll go and feed Geoffrey and
Stanley, shall I.

He exits with the dogs padding after him. She turns back to the screen and more of that stilted, mannered dialogue.

Tears well in her eyes.

EXT. THE HITCHCOCK'S HOUSE, BEL AIR - NIGHT

A full moon. The ONLY LIGHT from inside the house is the one in the kitchen.

We glimpse the figure in the window. A corpulent man in profile, like a Hopper painting.

INT. KITCHEN - LATE THAT NIGHT

Hitch sits in his nightgown, pushing some VEGETABLES around his plate -- his healthy midnight snack.

Alma enters in her robe. Hitch watches her. She goes to the fridge, opens the PRODUCE DRAWER and from under the brussel sprouts pulls out a tiny hidden jar of BELUGA CAVIAR.

She gets the crackers, a plate and a spoon and sits down at the table next to him.

ALMA
I don't think I can stand both of
us being maudlin.

She fixes several crackers, each with an appropriate dollop of caviar on top, and puts the plate in the middle.

ALMA (CONT'D)
There is one solution to all this.

She offers him one of the crackers.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA (CONT'D)
We could both get to work --
together.

Tentatively, Hitch accepts it.

ALMA (CONT'D)
That tiresome little Hitchcock
imitation I've been helping Whit
finish is done.

Hitch remains quiet, delicately consuming his cracker.

ALMA (CONT'D)
I suggest, for everyone's sake, we
start whipping *Psycho* into shape
tomorrow. You may not be the
easiest man to live with but you
know how to cut a picture better
than anyone.

Hitch puts the lid back on the caviar.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Except for you.

INT. EDITING ROOM - NEXT DAY

A series of quick shots as the editing room comes to life :
CANS OF FILM ARE BROUGHT IN BY ASSISTANTS, STRIPS OF
CELLULOID ARE PULLED OUT, INSPECTED AND MARKED WITH CHALK
WHILE OTHERS ARE SPLICED TOGETHER.

HITCH and editor GEORGE TOMASINI wait quietly like
schoolboys, while Alma reviews the footage on the Moviola.

ALMA
You'll need to cut those six or
seven frames where she blinks after
she's supposed to be dead.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
We've seen the footage a thousand
times. She doesn't blink.

ALMA
And the knife pierces her stomach
at least once.

INT. EDITING ROOM - LATER

FILM HANGS EVERYWHERE IN BINS

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FOUR ASSISTANTS are working on MOVIOLAS. Alma and Hitch work their way down the line, inspecting each new assembly.

ALMA

Take thirty frames off the head...

(next Moviola)

No, no, the second take, the light is better on his hands.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

(next Moviola)

Cut it tighter. The minute I lose one person I've lost the whole audience.

ALMA

(next moviola)

You imp. You got nudity in there.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Her breasts are very large, dear. It was hard not to show them.

INT. EDITING SUITE - NIGHT

Editor GEORGE TOMASINI works at the Moviola, sleeves rolled up.

GEORGE TOMASINI

I'll be damned. She *did* blink.

INT. EDITING SUITE CORRIDOR - DAY

Peggy stands with the ever-pestering PR FLACK.

FLACK

How's it going in there?

PEGGY

Swimmingly.

FLACK

Everyone's saying it's a dog with fleas.

Before Peggy can deny it the argument flares through the wall.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (O.S.)

Absolutely *not* Bernard...

INT. EDITING SUITE - SAME TIME

Bernard Herrmann is pressing his point hard with Hitchcock.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

...I don't want music in the shower murder.

BERNARD HERRMANN

(frustrated)

But what Alma and I talked about is really going to play.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

No. The images have to work on their own.

ALMA

You can't scare people just by going, "Boo!" You have to tell them what's coming, make them anticipate it --

OUTSIDE

The PR Flack shares a despairing look with Peggy.

FLACK

Thank God we've got *Cinderfella* for the holidays.

INT. EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

TWO PAIRS OF HANDS. Hitchcock's and Alma's. They work like a pair of twenty-year-olds at a pair of MOVIOLAS cutting the picture.

ANGLE LOOSENS -- to reveal George Tomasini has dozed off, exhausted.

Alma looks up from a freeze frame shot on the MOVIOLA.

ALMA

The final close-up of Norman needs an exclamation mark.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Would it be too much to superimpose a skull over his face?

ALMA

It's the end of a horror movie. What could possibly be 'too much'?

BERNARD HERRMANN'S ICONIC SCORE RISES as

INT. EDITING ROOM - DAY

We move across HITCH, ALMA, TOMASINI and PEGGY'S faces as they watch the film.

We study their reactions. The impact of the music is instant and unimaginably powerful.

They are all moved. Gripped. Stunned.

Hitchcock looks down. Peggy is gripping his arm tightly.

GEORGE TOMASINI

What do you think?

PEGGY

I think I'm never going to take a shower again.

GEORGE TOMASINI

Hitch?

They look at him. He's struggling to contain his enthusiasm.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

It's getting there.

He turns to Alma and with the tiniest of nods, acknowledges her instinct was right.

INT. MOTION PICTURE CODE REVIEW OFFICE - DAY

ON SHURLOCK'S HUMORLESS FACE

Hitchcock sits opposite him at the big conference table.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK

I distinctly saw both the stabbing and the nudity. I'm recommending you cut the shower scene entirely.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Geoffrey, I take your opinion very seriously. But what you think you're seeing is purely informed by the power of suggestion. I assure you that once you view the final version with Mr. Herrmann's lovely, lyrical score...

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK

A "lyrical score" won't change my opinion. All that innuendo and half-naked groping -- really, Hitch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I have a modest proposal to make.
If you're willing to leave the
shower sequence as it is, I will
reshoot the opening love scene to
your exact specifications.

Shurlock reacts with surprise.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

In fact, I'll welcome your personal
supervision on the set.

Shurlock is more flattered than he'd care to admit.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

If only audiences could fully
appreciate how tirelessly you work
to help us entertain them while
protecting them from filth and
indecentcy.

Shurlock studies Hitchcock's sphinx-like expression.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE - DAY

Hitchcock and Peggy confer. John Gavin and Janet Leigh,
wearing robes, chat while lying on a bed. Crew members wait
impatiently. Peggy checks her watch.

PEGGY

He's been harassing you since you
announced this project, you invite
him to the set, and he doesn't even
show up? What did you tell him?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

That I respected him. *Deeply.*

Peggy laughs. Now she understands.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Ladies and gentleman, that is a
wrap. Thank you all.

The crew starts breaking things down. The actors are baffled.
Janet walks over to him.

JANET LEIGH

But we didn't reshoot anything.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

No need. The charade is over.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hitch holds out his arm for her and walks her back to the dressing room.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
See, I wasn't that much of a
monster to work with, was I?

JANET LEIGH
Hitch, the pleasure and honor were
all mine.

We hold on Janet's polite smile as Hitch walks away. Finally,
the nightmare is over.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S UNIVERSAL-REVUE OFFICE - DAY

Hitch sweeps in. Lew is waiting for him.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
We have our seal from Shurlock's
office.
(devilishly)
Now, we lead the lambs to the
slaughter.

Hitch turns to Lew for the latest news.

LEW WASSERMAN
The front office confirmed. They're
only opening the movie in two
theatres, as we suspected. If we
don't get word of mouth we're dead.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
We'd better get started. Peggy,
take a memo...

Peggy whips out her steno pad.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
We're going to write a manual on
exactly how to sell *Psycho*.

INT. PRINTING PRESS - DAY

BOOKLETS make the rounds on a conveyor-like contraption. As
the booklets are bound by swift-moving WORKERS, we see
Hitchcock's photo on a cover and his "advice" to theater
owners.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (V.O.)
My first instruction to Theater
Owners: Hire Pinkerton guards to
strictly enforce our unique
admission policies.

INT. NEW YORK THEATRE - FLASH FORWARD

A MANAGER opens up his PSYCHO PROMOTIONAL HANDBOOK and starts
to read, totally baffled.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (V.O.)
Furthermore, because *Psycho* is so
terrifying and unique, the guards
can help you deal with customers
who run amok.

INT. NEW YORK THEATRE - FLASH FORWARD

The manager introduces the PINKERTON GUARDS to his equally
bemused STAFF.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (V.O.)
Post our special lobby clocks to
remind audiences of the starting
times for *Psycho*.

He oversees as they hang a ridiculously large PSYCHO CLOCK in
the lobby.

EXT. NEW YORK THEATRE - FLASH FORWARD

Hitch's voice booms from LARGE SPEAKERS MOUNTED UNDER THE
MARQUEE.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (V.O.)
The manager of this fine motion
picture theater has been advised
not to allow anyone to enter the
theater once *Psycho* begins.

We PAN DOWN to the STAFF and GUARDS as they test out the
RECORDED message that will be played for the ticket holders
line. A couple of PASSERSBY listen, perplexed...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (V.O.)
Should you be so foolish as to
attempt to slip in by a side
entrance...

INT. HOLLYWOOD RECORDING BOOTH -- PRESENT

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
 ... a fire escape or through a
 skylight, you will be ejected by
 brute force.

Hitch lays down the track into a large microphone while Alma
 watches from the recording desk.

ALMA
 More playful, darling.

INT. EMPTY THEATRE - FLASH FORWARD

A row of life-size HITCHCOCK STANDEES are delivered by truck.
 Posters are hung in the theatre lobby. The letters hoisted up
 and hung on the marquee outside.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
 "To further emphasize the sheer,
 unrelenting shock and suspense of
Psycho, right after the closing
 title "THE END," we strongly
 recommend that you close your
 house curtains over the screen for
 a full thirty seconds."

Inside the theatre, the manager makes sure the CURTAINS open
 and close correctly then turns to face the vast, empty
 auditorium.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S VOICE
 "By doing so, the horror of *Psycho*
 will be indelibly etched in the
 mind and heart of your audience."

He anxiously surveys the hundreds of seats that will have to
 be filled.

INT. PARAMOUNT BOARD ROOM - DAY

Now Barney Balaban is reading Hitchcock's publicity manual to
 the board.

BARNEY BALABAN
 "Absolutely never, ever will I
 allow anything to follow *Psycho* --
 no previews of coming attractions,
 no newsreel, no short subject and
 certainly no double-feature.
 Sincerely, and, emphatically,
 Alfred Hitchcock."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Balaban shuts the pamphlet. Silence. Then turns to the stone-faced board members :

BARNEY BALABAN (CONT'D)
At the end of the day, it's a minor
Hitchcock movie. One week, and
it'll be gone...

He tosses the pamphlet into the trash.

BARNEY BALABAN (CONT'D)
Like a bad dream.

INT. PARK PLAZA HOTEL - NIGHT

MOVING THROUGH STEAM we arrive at the bathroom mirror as Hitch wipes it clean and inspects his tuxedo.

A last moment to prepare. He tries to do his cufflinks but he's too tense.

He walks out into the suite and holds out his sleeves to Alma. Without needing to be asked she fixes his cufflinks but she's even more nervous than he is.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Well?

ALMA
Very presentable.

A KNOCK on the door.

VOICE (O.S.)
Mr. Hitchcock, your car has
arrived.

A final, deep breath.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Ready for the gallows?

INT. LIMO - LATER

Hitch and Alma sit in the backseat as it approaches THE BLINKING NEON that typifies Times Square, 1960.

The limo pulls up and the door opens. Hitch and Alma step out into a SEA OF FLASHBULBS and JOSTLING CROWDS beneath the DAZZLING MARQUEE for "ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S PSYCHO."

As PEGGY leads them through the swarm of people and REPORTERS shouting questions we feel the terrifying nerves beneath Hitch's smile.

INT. LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The atmosphere is tense as people hurry to their seats. Lew greets them.

LEW WASSERMAN
This way, Hitch. We've roped off
some seats for you.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
You go on ahead.

ALMA
Are you sure?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
I'll join you in a minute.

Off Alma's look.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
I want to double check the print.

Alma follows Lew and Peggy into the theatre.

INT. BARONET THEATER, PROJECTION BOOTH, MANHATTAN - NIGHT

The soothing whir of the projector as Hitchcock stands next to it... but the sound of the audience below TITTERING NERVOUSLY is anything but reassuring.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
(under his breath)
They're laughing too much.

He peers down through the tiny window but can't see a bloody thing.

INT. THEATRE FOYER, DOWNSTAIRS - A MINUTE LATER

Hitch inches open the door and PEERS THROUGH THE CRACK at the audience but now he can't read them. Are they gripped with suspense -- or do they just hate it?

INT. THEATRE CORRIDOR - CONTINUOUS

From the lobby we see

HITCH

as he closes the door and leans back against the wall of the empty corridor. A scared, lonely, corpulent figure. Totally powerless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

There's nothing for him to do but wait.

And wait.

And wait.

Across the foyer, a spotty young THEATRE EMPLOYEE sweeps up ticket stubs and empties ashtrays, quietly going about his business, entirely oblivious...

ON HITCH'S FACE

As he grips the railing. This is taking far too long.

And then -- finally -- the sweetest sound in the world A BLOOD-CURDLING SCREAM.

Soon the WHOLE AUDIENCE SCREAMS IN TERROR... then breaks into LAUGHTER again... nervous laughter this time, the best kind.

HITCH

As he gestures with his hands, a conductor leading his orchestra, raising them up again as the audience STARTS SCREAMING AGAIN right on cue

PUSHING TIGHTER ON HITCH

As the dam breaks and all the pent-up emotion floods out... leaving only relief and satisfaction... and making way for a smile... the largest of his whole career.

INT. BACK CORRIDORS OF THE THEATER - LATER

Hitch, Alma, Peggy and Lew are led out by a THEATER MANAGER. There are still SCREAMS in the theatre as the show continues.

Hitchcock and Alma try to slip through a huge line of ticket buyers to get to their parked limo. Patrons recognize him and there is great excitement.

WOMAN WAITING ON LINE

Mr. Hitchcock, how does it end?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I promised Mother I wouldn't tell.

He gets a laugh. Hitchcock walks alongside the Theater Manager.

THEATER MANAGER

Mr. Hitchcock, what do I do now that my wife won't take a shower after seeing your movie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Have her dry-cleaned.

More laughter from the crowd. Hitchcock gestures for Alma to take her place next to him instead of behind him. She shyly waves him away but eventually, and appreciatively, relents.

ALMA
It's the biggest hit of your
career, Hitch.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Our career, Alma.

He looks into her eyes with nothing but deep, intense gratitude and joy.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
I've realized I'll never be able to
find a Hitchcock blonde who is as
beautiful as you.

ALMA
You do realize I've waited decades
to hear you say that, Hitch.

He gives her a gentle peck.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
And that, madame, is why they call
me "The Master of Suspense"...

INT. THE PLAZA HOTEL - MORNING

A MAGNUM of Champagne on Ice. Dozens of large flower arrangements, fruit baskets, and congratulatory banners litter the vast, elegant suite... Alma sits at the table going through a large stack of telegrams.

ALMA
Here's one from Jimmy and Gloria
Stewart, "Congratulations on the
sold-out shows. You've outdone them
all."

Peggy comes in with NEWSPAPERS.

PEGGY
Walt Disney just announced he won't
let his children see *Psycho*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
We must write to thank him
personally. That's going to double
our box office.

Alma pauses over another telegram. "To my two favorite
geniuses. Felicitations. LOVE, WHIT."

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Who's that one from?

ALMA
(beat)
Whit. He tips his hat.

She adds it to the pile. One of many.

LEW WASSERMAN
(reading out another
telegram)
"Congratulations, Hitch, a well
deserved triumph as we always
knew!" Barney Balaban and your
friends at Paramount Pictures."

He shares a look with Hitch.

LEW WASSERMAN (CONT'D)
"As we always knew."

He screws it up and tosses it into the fire.

LEW WASSERMAN (CONT'D)
(patting Hitch on the
back)
So how does it feel to be the talk
of the town?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
That depends entirely on what
they're saying.

LEW WASSERMAN
They're saying every performance is
sold out for the next two weeks.
Paramount doesn't know what hit
them.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Neither do the critics.

He glowers at the *New York Times*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Bosley Crowther is calling it "a
blot on an otherwise honorable
career."

He rattles the paper and grunts.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Some things never change.

SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CENTRAL STATE HOSPITAL WARD - DAY

It is a utilitarian institutionalized dining room. Several nonviolent INMATES eat at different round tables around the room.

An ATTENDANT watches, and an ORDERLY mops the floor (there are NO female patients nor staff members.)

THE REAL ED GEIN

is at a table with two other patients, including a soft spoken older man, CHET. Ed is heavier, his hair is whiter, and he is much more at ease than we've ever seen.

ORDERLY
(to the Attendant)
Guess what I'm doing this weekend?

ATTENDANT
What?

ORDERLY
Claudine and I are driving to
Chicago, staying with her folks,
and we're all seeing that *Psycho*
movie.

The Attendant pulls the orderly aside, and whispers to him, nodding toward Ed. The Orderly's jaw drops! It is the coolest thing he's ever heard. He looks at Ed like he's a movie star. Meanwhile, Ed yawns, content. Utterly oblivious.

CHET
I think you're the happiest guy
I've ever known, Ed. How you do it?

ED GEIN
I'll tell you. You live your life,
and it's unbearable sometimes but
There's this secret, Chet;
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED GEIN (CONT'D)

a big secret no one else knows or wants to tell...

(he leans a little closer)

... there is a God and he's so big and powerful, he doesn't always remember you're there. It's not his fault. He's a God and you're no more than a speck in all he's made.

He takes a huge bite blueberry pie.

ED GEIN (CONT'D)

But if you can get his attention and he sees you're suffering, he'll notice and he'll take care of you. My mother used to tell me -- she's passed, God bless her -- the one thing God truly loves and understands is suffering.

He takes a long drink of milk.

ED GEIN (CONT'D)

After all, he invented it.

WE PAN to discover HITCHCOCK has been watching all this. He turns to the camera.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

And so, gentle viewer, *Psycho* -- the picture everyone predicted would bring me to wrack and ruin -- was such a hit that Alma and I got to... Well, let's just say that we got to keep our house -- and the swimming pool. And the same critics who despised it went on to call it one of my greatest achievements.

He produces a CIGAR and wanders outside.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Of course for me, it was just another "moo-vie."

As he strolls through the well-tended grounds of the hospital they seamlessly transform into the rosebushes of the HITCHCOCKS' OWN GARDEN, beautifully tended as before.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
But you know what they say in
Hollywood: "You're only as good as
your last picture." So, now, if
you'll excuse me, I must toddle
off to begin the exhaustive search
for my next project.

He holds out his cigar towards something we don't yet see...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Unfortunately I find myself once
again bereft of all inspiration. I
do hope something comes along
soon...

A SMALL BIRD

Alights on his cigar tip and FLAPS its wings. Hitchcock gives
the camera a final characteristically deadpan look as the
distinctive THEME TUNE to his TV show starts up.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Good evening.

The bird flies away and he toddles off back to the house,
where Alma can be seen through the open french doors
preparing a healthy dinner...

DISSOLVE TO

ALFRED HITCHCOCK MADE SIX MORE MOVIES AFTER PSYCHO. HE DIED AT
HOME IN BEL AIR IN 1980, WITH ALMA BY HIS SIDE. ALMA HITCHCOCK
DIED TWO YEARS LATER.

FADE TO:

ED GEIN LIVED IN COMFORT IN MENTAL INSTITUTIONS UNTIL HIS
PEACEFUL DEATH IN 1984.

FADE TO:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK NEVER WON AN OSCAR. IN 1979, WHEN HE ACCEPTED
THE AMERICAN FILM INSTITUTE'S LIFE ACHIEVEMENT AWARD, HE
DEDICATED THE HONOR TO HIS WIFE, SAYING, "I SHARE MY AWARD, AS
I HAVE MY LIFE, WITH ALMA."

FADE OUT.