

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

FADE IN:

EXT. MARSHLAND - DUSK

We move across smoldering embers and reach a small grass fire. Dirt is thrown over the flames before a BOOT finishes stamping them out.

SUPER: PLAINFIELD, WISCONSIN, 1944

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

We move up two dirty pairs of overalls to find HENRY and ED GEIN sweating away as they continue shovelling out the flames. Both are in their forties and wearing flannel shirts. 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?

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, holding a rose-patterned cup and saucer of tea...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He takes a sip and turns to address the camera --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Good evening.

He places his cup daintily back on the saucer.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
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 glances back over at the murder scene.

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 shrugs: 'Who would've thought it?'

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 --

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 and from behind the tree stump
produces an umbrella.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

As Hitch opens his broolly and 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.

(then, to a BEAUTIFUL
BLONDE FAN)

Any questions, my dear?

The blonde fan, holding out her autograph book, shakes her head 'no' and giggles.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

A pity.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The reporters crack up. Alma manages a polite smile as Lew helps her into the limo, leaving Hitchcock alone for a moment to sign his autograph for the blond fan...

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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA

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

Hitchcock clears his throat, rattling his paper as if he'd
been reading the whole time.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Talking of arrows, 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 as Hitch opens the London Times.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

And 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.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

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

ALMA

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

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

Alma comes in, takes the newspapers from him and puts them on
the side.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Stop reading them. You've been reading
them for a week now.

She puts down the TOILET SEAT and sits on it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Tell me, dear. Am I really too old?

ALMA

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

She comes 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 and Hitchcock surreptitiously picks up the papers again...

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 too corpulent to be seen in broad daylight.

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.

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 in the 'New Masters of Suspense' article...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Very presentable.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

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 rings 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 1957 CADILLAC. 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.

EXT. PARAMOUNT STUDIOS, PRODUCERS' BUILDING - DAY

The Cadillac pulls up. Alma 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.

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.

OMITTED

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE, PARAMOUNT - DAY

Luxurious, wood-paneled and very British. Hitch sits restlessly behind his desk, receiving his morning shave from his private barber, SILVIO. 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* for the third time.

Hitch directs his response to Silvio.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

The audience would spend the entire picture waiting for Miss Frank to discover the corpse I'd hidden in the attic. Wouldn't you agree, Silvio?

SILVIO

Si.

Hitch 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

(again, turning to Silvio)

Doesn't she know I just made that movie? It's called *North by Northwest*. And "style" is merely self-plagiarism.

Silvio nods, then recommences the shave.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

I'm treading water, Peggy. I need something fresh. Something different. Without expensive stars like Cary Grant or Miss Kim Novak to pretty it up.

Silvio unintentionally nicks Hitch's face.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

A nice, clean, nasty little piece of work.

Silvio hurriedly dabs away a speck of BLOOD.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 Silvio 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, 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.

WHITFIELD COOK

I can't believe he let me have you all to myself for a whole afternoon. Especially looking this beautiful.

He clinks her glass.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

Très chic.

Alma turns to look at the menu again.

ALMA

All this relentless sycophancy is giving me indigestion.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA (CONT'D)
(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?

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He touches her hand, affectionately. She brushes it away, affectionately...

WHITFIELD COOK

The most fun I ever had was working with you.

She looks through the opening pages... taking her time... enjoying making him wait...

ALMA

I suppose I could give it a look.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE, PARAMOUNT - DAY

Hitchcock peeks avidly through the blinds at a smartly dressed KIM NOVAK-TYPE WOMAN hurrying along to some appointment or assignation... Hitch cranes to see who she's meeting, but she moves tantalizingly 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.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S 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. He startles her.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Anything. Anything at all?

He starts sifting through her tray. She notices the glass in his hand.

PEGGY

Nothing suitable. Is that water or do I need to call Alma?

He drains it playfully.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Gin. Mother's ruin.

But something's 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 (CONT'D)

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY

It sounds ghastly. Everyone in town's already passed.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

And who is everyone?

PEGGY

The story department finished the coverage this morning.

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." Certainly not your average run of the mill nutcase, is he?

He gives a grunt of approval.

PEGGY

You're kidding.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Peggy. This is the boy who dug up his own mother.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S STUDY - THE NEXT 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 pops her head in the door.

ALMA

Hungry?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Famished.

She disappears to take off her coat.

ALMA (O.S.)

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She comes back in again carrying some galleys, notices the title of Hitch's book -- some trash called "Psycho."

ALMA (CONT'D)

Whit gave me the galleys of his new book yesterday at lunch. I've already got some ideas on how you could adapt it.

Hitch continues reading.

ALMA (CONT'D)

It's elegant, sophisticated, full of intrigue --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

The book or Mr. Whitfield Cook?

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

ALMA

This might be the one, Alfred.

He finally looks up.

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.

But Hitch ignores her and turns to look out the window, his imagination starting to turn...

INT. GEIN HOUSE, PLAINVIEW, 1945 - NIGHT

Ed enters the bedroom. His mother, Augusta, is in the bed, faced away from him.

ED GEIN

Aren't you cold, ma?

She doesn't answer. We follow him to the dresser where he lingers a little too long over his mother's open underwear drawer before grabbing the blue coverlet on the side.

He comes over and spreads the extra blanket over her. Still wearing his jacket, he takes off his shoes, gets into bed and crawls up next to her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ED GEIN (CONT'D)

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

As he puts his arm around her and pulls her close, we reveal his mother's ghoulishly embalmed face.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, 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 of obsession on his face is unmistakable.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Read the bit in the motel bathroom.

ALMA

Now?

He switches on the light by her bedside. She sits up, puts on her glasses and reads from the opened page.

ALMA (CONT'D)

"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.

She hands him back the book.

ALMA (CONT'D)

This is nothing but low-budget horror movie claptrap.

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 movie?

EXT. HITCHCOCK'S GARDEN - MORNING

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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.

OMITTED (SCENE 17)

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE, PARAMOUNT - DAY

Hitch enters with purpose, carrying a stack of photos and
articles.

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

PEGGY
Minions. Certainly. And who might they
be...?

Hitch heads for his office, in no mood for wise cracks. He
spreads out the articles on the desk. Photos and magazine
articles about Ed Gein...

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

Peggy stands in the doorway, watching --

PEGGY
How many do you need?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
All of them. I want every copy,
nationwide.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
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.

She walks over, notices the LIFE MAGAZINE headline : "HOUSE OF HORRORS STUNS NATION." Stark black and white photographs expose the nightmarish decay of the Gein house...

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

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
That's exactly the point, my dear.

Peggy watches uneasily as Hitchcock pores over the articles with delight.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - A SUNDAY AFTERNOON

A PIANIST plays a polite version of Al Jolson's "My Mammy". CLOSE ON A MANILA ENVELOPE clutched in one hand behind HITCHCOCK'S back as we follow him travel through the party. The clink of champagne glasses as we reveal the GUESTS saying HELLO as he passes...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (PRE-LAP)
And when the Wisconsin Police department raided his farmhouse in Plainview...

HITCHCOCK

Is now in position in front of the fire place. Around the coffee table are INVITED GOSSIP COLUMNISTS, including a HEDDA HOPPER-TYPE. They take in the gory LIFE MAGAZINE article.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
..they opened the door only to discover -
voila...

He produces the manila envelope from behind his back and empties THE HORRIFICALLY GORY CRIME SCENE PHOTOGRAPHS inside onto the coffee table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

... 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 down sweetly at the circle of quietly horrified expressions...

HEDDA HOPPER TYPE

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

HITCHCOCK

That is my intention, madam. Yes.

Hitch taps the photo of ED GEIN.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I only wish he looked more like William Holden and less like Elmer Fudd.

The other columnists scribble down the quote.

HEDDA HOPPER TYPE

Am I the only one who finds this offensive?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I was hoping everyone would. I mean life is deeply offensive and disgusting, isn't it?

Hitch glides off without missing a beat, past the Servers arriving with more *hors d'oeuvres* from the kitchen.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

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

He snags a martini and collars Peggy while he's at it.

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 over at the pantry, where Alma can be glimpsed through the swinging door, putting food onto trays.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Her monthly rent, what she wears, what she reads, which scent or 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 pantry ahead.

He 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 told you, Hitch. This thing's strictly for the drive-in crowd.

Hitch smiles tightly and extricates himself, heading on to the kitchen through more annoying guests --

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, PANTRY - SIMULTANEOUS

Whit leans against the stove watching Alma expertly arrange the next round of *hors d'oeuvres* coming in from the kitchen.

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.

ALMA

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

WHITFIELD COOK

Certainly more fun than reading those reviews.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

(then)

Do you think he really will read it?

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.

Hitch stares blankly at him while Alma turns and busies herself over the sink, hiding an almost imperceptible blush.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

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. Then leans in to Whit's ear and whispers - just like Whit leaned into Alma's ear a moment earlier.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Don't stop looking on my behalf.

Peggy appears in the pass-through, beckoning Hitch to hurry back into the living room.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

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.

ON LEW, PEGGY AND HITCH

standing together watching.

LEW WASSERMAN

I've seen happier faces on a school bus going over a cliff.

PEGGY

I told you it would be too much.

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, sits behind his impressive desk flanked by two CONSERVATIVELY-ATTIRED EXECUTIVES.

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 stares unblinking, giving nothing away.

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 inscrutable.

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.

BARNEY BALABAN

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Are you telling me "no?"

Balaban maintains a calm, pleasant front.

BARNEY BALABAN
I think you know me better than that,
Hitch. I would never say "no" to you.

Hitch's suppressed rage is building...but Balaban says nothing.

EXT. PARAMOUNT COURTYARD - DAY

Hitch and Lew walk down the stairs and through the leafy courtyard past Hitch's office.

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.

Hitch turns to Lew.

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. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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...

LEW WASSERMAN
I have whisky in the car.

EXT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, SWIMMING POOL - A FEW DAYS LATER

ALMA does afternoon laps in the pool. A contemplative Hitchcock wanders down to the pool side wearing black sunglasses and a business suit. He watches Alma a moment. Finally she notices him.

ALMA
You're back early.

He shrugs, then sits at the table to pour himself a glass of lemonade. Alma gets out and towels herself off.

ALMA (CONT'D)
I'm disappointed you didn't give Whit's book a chance.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
What about him?

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.

He looks off cryptically.

ALMA
Why?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

Pause.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Hitch?

Without turning he takes her hand.

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.

A long moment as he gazes across the pool.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

I want to feel that kind of freedom
again.

He turns to look into her eyes for the first time. A glimpse
of 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, PARAMOUNT - DAY

Balaban watches Hitchcock and Lew closely. Hitchcock again is
like a waxworks Buddha, revealing nothing.

LEW WASSERMAN

We finance it. Independently. Paramount
only distributes it...in exchange for 40
percent of the profits.

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?

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 long silence.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Who do I make it out to?

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

Hitch and Alma lie side by side in their separate beds. A copy of "The Dance of Death" by Strindberg lies on Hitch's bedside table. All traces of his bravado are gone...

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, PARAMOUNT - DAY

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

Peggy ushers JOSEPH STEFANO, 30s, into Hitch's office.

JOSEPH STEFANO

Joe Stefano. Good to meet you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hitchcock leaves Stefano's hand dangling in mid air and sits down at his desk.

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, not writers.

Stefano laughs off the barb and takes a seat as Peggy slips out.

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 HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Alma sits with the Hitchcocks' ACCOUNTANT who's consulting a ledger. She sits at her desk in the corner of the kitchen.

ACCOUNTANT

There's still 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Alma's moved to the kitchen table and is sorting through the accounts herself, the dogs at her feet. Her face is now properly filled with concern.

Hitch enters, holding out some typed pages. Alma covers her worry. He puts the pages on the table next to her.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

Alma takes Stefano's pages and starts to read...Hitch goes to the fridge and opens the door.

ALMA

We're about to have dinner. You don't need anything else.

He shuts the door. Leans against the fridge door. Hitch waits but she gives nothing away...until she off-handedly places the pages on the table...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Well?

She doesn't look up...

ALMA

Hire him.

INT. UNKNOWN ROOM - DAY

Close on a blank page being fed into a Corona typewriter. FINGERS pound out "PSYCHO"

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BY JOSEPH STEFANO.

EXT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE - MORNING

The door opens and Hitches step outside. The Cadillac is waiting.

Alma follows him out and makes a final adjustment to his tie.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

ALMA

Whatever you do, Alfred, don't lose your temper.

INT. PRODUCTION CODE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - DAY

The intimidating plaque for the MPAA's "PRODUCTION CODE ADMINISTRATION 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. 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, are always models of taste and discretion.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK

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

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

She won't be nude. She'll be wearing a shower cap.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

Then -- this scene with the toilet.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

It's completely necessary. Marion flushes evidence later found by her sister. 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.

Hitch turns to Peggy and a Paramount Executive.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Perhaps we ought to shoot the film in France and use a bidet instead?

No response from Shurlock's end of the room. Peggy stares down at the table.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK

Mr. Hitchcock, 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?

Hitchcock gives a slow but meaningful shrug.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

He looks around the luxurious office.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

They take sadistic pleasure in denying me that one little moment.

ANALYST'S VOICE

That must hurt.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Deeply.

Hitch fumbles for a handkerchief and mops his brow.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

You'll have to excuse me, doctor. I'm not used to this... process...

ANALYST'S VOICE

Take your time.

Now Hitch claws at his tie. It's hot in here.

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.

ANALYST'S VOICE

What kind of impulses?

Finally Hitchcock is still. He stares up at the ceiling.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Strong ones.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He pulls it out it 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.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, STUDY - 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.

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. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE, PARAMOUNT - SAME TIME

A row of HANDSOME ACTOR HEADSHOTS on a table. HITCH glares at the waiting ACTORS in the hallway through the blinds. He turns back to Peggy and Alma and pulls a face.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

PEGGY

Why, Alma, you're not suggesting that Mr. Perkins is -- ?

She raises her pinky finger just slightly. Alma nods without judgement.

ON HITCHCOCK

Pondering...

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE, PARAMOUNT - NEXT DAY

Anthony Perkins now sits across from Hitchcock.

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

My only worry is that playing Norman might cut too close to home.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

How so?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Hitch's calmness is strangely reassuring to the young actor...

ANTHONY PERKINS

I was incredibly close to my mother. So close I remember wishing my father would drop dead. And then when I was five, he did just that...He keeled over from a heart attack.

(laughing nervously)

You see I've been guilty my whole life, Mr. Hitchcock.

Hitch is enthralled.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Try to remember this is all just make believe.

Perkins wishes he could be more reassured...

ANTHONY PERKINS

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

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Further than you can possibly imagine.

On Perkins uncertain expression -- what is he letting himself in for?

EXT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, 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 filled with manure.

She shovels the manure around the rosebushes.

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 I could get Grace Kelly to play the girl, they'd let me get away with anything.

ALMA

Well you can't. She's a princess now which makes her permanently unattainable.

Hitchcock beheads the ROSE, muttering to himself.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

And 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 mentioned her name. Do you remember how you always remarked on her figure at the Wassermans' parties?

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

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. CHASEN'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

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

Hitch stands to greet her, his eyes follow her across the room in some private rapture..

Alma watches as Janet removes her glove and shakes Hitch's hand...before he guides her to the spot to his left, across from Alma.

INT. CHASEN'S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Hitch finishes telling his story...

(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.

He's so deadpan... it takes a moment before she laughs.

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.

Hitchcock ignores Alma, gesturing to the waiter again.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Bring her the banana shortcake, George.
In fact make it two large portions.

He pointedly shifts to face Janet.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

So do tell me, how else have you've prepared to play Marion?

Janet 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 the classic 'Hitchcock bun'.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

A quick look to Alma, as if to ask for permission before :

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.

She notices Alma's expression.

JANET LEIGH (CONT'D)

But...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... I mean 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)

May I show you some of Mr. Saul Bass's
marvellous story boards?

Hitch pulls out his folio case and shows Janet the
storyboards (which we don't see).

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

I plan to shoot quick bits of film from
various angles.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Cut together, this montage will suggest
nudity and violence but nothing will
actually be shown.

Janet studies them, deeply impressed. And relieved.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

And having you in the shower will make it
all the more *tit-illating* --

ALMA

If you'll excuse me.

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

INT. CHASEN'S RESTAURANT, 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA

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

EXT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, GARDEN - DAY

PERFECT PINK ROSEBUSHES

Like in a Douglas Sirk movie. The same roses that are the 'color' of Janet Leigh. Alma hovers with her secateurs for a moment and then starts SNIPPING off their heads with a Caligula-like lack of mercy.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, KITCHEN - MORNING

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

Alma enters briskly and holds up a handwritten LIST.

ALMA

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

She places the list on the table.

ALMA (CONT'D)

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

Hitch goes over and picks it up, and reads.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

ALMA

There aren't any other places. And furthermore, they'll be no more shipments from Maxim's either. We can't afford it.

She snatches the list out of his hand.

ALMA (CONT'D)

The *foie gras* at Chasen's is more than adequate.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She turns back to him.

ALMA

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

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.

INT. ED GEIN'S HOUSE, 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. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Hitchcock bolts upright in bed, face beaded with sweat in the moonlight.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Ed... Ed...?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

It takes a moment to get his bearings.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Am I making a mistake?

Alma stirs in her bed.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
What if it's another *Vertigo*?

ALMA
Oh, shut up. Just get the first take
under your belt you'll be fine.

But Hitch isn't looking convinced.

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

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

INT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - CONTINUOUS

Inside, it's a hive of quiet purposeful activity. A.D. HILTON GREEN 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.

Hitch sits in his director's chair reading a copy of the *London Times*.

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

PEGGY
Rather a thankless role, don't you think?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
For an utterly thankless girl.

But he still watches VERA over the top of his newspaper as the A.D. leads her through the maze of hazardous cables and light stands towards the fitting room.

She passes an actor in a HIGHWAY PATROLMAN'S UNIFORM trying on various sunglasses with the prop master.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PEGGY

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

Hitch gets up from his chair.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

He goes over to specify the correct sunglasses that should be worn. The Cop puts on the MIRRORED shades. Hitch nods his approval.

INT. BEVERLY 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 OFFICE UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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?

EXT. JANET'S DRESSING ROOM, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

Hitch knocks at the door.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Are you decent my dear?

JANET steps out dressed in a crisp, sexy white shirt and
pencil skirt. She does a twirl for him. The effect is
stunning. Even the stagehands stop to watch.

JANET LEIGH
Am I alright?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

His picks a tiny piece of lint on her sleeve.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Perfect.

As he escorts her onto the soundstage, Tony comes up to greet them.

ANTHONY PERKINS

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

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

Janet caught that -- she's clearly amused. Tony gives her a gracious peck on the cheek.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Look at you two. America's favorite boy and girl nextdoor...

Janet flicks a glance back at Hitch.

JANET LEIGH

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

Already, Tony can't help feel a little excluded from Hitch and Janet's little clique. Hitch ushers them across the soundstage where the crew are assembling.

VERA MILES

Morning Janet. Morning Tony.

Vera Miles marches up in her frumpy tweed suit and wig.

VERA MILES (CONT'D)

"Thanks" for the wardrobe, Hitch.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

(already moving past her)

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

VERA MILES

You're the genius.

She checkmates him with a ravishing smile.

VERA MILES (CONT'D)

One thing, though. My script is missing the last ten pages.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Everyone's is. Until Alma finishes the revisions. Now hurry along, Vera. You're just in time for the oath.

VERA MILES

The what?

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

He takes Janet by the hand, placing her right next to him and officiously raises his right hand. The cast and crew duly follow suit, all except for Vera.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I solemnly promise...

CREW

I solemnly promise...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

(ignoring Vera's sarcasm)

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 Janet's look of mock disapproval. Vera pokes her tongue out.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

Everyone cracks up, but Hitchcock's only interested in the reaction of his new blonde, standing in pride of place, right beside him.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, KITCHEN - SAME TIME

ALMA sits at the desk typing away at the revisions for "Psycho." -- we see the title page.

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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...

We hear a LOUD SPLASH --

EXT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, 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. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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 display of mischief from her.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I don't know...Perhaps as a boy, Norman secretly watched his mother preparing for her nightly bath.

JANET LEIGH

Maybe there was a transom over the bathroom door?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Yes -- one he could access with a chair so long as he was stealthy.

JANET LEIGH

Well, a boy's first glimpse of a naked woman is usually his mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
You're the actor. You figure it out.

Tony flinches at Hitch's brusque response.

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

JANET LEIGH
Hitch, I have a question. Why is the hole
much larger on this side?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
All the better to see you at the greatest
possible angle my dear...

Janet simply steps up and presses her face to the hole. Hitch
studies her profile, quietly thrilled at her curiosity. Tony
hangs back, watching Hitch watching her...

JANET LEIGH
Wow. You really do your research, don't
you?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
It's just my Jesuit work ethic.

He takes a quick peek through the hole now too...then puts
the painting carefully back into place over it.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (PRE-LAP) (CONT'D)
The truth is... I'm only happy when I'm
working...

INT. 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ANALYST'S VOICE (O.S.)

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

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

My mother? Yes.

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?

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-paneled wall in the background.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

You're a fine one to talk.

INT. WARDROBE FITTING ROOM, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

Hitchcock leads Janet to a row of brassieres, all laid out for inspection. They are all white with recognizable labels: Berlei, Triumph, Marks & Spencer. He picks out one of them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

You will be wearing a white bra like this
for the opening scene on the bed. And
then after you've stolen the money...

They move on to a second row of brassieres - all dark.

JANET LEIGH

I switch to one of these.

He nods, correct. She moves over to a mannequin displaying
the iconic jet black brassiere.

RITA RIGGS

Are you sure you don't want to look at
something a little more elegant?

HITCHCOCK

(sharp)

No. They have to look like they were
bought at Sears and Roebuck. I want every
woman in the audience to look up at Janet
having sex with John Gavin and think,
'that could be me'.

Janet reads the label. It's "Maidenform."

JANET

This is the brand I wear.

Hitch digests the information and turns to Rita.

HITCHCOCK

We're ready for a fitting.

As Rita starts to measure Janet's chest, Hitchcock lifts his
hands and 'frames' her...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (V.O. PRE-LAP)

We travel across the rooftops of downtown
Phoenix and finally, through the heat,
pick out a certain hotel window...

INT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

Close on Hitchcock's FRAMING HANDS as they now travel up to
an open window with blinds half down...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

We go under the blinds and match dissolve
into the room itself...

INT. SOUNDSTAGE, BEDROOM SET - LATER

HITCHCOCK'S HANDS have now become THE CAMERA, recording the scene already underway and now watched by HITCHCOCK, his DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY and CREW from across the stage...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (V.O.)
We pan over and discover John and Janet
on the bed.

...the camera moves to Janet and John making out on the bed.
It's serious stuff.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
She'll be wearing only her undergarments
and a large glow of satisfaction...

JANET smiles up at John contentedly.

ON HITCH

watching from his directing chair. Peggy stands next to him.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Cut.

PEGGY
Good luck getting this one past the
censor.

EXT. STUDIO GATES, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

Alma drives the gleaming black Cadillac through the UNIVERSAL GATES and pulls up to the production office outside the stage.

EXT. HITCHCOCK OFFICE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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' CADILLAC.

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 OFFICE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

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.

As she makes a few more changes to the schedule. Alma turns to Peggy whose face tightens as she continues reading. 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. HITCHCOCK OFFICE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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 Cadillac.

ALMA

Whit.

WHITFIELD COOK

Where have you been hiding yourself?

ALMA

I've been doing the revisions on...

She points to the PSYCHO HOUSE on the ridge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

WHITFIELD COOK

Psycho.

(then)

And how is the old boy?

ALMA

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

WHITFIELD COOK

And you? How are you?

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.

He looks at her a moment.

WHITFIELD COOK

I've got a better idea.

He steps closer.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

Why don't we drive out to Santa Barbara? We'll have Emilio fry up those juicy steaks we like at El Encanto.

He playfully tugs at her sleeve.

WHITFIELD COOK (CONT'D)

No shoptalk ... No silly magazine articles...just a wonderful meal...

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. HITCHCOCK OFFICE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

But Hitch doesn't move.

A.D. HILTON GREEN
Mr. Hitchcock?

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, FOYER - DAY

ALMA enters the silent, empty house smiling to herself. She walks through to -

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

- 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
No. Actually, I'm back sooner than I expected.

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

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Would you like a cocktail?

He heads for the liquor cabinet.

ALMA
No.
(he starts to head off)
And you shouldn't either.

Hitchcock stops. Pulls out a CELERY STICK from one of the bags and bites it.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Those haven't been washed yet.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
(chewing)
I don't care.
(then)
I was filming all day with John Gavin -- a good-looking chap but, really, plywood is more expressive. His love scene with Janet may be most horrifying thing in the picture.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Even your friend Whitfield Cook would be better in the scene.

ALMA
You should tell Whit that. 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. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

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

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Maybe I was too dismissive about your friend Whitfield's 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, UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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

Janet emotes for Hitchcock's CAMERA while "driving" a PARTIAL CAR, being rocked by STAGE HANDS.

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 (CONT'D)

You could return the money secretly, but what would be the point?

He wipes his brow, getting more intense...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

You, Marion Crane. The prim and proper girl who's always been so tight and respectable. So perfect and untouchable. Well, they know all about your dirty little secret, don't they? Your messy, sticky lunchtime trysts. Yes, your boss Mr. Lowery could even *smell* the sex on you--

SUDDENLY THE REAR SCREEN film breaks and a frame burns.

It's a good thing because Janet is starting to look a little uncomfortable -- was that meant to be funny? As technicians yell and hustle, Hitchcock turns to Peggy --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Circle that.

INT. JANET LEIGH'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

As Janet gets changed, Vera hangs up her frumpy coat on a rack, looking over a little enviously at Janet's good girl/bad girl underwear hanging nearby.

VERA MILES

Have you talked to him much about your personal life?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

That may well be true but it doesn't bother Janet.

JANET LEIGH

Compared to Orson Welles, he's a sweetheart.

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

(whispers)

See? He's always watching.

They laugh nervously.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - SAME TIME

Alma comes in from her gardening, and settles on the sofa with a cup of tea, 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. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, 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 HOUSE, 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. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - SAME TIME

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

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He 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 HOUSE, STUDY - 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)

Well, I think that sounds like a fabulous
idea. We'll have a late lunch. I'll make
the reservation for one thirty.

ALMA

What would I do without you?

WHITFIELD COOK

Till then, bye.

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

ALMA

(laughing)

What did you forget now?

INT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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. The set is suddenly a cacophony of noise and chaos.

A PR FLACK appears --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

PR FLACK

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

Hitch brushes past him to find another route but more grips
are moving a ladder. He turns, kicks a platter of healthy
snacks out of the way, only for an ARCLIGHT to swivel in his
face and blind him.

PEGGY

Are you okay? You've gone very pale.

Peggy's face suddenly comes into focus.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

PEGGY

It's not even three.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Give me the key!

He snatches it and pushes past her, leaving her flat.

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

HITCH exits the soundstage doors, 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...

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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

Unlike the last five Martin and Lewis
pictures you're all so proud of.

He slams the door in Balaban's startled face.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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.

He takes the key and opens the liquor cabinet ignoring the
INSISTENT KNOCKING at the door --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

(on phone)

Yes, it's Alfred Hitchcock in Hollywood,
California, Jean-Claude. I need three
pounds of *foie gras* sent on the next
flight out.

(then)

That's correct. Three.

He pours himself five fingers of scotch.

EXT. PACIFIC COAST HIGHWAY - DAY

A majestic view of the coastline as Whitfield Cook's Cream
MERCEDES 190CL, zooms along, top down. Alma wears white-
rimmed sunglasses and a head scarf.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Whitfield, in true Hitchcock leading man style, has the perfect amount of wind blowing through his hair.

WHITFIELD COOK

Those steaks haven't changed at all, have they?

ALMA

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

She takes in the sparkling scenery whipping past.

ALMA (CONT'D)

Whit, where are we going? You still haven't told me.

WHITFIELD COOK

I have a little surprise.

ALMA

A surprise. How fun.

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

EXT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

Hitch stands in the parking lot tapping his foot impatiently near the parked Ford Fairlaine police car used in 'PSYCHO'. Janet watches him, sitting behind the wheel of her VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE. After a moment she toots her horn and drives up.

JANET LEIGH

What happened to your driver?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I've been asking myself the same thing.

She smiles.

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 wedged uncomfortably into his seat.

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".)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

May I?

JANET LEIGH

Help yourself.

(letting him in on it)

I pinched them from Tony's dressing room.

He takes one and chews it curiously.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

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, my dear.

He's so deadpan but now there's no way to tell if he's joking or not. She puts the car into gear, sensing his despair.

EXT. SANTA BARBARA BEACH - DAY

TWO PAIRS OF FEET

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

nesting in the sand. Alma and Whit sit out watching the surf. 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)

Van Gogh wasn't exactly a walk in the park either.

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

Looks nice. Terrific location. 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. HITCHCOCK HOUSE - DAY

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

INSIDE THE CAR

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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?

ON JANET

As she looks across and sees the lonely abandoned little boy just sitting there...

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.

ALMA

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, FOYER - DAY

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

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, 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. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, 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.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT (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 HOUSE, 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.

GEIN steps out of the shadows and puts a comforting hand on Hitch's shoulder.

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

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, DINING ROOM - DAY

Hitch and Alma sit at the table having lunch. Alma eats a pork chop while Hitch defiantly nibbles at his healthy salad. He has a nice big glass of red wine which Alma ignores.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

So I read your finished treatment. "Taxi to -- " Where was it?

ALMA

Dubrovnik.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

That's it. Dubrovnik. Care to hear my opinion?

ALMA

Yes. Naturally.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

There's no other way of saying it. It's stillborn. Dead in the water.

Alma blinks, unable to hide her shock.

ALMA

How so?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

(with mock compassion)

The plot's a muddle. Some of the jokes are awfully like things we already did better hundreds of years ago in *The Lady Vanishes*. And your villain is weak. But the biggest failure is the relationship between the hero and heroine.

He picks up a radish and bites into it.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

If you weren't so smitten with your friend Whitfield cook you'd probably see that.

Alma is entirely stunned. Hitchcock has delivered the killer blow he intended. He gets up and goes over to the garden door.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

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

As he steps out into the garden --

ALMA

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

EXT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

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. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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.

SET HAND

Tell the boss we're ready.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

Peggy and A.D. Hilton Green exchange a glance as Hitchcock paces up and down in the corridor, eager to get to work.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Neither woman looks convinced but they proceed with blind faith.

JANET LEIGH

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

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 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 why don't we 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 desire.

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

INT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - MOTEL SHOWER SET - DAY

Janet nervously removes her bathrobe and heads toward the MOCK SHOWER STALL.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Good morning.

He takes her hand and guides her into position.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

As I explained earlier, this scene will be made up of many shots from Mr. Bass's boards. A series of looks - actions...

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Well, you're the professional. You'll
know how to do it.

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.

Saul Bass comes over with his boards and Hitch and he discuss the planned shot a moment.

FIRST A.D. HILTON GREEN
Tony's stunt double is ready.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Ah. There's our murderess.

Into frame steps Anthony Perkins' FEMALE STUNT 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)
(to Janet)
Are you ready for our little bloodbath?

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

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

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
My mother used to say the same thing.
(then)
Let's go for a take. Quiet everyone.

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)
Cut. 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. More angry. You are possessed with
unbridled homicidal rage.
(leaping up)
Cut. Cut camera.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

He 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? I'm older than anyone on this stage and I'm still standing.

Everyone falls silent, unsure how to respond. Hitchcock HOLDS OUT HIS HAND.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)
Give me the knife.

Margo places the knife in Hitchcock's palm.

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

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

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

Print. We've got it.

He exits quickly.

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

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE - UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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, fumbling for a cup.

Ed steps forward and pours him some water, pats his shoulder.

ED GEIN

You just can't keep this stuff bottled up.

But before Hitch can drink it he crashes to the floor.

EXT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE - UNIVERSAL REVUE - SAME TIME

Peggy and Perkins to react to the noise...

HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE - UNIVERSAL REVUE - SAME TIME

They come through the door to see Hitch lying on the floor. He looks like he's dead.

PEGGY

Oh God...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Peggy rushes forward to help. Perkins just stands and stares, as if paralysed in some Freudian nightmare.

A TELEPHONE

starts to ring.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE, SANTA BARBARA - 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.

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, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

Peggy grips the phone, her face full of concern.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 floor. A compress over his forehead. His head lolls to one side as he slips in and out of consciousness...

FADE TO BLACK.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

Disarray on the set.

MARTIN BALSAM watches as SAUL BASS, cameraman JACK RUSSELL and A.D. HILTON GREEN argue about the best way to proceed with the staircase sequence. Hitch is conspicuous by his absence.

As they bicker we find Tony Perkins off to one side, sitting in his Mrs. Bates costume, unable to cope. He puts the wig back on his head. There, that feels better...

Balsam's finally had it with all the arguing. He walks off past Peggy who's arriving with the PHONE.

MARTIN BALSAM

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

Peggy hands Hilton the phone.

PEGGY

Hilton. I have Mr. Hitchcock for you.

She gives him a warning look. "Watch out. He's in a terrible mood." He waves away her concern. It can't be that bad.

HILTON GREEN

Hey there, Hitch. We're still working on it.

(looking over at the continuing argument)

Everyone misses you.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I've told Peggy and now I'm going to tell you. You have to get this sequence shot today. What's the hold up?

HILTON GREEN

We tried it ten different ways and it looks terrible. Why don't we use inserts?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

No. It has to be a high angle. You'll tip off the big surprise! Just get the process shot.

Hitch slams down the phone.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - CONTINUOUS

ON HILTON

Still clutching the phone, a little nonplussed. Peggy gives him a look: "What did I tell you."

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, BEDROOM - SAME TIME

Alma removes the phone from Hitch's grasp. Touches his forehead.

ALMA

No more phone calls. You're burning up.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

Hitch swings his legs out of the bed.

ALMA

Where do you think you're going?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

To the set. We can't afford to lose any more time. Two more days of this and the whole production goes under.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

ALMA
Under the blankets. Now.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

Crew members sit around eating donuts. Assistant director Hilton Green and cameraman Jack Russell are still arguing over the mechanics of the shot with more crew members joining in. It's near pandemonium.

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.

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
One seventy three.

ALMA
Storyboards?

Peggy hands the boards to Alma. She and Hilton quickly review the boards.

ALMA (CONT'D)
Start with the overhead. We'll cut before the fall. Then we'll put Martin in a chair under the camera.

Hilton looks at Russell. Perfect. He sets ANTHONY PERKINS in his dress into place.

ALMA (CONT'D)
(to the cameraman)
And that lens should be a thirty-five.

Peggy mouths Alma a silent "THANK YOU" for restoring order.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY

Hitchcock lies in bed, tossing and turning, the fever only making his thoughts darker and more obsessive.

ED GEIN (O.S.)
You forgot to look in the bathroom.

Hitch notices the SHADOWY FIGURE standing at the end of his bed.

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

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

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.

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

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

ED GEIN
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.

OMITTED

INT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - SAME TIME

Alma spots the towering figure of Balaban stride onto the stage accompanied by a MAN in a cardigan.

ALMA

Barney.

He sees her and bristles, clearly surprised to see her there.

BARNEY BALABAN

Alma.

Alma takes in Balaban's companion, and the viewfinder round his neck.

BARNEY

You know David Kirkpatrick. He's working on Jerry Lewis' next picture.

She does. They nod politely -- then stand there.

BARNEY (CONT'D)

So he's free to help...

(a sly smile)

if you need it...

Silence. Just the bustle of crew members in the background.

ALMA

That won't be necessary.

BARNEY

But you're nearly three days behind.

He takes a step towards Hitch's empty chair, but Alma moves to block his path. It may be a small gesture, but it's highly charged.

Barney stares down at her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BARNEY BALABAN

Alma. We both know what kind of film this is.

(then, closer)

The smart thing to do would be to help Hitch finish it.

ALMA

Thank you for your concern, Barney.

She moves closer to him, holding his gaze, not bending one bit...

ALMA (CONT'D)

But on a Hitchcock picture, there is only one director.

The anger flashes on his face as she faces him down, the entire crew behind her now, holding firm...

EXT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

Balaban, incensed, leaves the stage with Kirkpatrick. Alma steps out into the sunlight not far behind them. As she watches them leave, she lets out a breath.

A voice calls out to her --

WOMAN'S VOICE

Mrs. Hitchcock?

She turns to see Janet walking over in Capri pants and a sleeveless top. She's carrying an elegantly wrapped package.

JANET

I hope you don't mind. I heard Hitch was sick so I got him a little something.

She hands Alma the gift. A bag of candy corn tied with a ribbon.

ALMA

That's kind of you.

JANET

Well, he's been very considerate with me.

(a beat)

I haven't always had that from my directors.

ALMA

Janet, you've been very... professional. It hasn't gone unappreciated.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Alma takes in Janet's unaffected natural beauty -- and her sincerity.

She can't help but notice the second glances Janet is provoking from passers-by now...

She's an impossible rival for any woman.

BEETHOVEN'S 3RD SYMPHONY, 'EROICA'

Blares deafeningly...

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, BEDROOM - DAY

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

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 two 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA

Alright, what's this about?

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.

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 waste of time.

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 been doing?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Then why are you spending all hours of the day and night with some overage, talentless mamma's boy?

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.

ALMA

Full support? We've mortgaged our house. My house.

Alma's eyes flash with unaccustomed hurt and fury.

ALMA (CONT'D)

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. And the first time you show the film, it will be my notes that you want. I celebrate with you if the reviews are good and I cry for you if they are not. I host your parties and put up with those fantasy romances with your leading ladies. And when you're out promoting this film 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)

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.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ALMA (CONT'D)

And even though that takes absolutely nothing away from you, please consider this a reminder: I am your wife, Alma Reville, not one of the contract blondes you badger and torment with 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, UNIVERSAL REVUE - DAY

ON HITCH

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 sits in front of the mirror and unties her own hair.

VERA MILES

Free at last.

Rita collects Vera's detested wardrobe to take back to wardrobe.

VERA MILES (CONT'D)

Thanks Rita.

Vera rubs cold cream into her face to remove her make-up. In the mirror, she sees Hitch in the doorway as Rita squeezes past him on her way out.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VERA MILES (CONT'D)
(wiping off her make-up
with a Kleenex)
Hello Hitch.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Well, Vera. You always make it look so
easy.

VERA MILES
Oh, 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 *au revoir*...

Hitch comes and stands behind her chair, gazing at her in the
mirror.

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

She considers the question and the man asking it, sensing
something different about him now. She continues wiping off
her make-up.

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 a moment.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
There was a time when I thought I
understood you so completely --
understood women....

Hitch gives a very slight bow, touches her on the shoulder,
then leaves. Vera watches him go, struck by his rare show of
vulnerability.

EXT. BEACH HOUSE, SANTA BARBARA - 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.

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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

Oh, 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, PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - 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.

EXT. SCREENING ROOM, PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - 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. I'm recommending you cut the shower scene entirely.

Hitchcock is livid but holds his tongue.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

Hitch just stands there.

LEW WASSERMAN (CONT'D)

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.

Still, Hitch doesn't say a word.

LEW WASSERMAN (CONT'D)

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 KIM NOVAK-TYPE he spied on earlier outside, hand in hand and kissing her date.

LEW WASSERMAN (CONT'D)

More importantly, what does Alma think?

INT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, KITCHEN - 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?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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 HOUSE, STUDY - NIGHT

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.

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 HOUSE, BASEMENT - NIGHT

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

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.

FOOTSTEPS thunder above him. DOZENS OF OFFICERS are fanning out all over the house.

CAPTAIN SCHOEPHOERSTER (O.S.)

Jesus Christ.

Hitch watches as Gein just sits there and the sound of SHOCKED reactions and horrified GASPS continue above...

CAPTAIN SCHOEPHOERSTER (CONT'D)

I think we found his hiding spot.

ED GEIN

(sotto voce)

They can't go in there. That's my mother's room...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CAR HEADLIGHTS blast through the window and 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 (CONT'D)
They can't go in there!
(calling out)
That's my mother's room!!

Ed springs to his feet, screaming it out as he BOLTS UPSTAIRS and the pandemonium continues (o.s.)

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 HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - 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.

ANGLE ON 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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

Hitch sits there bereft in the lonely silence.

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

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. HITCHCOCK HOUSE - 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. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, KITCHEN - LATER

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, you
know.

She offers him one of the crackers.

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)

So 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 gives him a look ...

INT. EDITING ROOM - LATER

FILM HANGS EVERYWHERE IN BINS

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

ALMA

(first moviola)

Take thirty frames off the head...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

ALMA

(next moviola)

Only cut back to Janet once the car's already moving.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALMA

You imp. You got nudity in there.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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

INT. EDITING ROOM - NIGHT

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

GEORGE TOMASINI

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

INT. EDITING ROOM, CORRIDOR - DAY

Peggy stands with a pestering PR FLACK.

FLACK

How's it going in there with Mr. Herrmann?

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*...

INT. EDITING ROOM - SAME TIME

Bernard Herrmann is pressing his point hard with Hitchcock.

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. This isn't Vertigo, Bernie. This is different. The images have to work on their own.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.

OMITTED

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 Moviola.

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...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

It's getting there.

Alma turns to him and Hitch nods slightly. Was that the
tiniest acknowledgement that her instinct *may* have been
right?

INT. PRODUCTION CODE ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - DAY

ON SHURLOCK'S HUMORLESS FACE

Hitchcock sits opposite him at the big conference table.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK

I told you, I distinctly saw both the stabbing and the nudity. We're denying your seal, Mr. Hitchcock.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Would you mind if we had a word in private, Geoffrey?

Shurlock gestures his staff out. Hitch moves closer.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

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'd welcome your personal supervision on the set.

Shurlock is more flattered than he'd care to admit.

GEOFFREY SHURLOCK

My specifications?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

If only audiences could fully appreciate how tirelessly you work to help us entertain them while protecting them from filth and indecency.

Shurlock studies Hitchcock's sphinx-like expression.

INT. SOUNDSTAGE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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

I thought we were reshooting the scene.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

No need. The charade is over.

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

Not at all.

He offers his hand and she shakes it, determined to be professional to the end.

JANET LEIGH (CONT'D)

I just hope I was sufficiently loyal to the cause.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Worthy of a Purple Heart, my dear.

She leans in and gives him a peck on the cheek. A moment of unexpected heaven that leaves Hitch speechless.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

She walks away to her dressing room. Hitch watches as she steps inside and closes the door.

After a moment we hear a PIERCING SCREAM --

INT. JANET LEIGH'S DRESSING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Janet recoils at the sight of A MRS. BATES PROTOTYPE "PROP MASK" grinning lewdly from her chair, and wearing one of Janet's brassieres.

Hitchcock peeks inside as crew members come running.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

I hope you don't mind, I told Mrs. Bates she could have your dressing room.

ON JANET

She can't believe she's been caught out. She closes the door on everyone... and then after a moment SCREAMS AGAIN... but this time not out of shock.

INT. HITCHCOCK'S OFFICE, UNIVERSAL REVUE - 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. And no premiere. If we don't get word of mouth we're dead.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Then 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.

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...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (V.O.) (CONT'D)
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 NEW YORK THEATRE - FLASH FORWARD

A row of life-size HITCHCOCK STANDEES are carried in through
the door one by one. Posters are hung in the theatre lobby.
The letters hoisted up and hung on the marquee outside.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (V.O.)
"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. BOARD ROOM, PARAMOUNT STUDIOS - DAY

Now Barney Balaban is reading Hitchcock's publicity manual to
the board.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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."

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.

138 OMITTED

INT. LIMO - DAY

ON HITCH AND ALMA'S SILENT TENSE EXPRESSIONS as they drive through the frenetic madness that typifies Times Square, 1960.

EXT. NEW YORK THEATRE - DAY (LATER)

A DAZZLING MARQUEE for "ALFRED HITCHCOCK'S PSYCHO." The car pulls up. Hitch and Alma step out. There's a long line of people outside the theatre.

ALMA

Well, at least there are some people here.

But Hitch's nerves are hardly soothed. The people in line start to notice the Hitchcocks...is it really them?

PEGGY

Comes over to greet them with the THEATRE MANAGER.

PEGGY

We can go through the side entrance.

As the theatre manager ushers them through the side alley --

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THEATER MANAGER
Right this way, Mr. and Mrs. Hitchcock.

Hitchcock turns to Alma.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
Ready for the gallows?

INT. NEW YORK THEATRE, LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

The atmosphere is tense as people hurry to their seats. Lew greets them.

LEW WASSERMAN
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
Fine, darling. I'll save you a seat.

Lew escorts Alma and Peggy into the auditorium.

INT. NEW YORK THEATER, PROJECTION BOOTH - NIGHT

The soothing whir of the projector as Hitchcock stands next to it... but the sound of the audience below TITTING NERVOUSLY is anything but reassuring.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK
(under his breath)
But they're laughing too much.

He peers down through the tiny window but can't see a bloody thing.

INT. NEW YORK THEATRE, DOWNSTAIRS LOBBY - 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?

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.

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. NEW YORK THEATRE - LATER

Hitch, Alma and Peggy are led out into the foyer by the theatre manager. There are still SCREAMS in the theatre as the show continues.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Lew can be seen on the phone in the theatre manager's office in the background as Hitch, Alma and Peggy walk past the line of ticket buyers to get to the front doors. There is great excitement now as more and more people recognize the Hitchcocks...

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 who's not going to miss out on having his own moment with the crowd.

THEATER MANAGER

Mr. Hitchcock, what do I do now that my wife won't take a shower after seeing your movie?

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Have her dry-cleaned.

Laughter as Lew appears.

LEW WASSERMAN

I just got off the phone with Balaban. I couldn't resist telling him we're sold out for the next two weeks.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

What did he say?

LEW WASSERMAN

He said "Tell Hitch congratulations. A well deserved triumph as we always knew."

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

"As we always knew..."

The two friends a look.

PEGGY

Does this mean I can take the weekend off now?

Hitch playfully shrugs, "we'll see".

THEATRE MANAGER

I'm sorry, Mr. Hitchcock but there are photographers outside. They heard you were here.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The theatre manager ushers them towards the exit doors.

EXT. THEATRE - DAY (LATER)

A few photographers snap Hitch as he emerges and heads past the line of ticket buyers towards the waiting car. 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.

As the flashbulbs start to POP --

ALMA

This could be the biggest hit of your career, Alfred.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Our career, Alma.

He looks into her eyes with nothing but deep, intense gratitude and joy. As more flashbulbs pop --

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

I've realized I'll never be able to find a Hitchcock blonde as beautiful as you.

ALMA

You do realize I've been waiting decades to hear you say that.

He gives her a gentle peck.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

And that, madame, is why they call me "The Master of Suspense"...

He helps her into the car.

145 OMITTED

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

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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
with her folks to see 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; 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...

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.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

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 towards the exit doors.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Of course for me, it was just another "moo-vie."

As he strolls through the door --

EXT. HITCHCOCK HOUSE, GARDEN - DAY

-- and seamlessly appears in the beautifully tended gardens, as if having walked through a portal.

ALFRED HITCHCOCK

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 can't resist blowing a sadistic plume of smoke at the bird which promptly flies away. He gives the camera a final characteristically deadpan look...

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (CONT'D)

Good evening.

The distinctive THEME TUNE to his TV show starts up and Hitch toddles back up the front lawn and toward the terrace, where Alma can be seen laying out a delicious healthy lunch...

DISSOLVE TO:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

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.