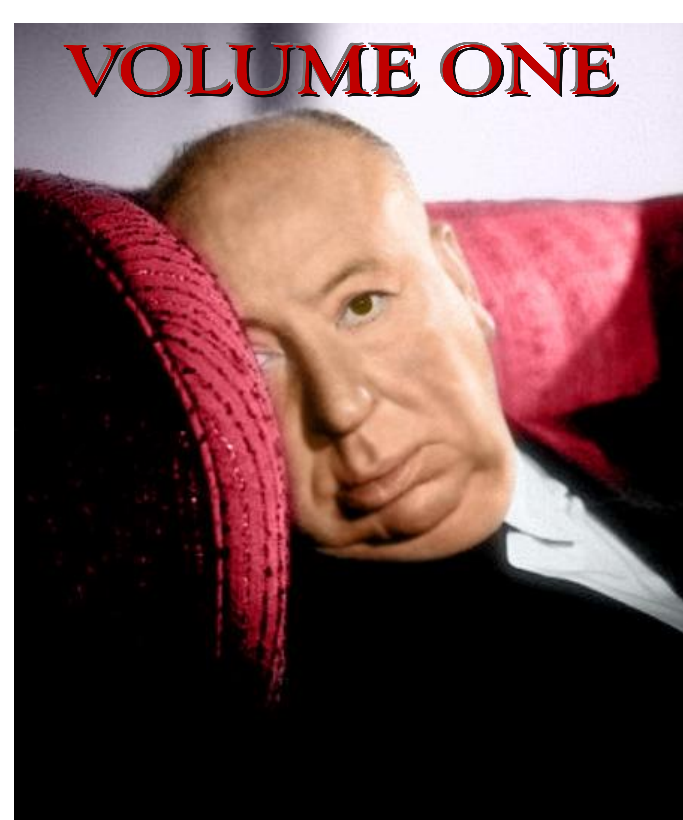
Nick Zegarac's

# THE Hollywood ART

# American Hitchcock




# American Hitchcock

the enduring cinematic legacy of Hollywood's undisputed 'master of suspense'

***"A good film is when the price of dinner, theater admission and the babysitter were worth it."***

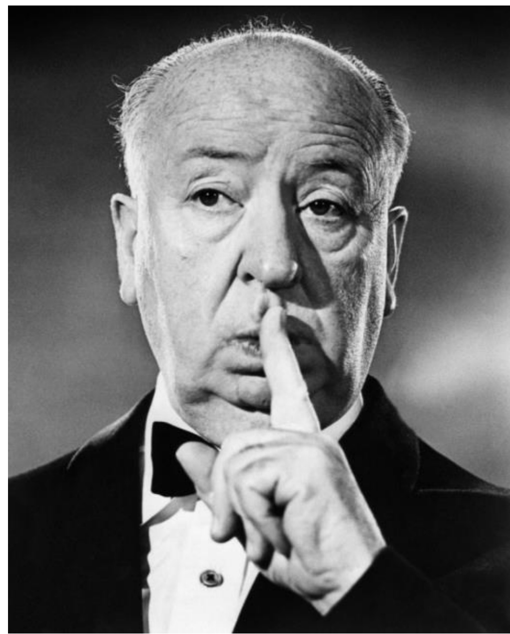
**– Alfred Hitchcock**

Two undisputed facts exemplified the filmic legacy of director Alfred Hitchcock; first - that he is, and remains, the master of suspense in 'pure cinema'; and second - that Hitchcock had his share of trying projects that – try as he might – never fully lived up to either his legacy or audience expectations. Yet, to even suggest that Hitchcock had a box office flop seems sacrilege, considering the overwhelming and unparalleled string of successes he created throughout his lucrative tenure in Hollywood.

There are those like film critic Leonard Maltin who would argue that Hitchcock never had an 'artistic' misfire; **Under Capricorn** (1949), **Jamaica Inn** (1939) **Torn Curtain** (1966) and **Topaz** (1969) arguably attesting to the contrary. Yet even these have their points of interest and, at least to some extent, cinematic merit. However, to say that Alfred Hitchcock made the occasional 'bad' movie is not the same as to stain his entire palette of creativity with a whitewash of unwarranted scrutiny. It merely suggests an honest critique through further reflection.

Mainly for concision, Hitchcock's tenure in British films has been excluded from the article you are about to read. His years with Lasky and the Gainsborough Studios in England yielded some miraculous early works, **The 39 Steps** (1935) and **The Lady Vanishes** (1938) among them. However, this early tenure is beyond the scope and focus of this article and therefore will remain conspicuously absent for another place and time.

It is important, however, to bear witness to the fact that Hitchcock's British period could easily fill as much space in print as the article at hand. Perhaps, because so much of the director's early works have been improperly preserved and even less frequently presented to the public abroad – particularly in North America - Hitchcock's British period is widely underappreciated or perhaps even forgotten; his American tenure having eclipsed it. This is indeed a shame; since a goodly number of the artistic precepts that Hitchcock would go on to establish with more refined competency throughout the late 1940s and most certainly the fifties derive their impetus from his experimentations during this beginner's period. Yet it remains Hitchcock's almost perverse intuition that has given the public the proverbial 'good scare' so consistently.

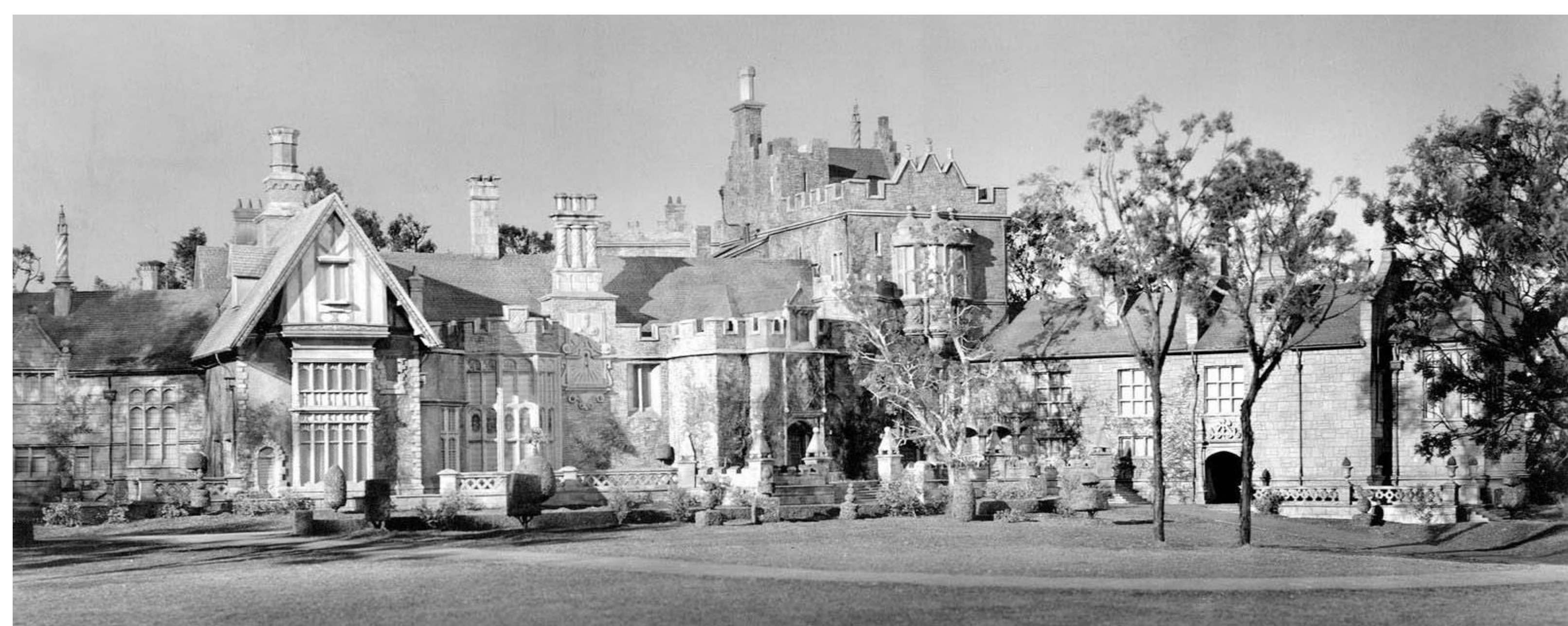


Previous page (top): looking characteristically lugubrious in this ‘publicity still’ from his tenure at Paramount in the mid-1950s. Like Cary Grant, Hitchcock worked so diligently at crafting his public persona – that of a slightly perverse ‘grandfatherly’ type – that when one stops to think of him now the inevitable and fabled cliché of the wicked prankster is immediately and erroneously conjured to mind rather than the man. In private, Hitchcock was a doting husband and father to his daughter Pat (pictured at bottom with wife Alma Reville inside the Selznick International commissary in 1946), and later a much beloved grandfather to Pat’s daughter, Mary Stone. In a 2002 interview Stone reflected on a moment from her college years when she decided to write a term paper on her grandfather’s career. When the paper was returned to Stone with a c+ grade Hitchcock rather apologetically told her*, “Well I guess that’s the best I can do.”* (Middle): a 1929 studio portrait taken in England. Once again, the iconography of Hitchcock’s American period, that of the heavy-set and jowl-cheeked MC bookending episodes of ‘Alfred Hitchcock Presents’ is so ingrained in our collective consciousness that any suggestion of Hitchcock as a younger man seems incongruous at best, and quite out of character when, in fact, the opposite is true. The presence of the screen was *the* character – not the other way around.

This page (left): at his heaviest in 1933. Hitchcock’s rotund girth tipped the scales at 300 lbs. in 1940, the year he embarked upon his American debut. Under a doctor’s care Hitchcock would shed over a hundred pounds by 1949, even poking fun at his own image in 1944’s Lifeboat where his famous portly image is depicted as the ‘before’ in a newspaper ad advertising a weight loss miracle drug. But the director’s relationship with food remained problematic throughout his life. Hitchcock had a natural aversion to eggs and infrequently would interject scenes into his movies where a character is seen brutalizing them, perhaps most famously when Jessie Royce Landis puts out her cigarette butt in a yolk in 1955’s To Catch a Thief. (middle): calling for a moment of silence during one of his prologues to Alfred Hitchcock Presents. In the mid-1950s Hitchcock was one of the biggest names in the industry to embrace TV as a viable medium to advance his own popularity and help promote subsequent feature films. The series occasionally lapsed into producing truncated and watered down skits loosely based on Hitchcock’s own past movie successes. Hitchcock rarely directed episodes, but served as the show’s master of ceremonies. The series ran from 1955 to 1962. (Right): with Tippi Hedren and a fine feathered friend before production on The Birds (1963) was about to commence. Since Grace Kelly’s retirement from the movies Hitchcock had been in search of a platinum blonde successor and first spotted Hedren in a television commercial. A New York model, Hedren came to Hollywood at Hitchcock’s behest.

Hitch’, as those of us who never personally knew the man remain particularly fond of referring to him as, frequently divulged his ‘secrets’ for creating suspenseful artistry. As such he not only gave us the visual examples – the movies – to illustrate and punctuate his points, but he also provided the tools by which inclined individuals could master his techniques. Many have tried to trump the master at his own game, both during and since Hitchcock’s time. Few have rivaled Hitchcock’s mastery. Arguably, none have surpassed it. For to be like Hitchcock today somehow means to be less of one’s self – the aping of Hitch’s craftsmanship too easily identifiable on the screen, yet never somehow going beyond the challenge and his tricks of the trade. In point of fact, establishing a ‘Hitchcockian’ flair in movies today is almost impossible. Thus Alfred Hitchcock has remained an excruciatingly difficult act to follow.

Over the years almost as much has been written about Hitchcock - the man - as about his movies; a good many stories and reflections made by those who worked in the master’s shadow and, arguably, knew him best, but also too many derived from more than a handful of rumors – quietly spread and later solidified as part of the Hitchcock mystique by other ‘dubious sources’. With the passage of time these latter tales about Hitchcock’s fetishisms, coupled with the public’s ability to believe that the master of suspense was equally as disturbed and dark an individual at home, have marred and tarnished the reputation of the man apart from his art. Therefore, to set the record straight before proceeding to the filmic examples of the master at work, it becomes necessary to dispel a few choice and lingering myths about Hitchcock in private life.



(Previous pages): *"Last night I dreamed I went to Manderly again…"* so begins Joan Fontaine's narration as the nameless, second Mrs. DeWinter in Hitchcock's American debut, **Rebecca** (1940). The girl first meets her future husband, Maxim (Lawrence Olivier) on the craggy cliffs overlooking the sea, he about to commit suicide. Her startle prevents the inevitable. Their first 'cute meet' is interrupted by Hitchcock's interpolated sinister mood of foreboding, their second by the venial Edith Van Hopper (Florence Bates) to whom the girl is a paid companion and social secretary. *"I didn't know companionship could be bought,"* Maxim tells the girl. Their time spent in Monte Carlo offers a brief reprieve before the mysteries of Rebecca and Manderly begin to intrude.

Arriving home, Maxim and his new bride greet the servants, the girl introduced to the housekeeper Mrs. Danvers (Judith Anderson) who will continue to hover like a gargoyle and intrude upon any chance the couple has for lasting happiness. After submarining the girl's attempt to throw the perfect costume ball, by suggesting a choice of attire worn by the late Rebecca only a year earlier, and thereby inciting Maxim's conflicted wrath, Danvers insidiously proceeds to encourage the overwrought young miss to contemplate suicide by throwing herself from an upstairs window.

Instead, she succeeds in flinging the couple into each other's arms, their brief moment of happiness once again intruded upon, this time by the discovery of Rebecca's body in a sunken wreck off Manderly's coast. Colonel Julian (C. Aubrey Smith) suggest to Maxim that he has nothing to worry about, but during the inquest Rebecca's lover, Jack Favell (George Sanders) attempts to cast aspersions and offer a possible motive for Maxim wanting his first wife dead – she was going to have another man's baby.

The investigation moves to a doctor's office in London where the truth is revealed. Rebecca had cancer, the disease already in its advanced stages by the time she accidentally fell on a piece of ship's tackle at the cottage by the sea. Cleared of any wrong doing at the official inquest, Maxim hurries home, only to discover that Mrs. Danvers has set fire to his beloved ancestral home, hoping to murder the second Mrs. DeWinter in the blaze. Instead, the girl escapes and Danvers is entombed in Rebecca's bedroom, the flames devouring all of the past along with her.

Besides all of the aforementioned, **Rebecca**'s supporting cast also features exemplary performances from Reginald Deny (as Maxim's loyal property manager), George Sanders (as Rebecca's lover, Jack Favell – masquerading as her cousin), C. Aubrey Smith (as Maxim's devoted friend, Colonel Julian) and Gladys Cooper and Nigel Bruce (as Maxim's sister and brother-in-law).

(This page above): the exterior of Manderly, the Cornwall estate belonging to the DeWinters was a skillfully built miniature shot mostly in long shot with matted in trees and a painted sky as its backdrop. This publicity still of the entire miniature never appears in the film, the model partially concealed by matte paintings of trees and other foreground miniatures mimicking shrubbery, the effect further enhanced by mood fog and the occasional effects rain storm to conceal its obviousness. Manderly's interiors were a combination of full scale sets and matte paintings to suggest vaulted ceilings. (Right above): Joan Fontaine attempts to impress Hitchcock on the set. Hitch' deliberately reserved his praise of Fontaine to keep the actress unsettled and feeling slightly insecure because it also helped keep her in character.

(Right): a publicity photo of the troubled couple, his lazy gaze met by a queer immediacy in hers. (Right bottom): one of the many lobby cards used to market the film, the artwork of an imperious mannequin-esque female meant to suggest the contents of the mysterious 'Rebecca' whom we never see in the film. Briefly Selznick toyed with the idea of a flashback to show the past life of Maxim DeWinter and his first wife. Thankfully, Hitchcock's suggestion of keeping only Rebecca's memory alive in the final edit prevailed. So too did Hitchcock managed to quash Selznick's fleeting thoughts of naming the second Mrs. DeWinter – who is never referred to by any name in the novel.

(This page): Anatomy of a Hitchcockian-styled romance; she's a psychiatrist; he doesn't know who he is. Gregory Peck and Ingrid Bergman's love affair is **Spellbound** (1945) but progresses despite seemingly insurmountable odds and a real mystery involving a missing doctor, Anthony Edwardes. Peck's John Brown initially believed that he was Edwardes. But after Constance (Bergman) broke him of this notion his repressed memories became increasingly erratic and perhaps even life-threatening. She takes him back to the last place he can remember before the rest of his past life was eclipsed within the fog of his subconscious. And although the pair is successful at uncovering what really happened to Dr. Edwardes, all fingers point to Brown being his killer. The trial that convicts John only serves to fuel Constance's determination to get to the bottom of the real mystery – a search for the truth that leads her right back to the asylum and her mentor, Dr. Murchison (Leo G. Carroll). **Spellbound** remains an intriguing, if psychoanalytically flawed, masterpiece, briefly interrupted by a truly nightmarish *dream sequence* staged by Hitchcock and designed by Salvador Dali.

To be clear on a quotation that continues to falsely resonate, Hitchcock never said '*actors are cattle'*. His truest intent, and one made with tongue firmly in cheek, was that 'actors' should be treated 'like cattle'; a fine line of distinction perhaps. After all, Hitchcock was perfectionist. Furthermore, when he latched on to a talent as dedicated as his own he retained the deepest admiration and respect for this person and chose to use them over and over again in his film. The film side, of course, is that they too chose to reunite with Hitchcock again and again; arguably doing the best work of their respective careers under his guiding tutelage. Cary Grant, Grace Kelly, Ingrid Bergman, James Stewart and Farley Granger – all personal favorites of Hitchcock's - have all gone on record as acknowledging the director's absolute genuineness towards them. But Hitchcock's camera remained absolute.

Once a sequence was mapped out – either in storyboard or more precisely in Hitchcock's own head – the actor was expected to fall in line with this concept and meet his marks without question. Those, like method actors Montgomery Clift and Paul Newman who debated or belabored the finer points of Hitchcock's decision-making process were not dealt with lightly. Nor were their suggestions on how to 'improve' the scene integrated into Hitchcock's own visualization of the final cut. Art, after all, is not made by committee – even movie art – but by the commitment of many given freedom to do their best under a singular guiding principle. But this in no way suggests that Hitchcock had no respect for actors.

Furthermore, rumors that Hitchcock's sense of humor bordered on sadism seem to be largely unfounded. True enough, Hitchcock enjoyed a good prank as much as the next man. He once told actor Bruce Dern on the set of **Family Plot** (1976)

(This page): the woman with a spurious past and the man with spurious intensions. Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman costarred together with Claude Rains in Hitchcock's most stylish espionage thriller from the 40s – Notorious (1946) a harrowing tale set mostly in a fictional Buenos Aires. Bergman is Alicia Huberman, the daughter of a Nazi spy who harbors no political convictions of her own, but is reluctantly coerced into partaking in an FBI sting operation to snuff out Nazi sympathizers plotting a major coup in South America.

Alicia's contact is T.R. Devlin (Grant), a roguishly handsome, but cold-hearted son of a bitch who allows the only woman he has ever loved to prostitute herself into a marriage to her father's one-time associate, Alex Sebastian (Rains). The rouse is eventually discovered by Sebastian who, together with his mother, insidiously plots to slowly poison Alicia, thereby making her death look like an accident. The film also costarred Louis Calhern as Paul Prescott, Devlin's superior. (Top left): Hitchcock converses with his two stars on the bungalow set. Bergman is not yet dressed in the outfit she will wear in the scene; a low cut zebra print. (Top right): Alicia attempts to quell her husband's suspicions of a mutual attraction between her and Devlin, whom she passes off as an old acquaintance. (Left): "You can add Sebastian to my list of playmates," Alicia tells Devlin during a planned rendezvous at the race track. Earlier at a café Alicia had challenge Devlin's opinion of her, "I know what you're thinking," she tells him, "Once a tramp, always a tramp." In seducing Sebastian as part of her 'job' for the government, Dev's worst fears about Alicia seem to have been confirmed.

(Below left): Publicity stills for moments that never occur in the final cut; Devlin visits with Alex and Alicia and actress Aileen Carlyle who will later appear as a flirtatious party guest at Sebastian's home. (Bottom): Paul loans Alicia some rented jewels to add a touch of class during her first rendezvous at Sebastian's home. In this still, Devlin seems indifferent. In the movie he is practically incensed.

that he always wished to co-star legendary feuding sisters, Olivia De Havilland and Joan Fontaine in a single sequence without informing either of the other's presence beforehand; presumably relishing the inevitable fireworks that would ensue. Yet, as cold-blooded as it sounds – at least superficially and on the surface - Hitchcock never dared attempt such a wicked reunion - even to amuse his own fancy. Another story goes that in order to gauge the shock value of his audience Hitchcock had his crew frequently 'surprise' **Psycho** (1960) star, Janet Leigh by leaving various incarnations of 'mother' inside her dressing room. Depending on Leigh's response to the discovery, Hitch' chose the appropriate corpse that would appear in the final cut.

Occasionally Hitchcock's genuine respect for talent was tested. When Montgomery Clift informed Hitchcock that he did not believe his character would look in a particular direction during the filming of a pivotal sequence in **I Confess** (1953) Hitchcock bluntly informed Clift, *"Well you better, because that's where the camera will be!"* When Paul

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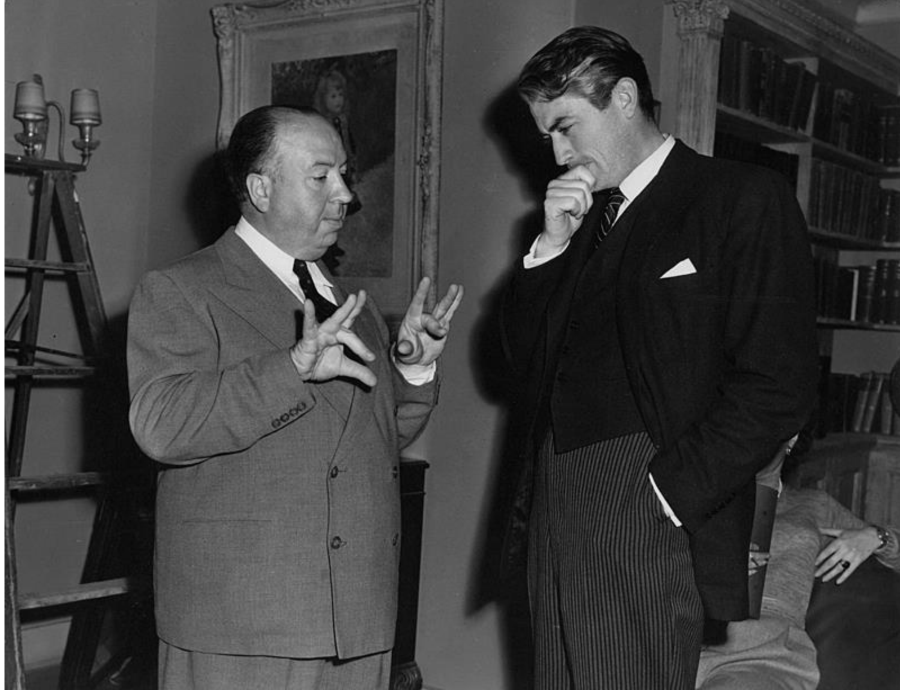
REPAIRS



(Previous page): *"Don't change Mr. Jones, I like you just as you are,"* Mr. Powers (Harry Davenport tells Johnny Jones (Joel McCrea) in **Foreign Correspondent** (1940). Before long, Jones will be plunged into a den of thieves helmed by Nazi sympathizer, Stephen Fisher (Herbert Marshall). Marshall's career was prolific and distinguished. He appeared in over 150 movies as everything from a devoted father, to a deft composer, to the imminent author Somerset Maugham – all convincingly with a wooden left leg. His real leg was amputated during WWI. Fisher's daughter, Carol (Laraine Day) becomes smitten with Jones early on, complicating matters for Fisher and his henchmen, Mr. Krug (Eduardo Cianelli) and Rowley (Edmund Gwenn) who attempts to push Jones off an observation tower, but falters and plummets to his own death instead.

Earlier, Jones had attempted an interview with international diplomat, Van Meer (Albert Basserman) in a taxi cab en route to the Savoy Hotel in London. Somewhere between the cloak room and the ballroom Van Meer is kidnapped, replaced by a double who is later resurfaces as a plant at a diplomatic conference only to be publicly assassinated to buy time for Fisher and his cronies who are attempting to drug and pump the real Van Meer for states secrets. In the penultimate moment Jones delivers a message of hope to the world as London endures the blitz.

This sequence was shot after Hitchcock had already left the project. McCrea's deliver of the lines is memorable, the speech going something like this: *"All that noise you hear isn't static - it's death, coming to London. You can hear the bombs falling on the streets and the homes. Don't tune me out, hang on a while - this is a big story, and you're part of it. It's too late to do anything here now except stand in the dark and let them come. Keep those lights burning, cover them with steel, ring them with guns, build a canopy of battleships and bombing planes around them. Hello, America, hang on to your lights: they're the only lights left in the world!"*

(This page): behind the scenes on the set of **The Paradine Case** (1947) Hitchcock's last movie for Selznick costarring Gregory Peck as an amorous barrister, Louis Jourdan as a love-mad chauffeur and Selznick's personal discovery, Valli, as the murderous Madeleina Paradine. Selznick wanted an epic. He got a tepid melodrama instead. Hitchcock's rough cut ran a little over three hours. After screening it, Selznick dispatched with the director's services for the last time and set about hacking together a story that ran a mere 116 minutes.

The final edit is awash with fascinating characters that are never quite given their due; some floating in and out of the narrative or leaving plot points entirely unresolved. Hitchcock was glad to be rid of Selznick. The feeling was hardly mutual. Selznick had reaped rich rewards by loaning out his most profitable asset to various studios including independent producer Walter Wanger and RKO.

(Top left): Hitch' goes through the motions with Peck who listens most intensely. Hitchcock thought all of his performers horrendously miscast, but worked diligently to will the production to life. Although everyone gave it their all, the resulting movie only comes to life in fits and sparks. (Bottom right): Hitchcock in foreground prepares for the penultimate court room drama that concludes the movie, surrounded by a sea of technicians and Louis Jourdan already pensively seated in the witness box. Behind the glamor there was undeniably a lot of work.

(Above): shooting on location in Santa Rosa for Hitchcock's first independent production, **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943), said to be Hitchcock's favorite movie. The film stars Joseph Cotten as a cold-blooded strangler of wealthy dowagers who, unbeknownst to his family, has come to his old home town to hide out from the police. Cotten was remarkably good at portraying menace beneath a veneer of cordial charm. The film also costars Teresa Wright and McDonald Carey, Henry Travers and Hume Cronyn. Introducing evil into the small homespun community unaccustomed to its insidious nature intrigued Hitchcock, who was more horrified when the owners of the house he had rented for his shoot decided to spruce up the place with new paint and shrubbery, all but ruining its original home town U.S.A. charm. Hitchcock's art director, John B. Goodman was promptly instructed to put everything back the way it was.

(Above right): four frames from Hitchcock's second most rare miscalculation – **Under Capricorn** (1949). The first had been **Jamaica Inn** (1939) made ten years earlier and the last movie Hitchcock made in England before coming to America. **Under Capricorn** is a period melodrama about a 'not so young' gentleman, Charles Adare (Michael Wilding) who returns home to New South Wales only to discover that a dear friend of his sister, Henrietta (Ingrid Bergman) is now the wife of a boorish elder statesman, Samson Flusky (Joseph Cotten). At first believing that their marriage has been one of convenience, Adare gradually comes to realize that the Flusky house harbors deep, dark secrets; first, that Henrietta is an alcoholic, and second, that she is responsible for a murder Samson took the rap for years earlier. Costume drama was not Hitchcock's forte. Worse, the screenplay cobbled together by James Bridie from a stage play by John Colton and Margaret Linden creaked like an old screen door, leaving Hitchcock no place to invest in his usual eerie touches to draw out its mood or atmosphere – a terrible misfire for all concerned.

Newman suggested a meeting to discuss his character's motivation on the set of **Torn Curtain** (1966) the actor was politely told that everything he needed to create his performance was already in the script. When Newman pressed the point about his character's motivations, Hitchcock adroitly shot back, *"It's your salary."* Yet these infrequently clashes of temperament did not translate to any lasting animosity between director and stars. In fact, on occasion they even paved the way for a bit of Hitchcock's own scathingly hilarious sense of innuendo. A more lighthearted incident involved a grip on the set of **Lifeboat** (1944) who went to his director with the concern about the film's star Tallulah Bankhead not wearing any underwear beneath her costume. Unnerved, Hitchcock assessed, *"I don't know whether that's a concern for wardrobe or hairdressing."*

A Time Magazine reporter on the set of **Rope** (1948) took notice of actor James Stewart's grumblings that '*the only thing around here that's been rehearsed is the camera*'. **Rope**, of course is one of Hitchcock's three filmic endeavors to shoot an entire movie within the confines of a single set. The challenge – or gimmick as some have chosen to regard it since – further exacerbated by Hitchcock's insistence to shoot the movie as though it were an uninterrupted rendition of Patrick Hamilton's stage play – the cameramen meticulously timed in their dollies and zooms; the set a giant cutaway with moving walls, windows and doors influx behind the scenes; the actors carefully placed within the frame and endlessly maneuvered merely to accommodate this constant reframing; and finally - the footage spliced together at ten minute intervals at the end of each reel with a zoom into someone's back or still frame at the splice to suggest continuity. Evidently, James Stewart recovered from his initial assessment, enough to respect Hitchcock's film-maker's prowess and to appear in three more of the director's best movies from the 1950s; **Rear Window** (1954), **The Man Who Knew Too Much** (1956) and **Vertigo** (1958).

Even before Alfred Hitchcock arrived in America he had already managed a minor coup in Hollywood – to market himself as his own trademark: one as easily identifiable as the films he created. Hitchcock's cameos – begun to help pad out crowd scenes as per budgetary restrictions in England – became legendary in Hollywood; and much looked forward to by audiences - almost as much as the movies themselves. Part of the allure was, of course, that one was never entirely certain where Hitchcock would turn up, either in silhouette, as part of a newspaper ad, or fully-formed, attempting to catch a crowded bus. But when Hitchcock segued from movies into television in the mid-1950s he took this 'brand name' with him; his droll weekly

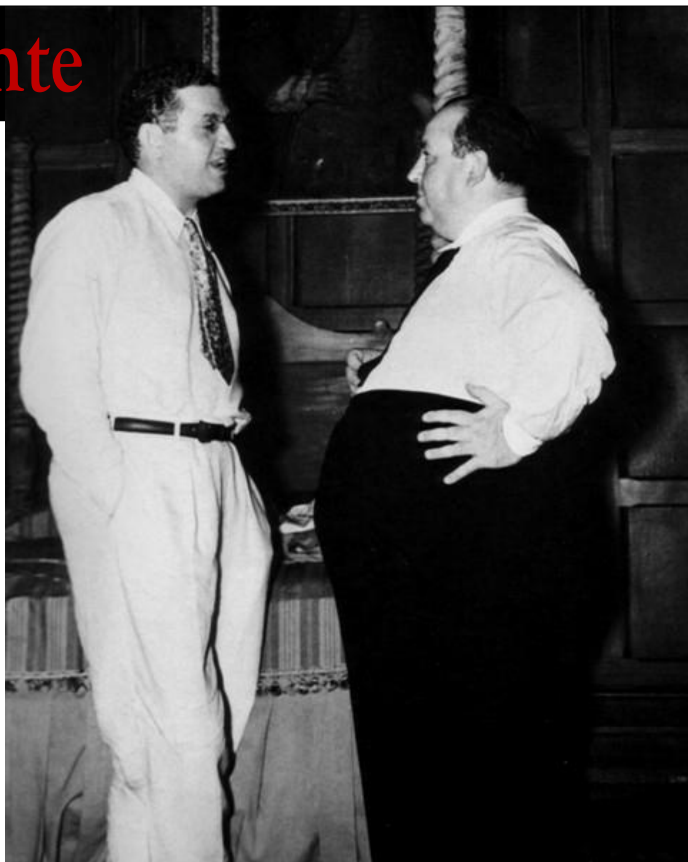
(Above): Robert Young as David and Carol Lombard as Ann pal around, come to despise each other, then fall hopelessly back in love in **Mr. and Mrs. Smith** (1941) – Hitchcock's mad stab at screwball romantic comedy. Scripted by Norman Krasna the movie plays more like a tepid remake of Leo McCarey's **The Awful Truth** (1937) than anything else; the madcap and her straight man butting heads and coming to terms. Ann asks the lethal question this time out – *"Would you still marry me today knowing what you know now?"* – to which he honestly replies, *"Probably not."* It's an answer Ann wasn't expecting to hear. When the couple discovers that legally they are not even married David proposes a second time only to have Ann turn him down. Payback? Wounded ego? Hurt feelings? Well, a little of all three. There's nothing inherently wrong with either the premise or Hitchcock's execution of the material. It's just that neither ever goes beyond the pedestrian. Not one of his better or better known movies and probably just as well.

introductions to '***Alfred Hitchcock Presents'*** cementing his portly stature and jowl-heavy visage as a touchstone of American pop culture.

For a 1954 Time Magazine article, an over-zealous reporter suggested to Hitchcock that he might want to diversify the type of movies he was making. Indeed, even today there remains this mythology about the master of suspense: that Hitchcock only made 'one type' of movie. He did not. Although most – if not all – of Hitchcock's movies share undeniable and easily identifiable traits and hallmarks of style and camera movement that one can choose to earmark, analyze and pick apart at will, the truth of the matter is that Hitchcock achieved artistry in everything from the intense family melodrama (**Shadow of a Doubt** 1943) to the slick and stylish romantic thriller (**To Catch A Thief** 1956); from the wickedly perverse screwball comedy (**The Trouble With Harry** 1955) and the suspense/action movie (**North By Northwest** 1959) to his forays into the horror genre (**Psycho** 1960, and, **The Birds** 1963). In response to the aforementioned reporter's query, and without flinching, Hitchcock shrugged his shoulders and politely replied *"If I made Cinderella everyone would be looking for the body in the coach."*

# the Anglo-American Detente

***"There is no terror in a bang, only in the anticipation of it."***
**– Alfred Hitchcock**



The arrival of Hitchcock in Hollywood began innocently enough with a personal invitation from producer David O. Selznick to work on the story of the ill-fated Titanic for Selznick Pictures. Arguably, Selznick had zero interest in this project, but he knew that it was of considerable interest to Hitchcock. Installed in a comfortable bungalow in Hollywood but with precious little to do, Hitchcock's dismay began to mount, but was somewhat quelled when he and Selznick concurred on **Rebecca** (1940) as his foray into American movies. The author of the novel, Daphne du Maurier was not only greatly admired by Hitchcock; she was also a close personal friend.

To say Hitchcock was wholly unprepared for the omnipotent and intrusive way David Selznick ran his studio is gross understatement.

(Previous) Hitchcock and producer David O. Selznick on the set of **Rebecca** (1940). Selznick had the deepest admiration for what he considered his star director. The plaudits were a little one-sided. Hitchcock considered Selznick obtrusive, distracting and a damn nuisance. He had come from a director-driven medium in England to a producer controlled autocracy. Selznick's name was above the title and it carried with it Selznick's own seal of approval, not given until a litany of memos had littered the floor of every soundstage at Selznick International, picking apart even the most minute detail. Selznick knew he could trust Hitchcock to make the right creative decisions but that did not stop him from making daily pilgrimages to the set. After the first month of shooting Hitchcock 'got wise' to Selznick's ritual – calling a halt to production and instead pretending to rehearse a scene until Selznick finally became bored with the whole process and left.

(This page above left): flanked by Selznick and Hitchcock, Joan Fontaine is all smiles at the 1941 Academy Awards. (Above right): from first to last. **The Paradine Case** marked the official end of Hitchcock's contract with Selznick International. He considered it more interment than servitude. Hitchcock is seen here with the entire principle cast; from left, back row; Louis Jourdan next to Hitchcock, then Selznick, Charles Laughton, Charles Coburn, Gregory Peck; front row from left; Joan Tetzel, Ann Todd and Ethel Barrymore. Hitchcock and Laughton had worked together before on **Jamaica Inn** (1939); a film that nearly ruined their friendship and mutual respect for one another when Laughton – as that film's producer – began to give Hitchcock tips on how to direct both it and him in scenes. On **The Paradine Case** Laughton was just another ham and fell into line with Hitchcock's wishes.

(Right): Hitchcock's cameo in **The Paradine Case**, departing the train station with barrister Anthony Keane (Peck). Selznick thought Hitchcock's cameos incredibly bourgeois but allowed him the luxury. (Right): Ann Todd and Charles Laughton share a relaxed moment in between takes on the set. By all accounts the two were very good friends. In the film Laughton plays a lascivious judge who attempts to put the moves on Keane's reluctant wife, Gay (Todd) when his own, the emotionally fragile, Lady Sophie (Ethel Barrymore) is not looking. (Bottom): Hitchcock runs through the paces with Todd and Barrymore in a scene that does not appear in the final cut; the latter looking rather unimpressed and perhaps even a little bored. She had reason to be. Lady Sophie is a thankless part, one that any number of actresses might have picked up at a glance. Barrymore had been a prominent actress on the stage and one of MGM's premiere talents throughout the 1930s. She had less success in the 1940s, predictably because then as is now plum roles for older women were few and far between.

Although Hitchcock has been described by some as the movie's first great auteur he failed to recognize before the ink had dried on his contract that, although his boss' official credit was strictly as producer, Selznick considered himself more a co-collaborator than a mogul. On the set of **Rebecca**, Hitchcock found himself taking 'advise' from Selznick on everything from the way certain scenes should be shot to his choice of casting a leading lady.

**Rebecca** is essentially Bronte's *Jane Eyre* set in modern times. A young nameless waif (Joan Fontaine) marries haughty aristocratic, Maxim de Winter

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10AM.-9PM.
SUNDAYS 2-5PM.

(Previous page): **Shadow of a Doubt** (1943) turned a corner in Hitchcock's career; one that regrettably led to a very fallow period immediately following the movie's debut. Hitchcock may not have appreciated Selznick's meddling, but without it a brief tenure of narratively uneven storytelling ensued. **Shadow of a Doubt** was the exception – a taut thriller that cast Joseph Cotten against type as a serial killer. The story begins with Charles' landlady, Mrs. Martin (Constance Purdy) come to warn him about two gentlemen who wanted to have a talk. After eluding police, Charles (Cotten) arrives in Santa Rosa, greeted by his niece Charlie (Teresa Wright) and the rest of the Newton clan, father Joseph (Henry Travers), younger daughter, Ann (Edna May Wonacott) and Roger (Charles Bates). At home Charles gets reacquainted with his sister, Emma (Patricia Collinge); an emotionally fragile, gingerly sweet, yet strangely sad creature to whom Charles' homecoming has meant everything. Charles gives the family 'gifts' – actually souvenirs from the women he has murdered, including a fur stow for Emma and a ring that the astute Charlie realizes has an inscription inside the band. Charles makes light of the discovery, saying that the jewelry store has given him the wrong merchandise. But later, when Charlie innocently sees that Charles has taken a section of the morning paper to his bedroom, Charles all but breaks his niece's hands to prevent her from reading the headline; a squib about the manhunt for the Merry Widow Strangler.

Charlie's suspicions get the better of her, particularly after police officer, Jack Graham (MacDonald Carey) informs her that Uncle Charles is their A-one list suspect. Begging the local librarian (Eily Malyon) to let her in after hours, Charlie finds the newspaper that Charles has kept from her and realizes her favorite relative – the one for whom she has been named after – is actually a cold-blooded killer. From here on in the plot increasingly becomes a dangerous game of cat and mouse. After Charlie reveals to her uncle that she knows the truth and orders him to leave town before she tells the rest of the family he makes two attempts on her life; an accident on the back stairs and later, by attempting to lock the garage door from the outside while the inside fills with carbon monoxide exhaust.

(This page) **Shadow of A Doubt** is remarkably void of Hitchcock's usual ultra-clever and stylish set pieces. If the film does have an iconic moment, it remains when Charles changes from congenial uncle to obvious murderer right before our very eyes. Joseph Cotten's delivery of the speech in which he equates women to animals fit for the slaughter is chilling. *"The cities are full of women, middle-aged widows, husbands – dead. Husbands who've spent their lives making fortunes, working and working. And then they die and leave the money to their wives…their silly wives. And what do the wives do, these useless women? You see them in the hotels, the best hotels, every day by the thousands, drinking the money, eating the money, losing the money at bridge, playing all day and all night: smelling of money, proud of their jewelry but of nothing else, horrible, faded, fat, greedy women."* Charlie interjects*, "But they're alive. They're human beings"* to which Hitchcock zooms in on Cotten's face turning from profile to extreme close up for the penultimate kicker*. "Are they?"* he asks without any hesitation or emotion.

(Lawrence Olivier) while vacationing with her paid companion, Edythe Van Hopper (Florence Bates) in Monte Carlo. For a while Maxim and his new bride are divinely happy. However, upon returning to Maxim's home, the foreboding seaside estate Manderly, the essence of Maxim's former first wife – the late Rebecca, begins to intrude on the couple's serenity. It seems that everyone from Maxim's sister, Beatrice Lacey (Gladys Cooper) to the matronly, yet possessive housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers (Judith Anderson) will not allow Rebecca's memory to fade.

Feeling stifled in her new home, the second Mrs. de Winter (never named in either the novel or the film) decides to throw a costume ball to liven the mood. However, her plans go horribly awry when she arrives costumed in a gown that Rebecca wore the year before; one that Mrs. Danvers deliberately suggested. The costume sends Maxim into a rage and he orders his wife to go upstairs and change.

(Above left): on the set of **Rope** (1948), a single camera set up that Hitchcock once described as a film with 'no edits' shot inside a giant erector set. The descriptor was only partly true. **Rope**'s walls were, indeed, cutaways that could, and were, frequently being moved to accommodate the camera's movement throughout the set. The takes were continuous and photographed at ten minute intervals using a whole reel of exposed film at a time. In retrospect this made the final edit incredibly easy to assemble; simply by splicing twelve cans of film together, minus outtakes. There were no trims. To accomplish the 'seamless' or 'continuous' flow Hitchcock would zoom in on a person's back or inanimate object before reloading the camera to continue. Cast had to be on their toes. Hitchcock was basically shooting Patrick Hamilton's ***Rope's End*** as a play.

The apartment set was unremarkable in virtually every way, except for the fact that its background cyclorama gradually turned from mid-afternoon to sunset and finally nighttime sky before our very eyes; a gimmick of lighting not exactly realistic achieved and adding yet another layer to the artifice of what eventually proved to be a very stilted exercise. (Above right): Hitchcock with (from left) Farley Granger, James Stewart and John Dall and that famous credenza concealing the strangulated remains of David Kentley (Dick Hogan), briefly glimpsed in the opening sequence of the film being murdered. To pad out this thankless part and add a tantalizing flavor for the macabre, **Rope**'s trailer was shot with an interesting premise; showing no scenes from the actual movie but rather David and his girlfriend, Janet (Joan Chandler) in Central Park. He considers them engaged, but she still has her reservations. After a polite peck on the cheek, David departs for a prearranged rendezvous at the apartment of Brandon (Dall) and Philip (Granger); the camera observing from a distance as David walks out of frame; followed by James Stewart's rather ominous voice over *"…but that's the last time she ever saw David alive. And that's the last time you'll ever see him alive too."*

**Rope** dealt with homosexuality and thrill killing – subjects forbade under the Production Code and thus rather watered down in the final movie. Screenwriter, Arthur Laurents did not want Hitchcock to shoot the moment of strangulation, believing that the movie's heightened suspense would derive from the audience's constant questioning of whether or not there was a body hidden in that credenza. Hitchcock disagreed, following an analogy he later fleshed out for Francois Truffaut during a taped interview. *"You have two people at a restaurant,"* explains Hitchcock, *"…and a bomb hidden under the table. Show the audience the bomb before you show them the two people sitting down to discuss baseball. Then what's the audience doing. They're saying to themselves, 'don't talk about baseball, there's a bomb under the table. Get out of there!'"* The 'bomb' in **Rope's** case is David Kentley's body, stuffed by Brandon and Philip into the credenza atop which they serve food and drinks to the deceased's family and friends, all the while with the very real prospect that at any moment one of them might lift up the lid and discover the gruesome remains hidden inside.

The new wife and Danvers have their confrontation in Rebecca's bedroom with Danver's attempting to brainwash the bride into committing suicide. Instead, the discovery of a shipwreck on Manderly's craggy rocks leads to the discovery of another sunken vessel with Rebecca's concealed remains still inside. Maxim further complicates matters when he confides to his wife that he knew all along the body was there. *"How did you know?"* she asks him. *"Because I put it there,"* Maxim explains.

This filmic revelation is worthy of further consideration because it is not the same in the novel. In print, du Maurier had made her hero a murderer as well; Maxim kills Rebecca in a fit of rage after she announced to him that she was pregnant with another man's child. Selznick, a purist in his literary adaptations detested this revision, imposed on the film by the Censorship Production Code of Ethics. In truth, what ought to have been a moment of shocking revelation now plays as slightly anticlimactic. Perhaps recognizing Olivier's abilities as a great orator, Hitchcock daringly declined to shoot a traditional 'flashback' sequence to explain what happened to Rebecca. Instead, his camera slowly follows the action that might have been as described by Maxim, the slow pan and dolly across the room suddenly coming to rest upon the sharp and protruding piece of ship's tackle that Rebecca reportedly struck her head on. In a moment of panic, Maxim then took his wife's body to her private boat, set out to sea and punched holes in its hull to conceal the evidence – even though no actual crime has been committed.

Exonerated from any wrong doing at a public inquest Maxim hurries home to his new wife whom he truly loves, only to discover that Mrs. Danvers has gone mad and set fire to his beloved Manderly – presumably with his new wife inside. After a brief frantic search, the lovers are reunited on the front lawn where they witness Danvers consumed by the hellish inferno, the flames at last devouring the embroidered bed pillow with the letter 'R' to symbolize an end to Rebecca's hold on the

(Above): scenes from a party. **Rope** (1948) was Hitchcock's second attempt to photograph an entire movie on one set. His first had been **Lifeboat** (1944). This time around the ensemble included Dick Hogan (as the strangulated corpse, David Kentley), John Dall and Farley Granger (the murderers, Brandon and Philip), Edith Evanson as Mrs. Wilson, their ever-doting housekeeper, Douglas Dick (as David's best friend, Kenneth and rival for the affections of Dick's best girl, Janet, played by Joan Chandler). The two liveliest performers in the film are undeniably Sir Cedric Hardwicke (as David's father) and more amusingly, Constance Collier (as Mrs. Atwater, David's aunt). Early in the film Atwater, an amateur mystic and clairvoyant, takes Philip's hands into her own, declaring "*These hands will bring you great fame*." She, of course, is referring to Philip's musical abilities. She has no way of knowing her fingers are caressing the fleshy palms of a cold-blooded killer. Neither does Mr. Kentley mark any suspicion that the man sitting next to him on the settee is partly responsible for his own son's murder. (Bottom center): the moment of truth. Having given departing party guest Rupert Cadell (James Stewart) David Kentley's hat by mistake, Mrs. Wilson rectifies the situation, unknowing that she has just exposed Brandon and Philip's thrill kill. After wrestling a gun from Philip's hands, Rupert holds the duo hostage until the police can arrive. **Rope**'s penultimate moment of realization is the sequence with the switched hats. But there is still at least fifteen minutes left to the story. James Stewart does his best to 'explain' his powers of deduction with panicked dread, but **Rope**'s finale remains one of the least convincing and entertaining in any Hitchcock movie.

couple too. For this penultimate moment Selznick had wanted Hitchcock to tilt his camera into the sky with the writhing smoke from the blaze forming the letter 'R' in the sky; a tacky finale to say the least. Hitchcock resisted. It was arguably, the only battle he won on the picture.

At the start of production Hitchcock had tried to balk on Selznick's decision to cast Joan Fontaine as the movie's heroine. But in hindsight she proved the ideal choice; capturing the empathy of that mousy, insecure and scared little creature as described by Du Maurier in the novel. And despite her relative obscurity (Fontaine had appeared in thirteen movies before Rebecca, but never as anything more than a demure wallflower briefly glimpsed in near cameo walk on parts) Fontaine

(Above): **Lifeboat** (1944) is a superior example of the single set ensemble movie, arguably it's only rival being Hitchcock's penultimate stab at the 'gimmick' – **Rear Window** (1954). The premise for **Lifeboat** is simple – seven survivors of a German U-boat torpedo attack on the luxury liner they were all sailing on crawl into a lifeboat, making desperate attempts to keep body and soul together while they wait for rescue – or imminent death from starvation – on the open sea. Along the way they pick up the Nazi captain responsible for the attack, who apparently has survived the sinking of his own ship in the assault. Systematically, the captain turns survivor against survivor, plotting to murder them one by one until his own rescue is secured. The film's ensemble features Tallulah Bankhead (as newspaper columnist Constance Porter), Henry Hull (as industrialist Charles Rittenhouse), William Bendix (as simpleton Gus Smith), John Hodiak (as a rough-around-the edges crew member of the sunken liner), Mary Anderson (as a nurse), Hume Cronyn (as nervous wreck, Stanley Garrett), Canada Lee (the noble George Spencer) and Walter Sleazak (as Willy, the Nazi captain). John Steinbeck's screenplay progressively addresses cross-cultural classicist snobbery and racial/ethnic biases, all within the context of its basic plot point – that of survival, and perhaps survival of the fittest. Midway through their ordeal, Gus' leg is amputated by Willy, who later convinces the delirious and dying man to throw himself over the side of the lifeboat and callously watches him drown while the others are asleep. Lifeboat ought to have been a great success for Hitchcock and 20th Century-Fox. But only weeks into its run, Darryl F. Zanuck pulled the movie from circulation after rumors began to circulate that its story was a pro-Nazi/pro-fascist piece of propaganda. Lifeboat would remain buried from view for the next forty-five years.

proved to Hitchcock that she possessed the necessary star quality to get the job done. Evidently, Hitchcock later agreed though he kept his opinions to himself, perhaps fearful that his plaudits would ruin the actress' ability to convincingly portray perpetual insecurity on the screen.

As Hitchcock's American entrée, **Rebecca** is impressive to say the least. In hindsight, Selznick's constant badgering through memos strengthens the novel's loose construction. Hitchcock, though a meticulous technical craftsman was not always as well served after he and Selznick parted company. On the heels of Selznick's iconic and groundbreaking success with **Gone With The Wind** (1939), **Rebecca** proved a valiant successor, popular with audiences and receiving critical praise and accolades; including the Oscar for Best Picture of 1940; the first, last and only time an Academy Award would be bestowed on a Hitchcock film. It is one of Hollywood's blunt ironies that Hitchcock was not even nominated as Best Director. Arguably, it did not matter. Hitchcock had proven that his reputation in England was well deserved, and that given a considerable budget, the right cast and the perfect script he could tell a pseudo-gothic romance better than any of his contemporaries.

Awash in **Rebecca**'s heady triumph it seems inconceivable that Selznick would allow his star director the opportunity to make a movie for someone else. In point of fact, after acquiring Hitchcock's services Selznick suddenly came to the realization that he had nothing for him to shoot. Instead, Selznick quietly loaned Hitchcock to independent producer Walter Wanger for the director's second big hit, **Foreign Correspondent** (1940); a taut and timely spy thriller set at the cusp of WWII. Although shot before **Rebecca, Foreign Correspondent** was ultimately released after it.

In hindsight, Selznick may have already been moving away from producing his own movies; setting up projects, acquiring scripts, getting talent in front of and behind the camera on board and signed, but then wholesale farming out the project to another studio as a package deal for a considerable fee and percentage of the finished film's gross. Selznick had, for some time, recognized that being one's own producer/director and sometimes screenwriter was not only an exhaustive endeavor, physically and mentally, but it also infrequently strained the coffers of his studio beyond what they were capable of sustaining. **Gone With The Wind** had gone severely over budget and Selznick had borrowed heavily on his life insurance and

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(Previous and this page): a crisis of conscience. **I Confess** (1951) took Hitchcock, his cast and crew to Quebec City. Hitchcock, who did not enjoy shooting on location (primarily because it meant one was at the mercy of weather and lighting conditions and had to re-dub and loop in dialogue and effects after the fact), nevertheless proved unequivocally that he was a master outside the parameters of the soundstage too. **I Confess** captures the cosmopolitan, as well as the old world flavors of Quebec City. Montgomery Clift is Father Michael Logan who must preserve the priest/penitent privilege after the church's gardener, Otto Keller (O.E. Hasse) confesses a murder. Pressed by Inspector Larrue (Karl Malden), and by the public's crazed appetite for a scapegoat, Logan turns to his one-time lover, Ruth Grandfort (Ann Baxter), who under oath reveals her past love in front of Larrue and her devoted and understanding husband; politico, Pierre (Roger Dann).

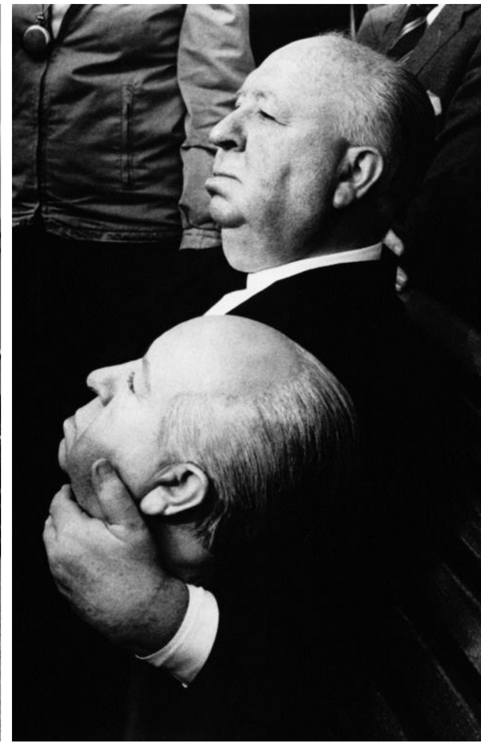
No one seems to have any sympathy for Father Logan. Even his contemporaries at the rectory begin to suspect him of the crime of murder or, at the very least, a cover up. In the penultimate moment of truth, Otto's wife, Alma (Dolly Haas) comes forward to expose her husband. Otto panics and shoots his wife, then races into the Hotel Frontinac across the street from the courthouse where he is hunted down and shot to death by police, with Father Logan performing last rights. **I Confess** is a visually immaculately composed thriller, full of Hitchcock's light touches of pure cinema. The murder at the start of the film is told entirely without dialogue, Hitchcock moving from various moonlit shots of the cobblestoned streets, his brief cameo strutting past the top of a set of outdoor stairs, before focusing on a sign post that ultimately points the camera in the direction of an open window where the audience is led to discover the body of Monsieur Villette (Ovila Légaré).

from investor/friend Jock Whitney to see the film through to completion. Had it failed at the box office that would have been the end of David O. Selznick and Selznick International. The precarious positioning of each had left Selznick weary and perhaps a tad unsettled. So, Hitchcock left to shoot Wanger's movie instead.

**Foreign Correspondent** is the story of Johnny Jones (Joel McCrea), a newspaper hound who is sent to Europe to cover the pending political upheaval. Rechristened Huntley Haverstock by his publisher (Harry Davenport), Jones is introduced to the curmudgeonly Stebbins (Robert Benchley) who instructs him to play everything low key, including his role as a 'foreign correspondent.' But Jones is determined to make good on his assignment.

Finagling a brief interview with diplomat, Van Meer (Albert Basserman), Jones is plunged into the middle of political intrigue when Van Meer is seemingly murdered before his very eyes. A resulting chase across the stark windswept landscape of Holland reveals the diplomat's double is the one who has been assassinated. But Jones is unable to prove his findings when the real Van Meer once again disappears. Jones' investigation is further complicated by two unforeseen circumstances; first - his main contact, Stephen Fisher (Herbert Marshall) is actually a double agent working for Nazi intelligence, and second - Jones has fallen in love with Fisher's daughter, Carol (Laraine Day) who knows nothing about her father's corruption.

Attempting to confide in Carol, Jones is nearly run over, pushed off an observation platform and murdered during a struggle with Fisher's henchman, Mr. Krug (Eduardo Cianelli). Eventually, the plot to obtain state secrets is foiled and Fisher, along



(Top): Hitchcock with Bergman in 1949 the same year the scandal over her affair with director Roberto Rossellini broke. The media devoured her reputation, leading to a European exile and a string of largely forgettable movies made abroad until 1956. Hitchcock might have gone on co-starring Bergman in his other thrillers. For him, she represented the ultimate female; sophisticated, smart, strong-willed yet feminine. In Bergman's absence Hitchcock would discover Grace Kelly instead; who would go on to become the ultimate Hitchcockian 'cool blonde'. (Middle): with wife Alma Reville in 1950 on the boat to England to shoot **Stage Fright**. It was Hitchcock's first visit since WWII and he found London a vastly different city from the one he had known before the war. (Right): Looking immensely pleased with himself in 1961, clutching a likeness of his own head for the inauguration of a wax figure at Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in London.

with his daughter and Jones are trapped inside a plane en route to Britain, bombed out of the sky by the Axis powers. In the resulting crash into the ocean Fisher magnanimously saves his daughter from drowning then commits suicide to spare himself the indignation of going to prison – leaving Jones free to rekindle his romance with Carol.

Originally, the story that Wanger owned dealt with espionage of a different kind during the Spanish American war. As that conflict had already faded into obscurity by the time this film was set to go before the cameras Wanger had the premise updated to reflect the dangerous rise of fascism in Europe. The final sequence – with Jones delivering his patriotic summation of '*why we fight'* during the London blitz was tacked on after production wrapped and Hitchcock had already turned his attentions to filming **Rebecca**. Wanger shot this penultimate sequence himself – an intervention Hitchcock deplored, although it has remained one of the galvanic moments most readily admired by audiences when the film is run today.

The demand for Hitchcock's services following these back to back premieres was overwhelming. While Selznick toyed with the prospect of developing more in-house projects he had no compunction about loaning Hitchcock to RKO for an unlikely dabbling in screwball comedy; **Mr. and Mrs. Smith** (1941). Scripted by Norman Krasna, the film tells the rather conventional tale of a couple; Ann (Carole Lombard) and David (Robert Montgomery) who are foundering in their marriage. The problem stems from the couple's '*one question a month'* rule. Ann asks David if, given the opportunity to go back in time, and, knowing then what he knows now, would he still have married her? In a moment of honesty David confesses that although he loves his wife dearly he also misses his freedom, leading Ann to deduce that he no longer loves her at all. David's response is made even more pointedly problematic when Ann learns that their marriage is not legal because of a state boundary dispute. Recognizing he has been free all along and assuming the question is therefore moot, David decides to propose marriage to his wife all over again. Only now it is Ann who contemplates the practicality of spending the rest of her life with David.

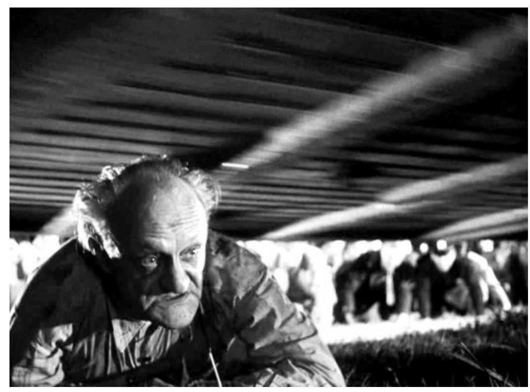
**Mr. and Mrs. Smith** is an admirably nutty romantic comedy masterfully played by Lombard and Montgomery. And yet the overshadowing of Hitchcock's proven prowess with suspense seems to have clouded this movie's reputation and its success.

(Above): getting Stage Fright (1950); Hitchcock's first film short partially on his native England soil since leaving the country in 1939. The war had taken its toll on London, and Hitchcock's film remains a curious amalgam of pre-war cordiality (the garden party and flower show in particular) and post-war decline and decay. The film stars Jane Wyman as Eve Gill an enterprising/love-struck woman who masquerades as a lady's maid to musical hall sensation Charlotte Inwood (Marlene Dietrich) to expose the fact that she has murdered her husband to be with dancer, Jonathan Cooper (Richard Todd) with whom Eve is desperately in love. The tragedy – at least for Eve – is that Charlotte has not murdered her husband. Jonathan has, in the hopes of becoming Charlotte's lover.

The movie's entire premise is a red herring, one that left audiences groaning. In years to come Dietrich would describe working with Hitchcock as "*delicious*" and, in her travelling repertoire of later years she frequently sang 'The Laziest Gal In Town'; the film's trademark musical hall number, punctuating both 'Hitch' and 'cock' to introduce the number with a sly wink and asexual come hither stare for which Dietrich was justly famous and celebrated.

Hitchcock shoots **Mr. and Mrs. Smith** in a style voice of his own Hitchcockian touches. Without his name in the credits the film might just as easily be incorrectly identified as a minor programmer made by Howard Hawks or George Cukor; although viewed from this vantage **Mr. and Mrs. Smith** would be considered very second tier in either director's career, indeed. Hitchcock's direction is solid and more than salvageable, if not on par with the mastery of the aforementioned or others who had already established their names within the screwball genre as their forte: Leo McCarey and Preston Sturges among them. Hitchcock may not lag behind these contemporaries, per say, but without his usual heightened visual flair **Mr. and Mrs. Smith** is merely an equitable comedy rather than an outrageously ingenious one.

At roughly this point in his early American career Hitchcock had begun to grow restless with the films he was being assigned. Under his ironclad contract Hitchcock had no options. He was at the mercy of Selznick who rented him out for a juicy retainer plus a percentage; while he – Hitchcock – was paid a flat salary by Selznick on a picture by picture basis; Hitchcock's outsourced directorial assignments not considered part of his obligations to Selznick International. To someone who had come from the relative autonomy of the director-driven British model the assembly



(Previous page): **Strangers on a Train** (1951) is a near perfect thriller. Patricia Highsmith's novel was about the duality in every man; that a basically good individual can be brought to commit unspeakable acts if pressed at just the right pressure points. The idea appealed to Hitchcock who frequently commented that just by walking down any street in the world one could come across a sadist, a thief and a murderer. Now there's a happy thought! In Highsmith's novel, both Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker) and Guy Haines (Farley Granger) are sincerely flawed; the latter actually following through with Bruno's plan to murder Bruno's father in the hopes that the act will convince Bruno to leave Guy alone. Partly due to the production code, but moreover because Hitchcock realized that movie thrillers require a clear cut good vs. evil scenario, Guy Haines never really entertains this notion but instead sneaks into the Anthony home with the gun Bruno has provided him as evidence to forewarn Mr. Anthony of his son's intensions**.**

**Strangers on a Train** has two undeniably exhilarating moments of Hitchcockian bravado; the first photographed at night at a lover's lane near a carnival. Having stalked Guy's wife, Miriam (Casey Rogers), Bruno now politely asks, *"Is your name Miriam?"* When she acknowledges that it is, Bruno silently strangles her, the reflection of the attack caught in Miriam's glasses which have fallen off her head, landed upright in the tall grass. The other truly great and unnerving sequence takes place much later, at a house party at Senator Morton's (Leo G. Carroll). Guy, who is engaged to the senator's daughter, Ann (Ruth Roman) is desperate to rid himself of this unwanted guest. To taunt Guy, Bruno engages another reveler, the daffy socialite, Mrs. Cunningham (Norma Varden) into playful discussions on how to commit the perfect murder, offering her a harmless demonstration of his patented 'strangulation' method. However, when Bruno sees Ann's sister, Barbara (Pat Hitchcock), who bears an uncanny resemblance to Miriam, his mind slips and he nearly murders Mrs. Cunningham instead. **Strangers on A Train** concludes with a showdown on a carousel spinning out of control. Harry Hines, who was 63 and *not* a stunt man, crawled under the carousel with his head mere inches away from its spinning floorboards.

(This page): *"He only cast me if I was right for the part,"* Pat Hitchcock admits about her infrequent appearances in her father's movies. She's also in **Stage Fright** and **Psycho,** but seen here with Hitchcock on the set of **Strangers on a Train**. Pat Hitchcock had studied acting abroad. A gifted comedian, her career was regrettably limited. She and co-star Ruth Roman became very good friends (middle), seen here attending the movie's New York premiere. (Right): For some reason Hitchcock looks moderately displeased as co-stars Robert Walker and Farley Granger smile for the cameras. Walker was a congenial and very hard-working actor mostly cast as the all-American nice guy in movies like **Since You Went Away** (1944) and **Her Highness and The Bellboy** (1946). **Strangers on a Train** was a decided departure from those roles and Walker relished the opportunity to play against type. In retrospect, Walker's Bruno seems to cut much too close to the surface of the real man rather than the characters he so often portrayed. Walker's marriage to Jennifer Jones ended when she began an affair with David O. Selznick. Their bitter break up, arguably, ruined his life. **Strangers on a Train** was Robert Walker's last on screen appearance. For on August 28, 1951 a lifetime of abuse of prescription sedatives and alcohol conspired to stop his breathing. He was 32.

line atmosphere in Hollywood had already left a distinct bad taste on Hitchcock's creative palette. A reprieve of sorts arrived just in time with Hitch's next assignment – this time farmed out to RKO for **Suspicion** (1941); the story of wealthy wallflower, Lina McLaidlaw (Joan Fontaine) and her inexplicable romantic obsession with penniless male beauty and gold digger, Johnnie Aysgarth (Cary Grant). Defying her parents, Lina becomes Johnnie's wife by elopement, but then slowly begins to realize what a scamp her new husband is.

After the death of her father, Lina is shocked to learn she has been left out of his will. For Johnnie, the snub is more critical. He has mortgaged their fabulous lifestyle on the assumption that Lina's inheritance would bail them both out of debt before the creditors have a chance to call. Now, Johnnie is forced to find other means to sustain them. He confides a get rich quick scheme to close friend, Gordon 'Beaky' Thwaite (Nigel Bruce), who agrees to help finance Johnnie's plans but then mysteriously dies after the project is already established. Suspecting that her husband may be a murderer – a progressive thought that ought to have led to an entirely different third act in the film – Lina remains resigned to the love she feels for Johnnie, despite her growing misgivings about his fidelity in their relationship.

(Above): **Suspicion** (1941) can arguably be called '*the one that got away*'. Hitchcock had endeavored to shoot an impossible ending – one that sealed the fate of a cold and calculating womanizer cum wife killer played by Cary Grant. Not only did the Code of Censorship reject this finale, but RKO balked as well, citing that the public would not accept Cary Grant as anything less than a suave and sophisticated hero. Very reluctantly Hitchcock and screenwriter Samson Raphaelson cobbled together a 'heroic' happy ending; one that belied all the moody uncertainty that had preceded it and cheated the audience out of its satisfaction of seeing Grant's Johnnie get his comeuppance. **Suspicion** did well at the box office, and won co-star Joan Fontaine a Best Actress Oscar besides – in effect a consolation prize for having lost the coveted statuette the year before for **Rebecca**.

Johnnie agrees to take Lina to her mother's because he cannot stand the fact that she distrusts him. On the way there, Lina's car door inexplicably flies open and Lina, assuming that Johnnie is attempting to throw her from the speeding vehicle, wrestles with his outreached hand until he is able to subdue her. Johnnie pulls the car aside and tells Lina that she has been a fool. He then confides an undying love for her before their car turns to go back home; presumably, all marital angst quashed and on to a happily ever after that the audience never gets a chance to see. As a Hitchcock thriller, **Suspicion** is awash in misdirection and cliché, the ending so woefully mangled and mismanaged that it virtually deflates all of the high stakes uncertainties that have been incrementally building throughout the story, and in both Lina and the audiences' heads.

**Suspicion** is based on a novel by Anthony Berkeley wherein Lina Laidlaw discovers that her worst fears are true – Johnnie is not only Thwaite's killer but is planning to murder her next for the insurance money. An inexplicably obsessive love prevents Lina from saving herself. Knowing that she will be dead by morning, Lina instead writes her mother a letter of confession, explaining the truth about Johnnie; then asks Johnnie to mail the sealed envelope for her after he has already made her drink a glass of poisoned milk. Lina dies and Johnnie, believing that he has managed the perfect murder as suicide scenario, sees no harm in fulfilling his wife's final request. The last shot in the movie ought to have been Johnnie tossing Lina's letter in a postal mailbox – thereby ensuring the audience and the censors that his crime(s) would not go unpunished.

The censors balked, arguing that Hitchcock's finale did not resolve – at least in clear enough and concrete terms for the audience - the apprehension (nee contrition) of a cold-blooded killer (one of the absolute 'musts' within the Production Code). RKO brought their own edict down; arguing that Cary Grant could not be presented as a murderer. His fans would not stand for it. Unable to sway RKO and the censors to his cause, revisions to the shooting script were regrettably made and Hitchcock's ending awkwardly diluted. Although **Suspicion** did respectable business at the box office, it proved to be less successful than Hitchcock's previous efforts. Ultimately, the film did achieve its primary objective; to earn Joan Fontaine another bite at the Oscar apple. She had been nominated (and ought to have won for **Rebecca** the year before); an inexcusable snub rectified when her performance as Lina won the coveted Best Actress Academy Award the following year.

Hitchcock's next project away from Selznick was **Saboteur** (1942); a kissing cousin to **Foreign Correspondent** and one that reintroduced the director to spies and espionage with a light motif of screwball romance. Produced independently for Walter Wanger, the story is that of Barry Kane (Robert Cummings) an aircraft factory worker who is suspected of being a Nazi

(Above left): taking a stroll around the back lot with daughter Pat and actor Robert Cummings in between takes on **Saboteur** (1942). Cummings was considered a popular second string leading man for a brief period in the mid-1940s, usually playing in light and frothy musical comedies. As the hero of Hitchcock's thrill ride into cross-country espionage he's rather bland however, particularly opposite the film's heroine, Patricia Lane. (Middle): preparing in London to shoot Richard Todd's escape from the police for **Stage Fright** (1950). Those who worked with Hitchcock do not recall him ever looking through the viewfinder to see if the cameraman had correctly set up his shot. This decision had more to do with the fact that Hitchcock had meticulously storyboarded virtually all of his movies from start to finish. Indeed, he once said the most boring part of movie-making was actually shooting the picture. Hitchcock's laborious pre-planning often took months, but once he was on the set every cameraman knew his duty – to replicate everything on Hitchcock's storyboards. (Right): looking appropriately droll in this publicity still to promote **Rope** (1948).

saboteur after arson at the plant kills his best friend. On the lam, Barry meets a kindly blind man, Phillip Martin (Vaughan Glasser) and his pert and sassy niece Pat (Priscilla Lane). Though Pat is ready to believe the worst about the mysterious man hiding in her uncle's cabin – even going so far as to make several valiant attempts to return Barry to the authorities – Phillip reminds his niece that at least in a free country not all men accused of a crime are guilty of it.

Eventually winning Pat's trust, Barry embarks on a cross country chase after the man he knows to be the real saboteur the police are looking for; Frank Fry (Norman Lloyd). Narrowly escaping a lavish house party where his arch nemesis, the ever-plotting Nazi sympathizer, Charles Tobin (Otto Kruger) is waiting to kidnap Pat and murder Barry – Barry instead tracks Fry down on the afternoon he is set to bomb an aircraft carrier stationed in New York Harbor. Barry chases Fry to the top of the Statue of Liberty and in the climax Fry loses his footing, plummeting to his death with Pat ably explaining to the police that he, not Barry was the saboteur.

**Saboteur** is a patchwork of themes visited more skillfully elsewhere in the Hitchcock canon; its screenplay by Peter Viertel, Joan Harrison and Dorothy Parker more episodic than cohesive. The cross-country trek foreshadows one made by another Hitchcock hero – Roger O. Thornhill (Cary Grant) in **North By Northwest** (1959). But **Saboteur**'s screenplay pitifully lacks a sense of humor and worse – a spark of sexual tension; generally main staples in a Hitchcock movie. Without Cary Grant's inimitable bon vivant charm to carry it all off Robert Cummings and Pricilla Lane make for a rather tepid couple; his fresh-face never entirely convinces us of either menace against the forces of evil or that flint of desire for his leading lady. Lane's transformation from distrusting shrew to loyal vixen is even more problematic. Quite simply it lacks the punch of an Eva Marie Saint or Grace Kelly. In the end **Saboteur** suffers this pair who is unable to bridge the countrywide 'chase' narrative with anything more than stock performances. These exaggerate the vignette quality of the screenplay, rather than being able to disguise it behind their outward charisma. Unevenly plotted, **Saboteur** was nevertheless a sizable hit for Hitchcock.

There are many reasons why Hitchcock considered his next endeavor one of his best. First, with **Shadow of A Doubt** (1943) Hitchcock was given the opportunity to break away from Selznick's hawk-eyed scrutiny that, even on a good day, he had come to regard as oppressive at best. The production also realized Hitchcock's desire to direct a movie that he also produced; this one for his own company Skirball – peripherally aided by Walter Wanger. Finally, **Shadow of a Doubt** brought Hitchcock back to his inherent love for directing cloistered suspense thrillers in confined spaces – a forte in England where money was always tight and production values and schedules tighter still. Despite director/historian Peter Bogdanovich's claim that

(Above): Who is the ultimate Hitchcock 'cool blonde'? The director was once asked why his heroines had a predilection for platinum tresses. The question seemed to surprise Hitchcock who went on to comment that the decision was made unintentionally. Maybe so, but Hitchcock's leading ladies were often more imbued by smarts than brass; ladies who frequently suffered and usually placed themselves in mortal peril but ultimately found happiness before the final fade out with the guy of their dreams. (Top row from left): Joan Fontaine – **Rebecca, Suspicion**; Ingrid Bergman – **Spellbound, Notorious, Under Capricorn**; Ann Todd – **The Paradine Case**; Ann Baxter – **I Confess**; Pricilla Lane – **Saboteur**. (Bottom row from left): Eva Marie Saint – **North by Northwest**; Kim Novak – **Vertigo**; Tippi Hedren – **The Birds, Marnie**; Julie Andrews – **Torn Curtain**; Barbara Harris – **Family Plot**. (Far right): Grace Kelly admiringly combs a lock or two in between takes on the set of **To Catch A Thief**.

**Shadow of a Doubt** is Hitchcock's *"first American thriller"* – by that he means it was his first set in America rather than retaining an air of European flavor – this dubious distinction goes to the aforementioned **Saboteur** instead.

The script by Thornton Wilder, Sally Benson and Alma Reville (Hitchcock's wife) concerns the congenial Newton family who live in the sleepy hamlet of Santa Rosa, California. Charlie (Teresa Wright), a teenager wilting from misperceived boredom over the summer holiday is invigorated when she discovers that her Uncle Charles (Joseph Cotten) – for whom she has been named – is arriving in town for a visit. There's just one problem: Uncle Charles is also The Merry Widow strangler, responsible for a series of heinous murders of rich elderly dowagers.

Despite the fact that Charles presents the Newtons with lavish gifts upon his arrival - token souvenirs from his brutal slayings – the motive for these killings is not entirely money. In one of his most chilling moments in any Hitchcock movie Uncle Charles illustrates his indelible contempt for "*rich, fat, greedy women,*" equating their useless lives to that of slovenly animals fit for the slaughter. For Charlie, who has already begun to suspect her uncle of some unspeakable cruelty, his oration reads like an obvious confession. Regrettably, the rest of the family does not read into Charles' comments, particularly Charlie's mother, Emma (Patricia Collinge) to whom this visit from her estranged brother has meant virtually everything in the world.

Emma's emotional fragility causes Charlie to remain silent. Instead, a dangerous game of cat and mouse ensues. Charlie threatens her uncle with exposure of the truth unless he leaves Santa Rosa immediately. After several failed attempts on Charlie's life, Uncle Charles reluctantly agrees to his niece's demand. However, once aboard his train Charles isolates Charlie until the cars have begun to pull away from the station – intent on throwing her into the path of an oncoming locomotive to be rid of the fear that she will expose him to the family once he is gone. In the ensuing struggle Charles loses his footing and slips between two speeding trains, cut to shreds beneath the grinding wheels of the oncoming locomotive.

**Shadow of a Doubt** is a beautifully crafted drawing room murder mystery – methodically paced and pastorally satisfying in its Norman Rockwell-esque evocation of idyllic Americana turned upside down. Hitchcock shoots the Newton house – an actual home in Santa Rosa – with loving care applied to its cloistered hominess, as though it were a stand in for 'any house U.S.A.' and small town gracious living. Hitchcock's vision for the all-American family is that of bright-eyed and unsuspecting idealism. The cast includes Henry Travers as Mr. Newton, Hume Cronyn, as Herbie Hawkins; a humorously meddlesome neighbor with an amateur sleuth's fixation for plotting the perfect murder, and, Macdonald Carey (a Fox favorite) in probably his best role, as sympathetic police detective, Jack Graham with whom Charlie has begun an adolescent infatuation.

***"Dialogue should simply be a sound among other sounds, just something that comes out of the mouths of people whose eyes tell the story in visual terms."***

\- **Alfred Hitchcock**

Hitchcock moved into a rather bleak, if brief, interim of undistinguished work following **Shadow of a Doubt**, beginning with a thinly veiled claptrap of elements loosely pilfered from both **Foreign Correspondent** and his penultimate British thriller, **The 39 Steps**. **Bon Voyage** (1944) is a convoluted short subject about an RAF pilot who may or may not be involved in espionage for the Axis powers. This he immediately followed up with another war propaganda featurette, **Aventure malgache** (1944) before recovering artistically – if not financially - with his next full-fledged feature film: **Lifeboat** (1944).

Loaned by Selznick to 20th Century-Fox for this adaptation of Steinbeck's novel, **Lifeboat** became the first of Hitchcock's movies to be shot on one confided set. In this case, that set is a lifeboat. The story concerns a small group of survivors attempting to keep body and soul together after their luxury liner has been torpedoed by a German U-boat. The survivor's list includes feisty reporter Constance Porter (Tallulah Bankhead), mistrustful shipmate John Kovak (John Hodiak), spirited businessman, Charles Rittenhouse (Henry Hull), loyal nurse, Alice Mackenzie (Mary Anderson), proud cook, George Spencer (Canada Lee), lumbering boatman Gus Smith (William Bendix) and trusting introvert Stanley Garrett (Hume Cronyn).

Shortly thereafter the survivors fish out the German captain of the U-boat that sunk them, Willy (Walter Slezak). Although Willy first presents himself sympathetically, he slowly begins to reveal his truer/darker self; a venal contempt for the Americans as his sworn enemies – his insidious determination to murder them one by one becoming the focus of the narrative. After amputating Gus's infected leg in order to save his life, Willy waits until the rest of the survivors have fallen asleep before sadistically pushing the crippled man overboard.

Claiming Gus's death was accidental, Willy next lies about their whereabouts. He is not sailing them to the American port in Bermuda as planned but toward his own Nazi rescue vessel where he will be saved, but the others most likely slaughtered or taken hostage to be sent to a concentration camp. Charles learns what Willy is up to and incites the rest of the survivors to mutiny. After much consternation, the survivors do indeed kill Willy in violent act of mob rule before the Axis rescue ship spies them on the horizon. A battle breaks out between that German ship rapidly gaining on them and an American war cruiser gaining on them. The German ship is torpedoed by the Americans with the presumption that the American ship will now rescue the survivors aboard the lifeboat.

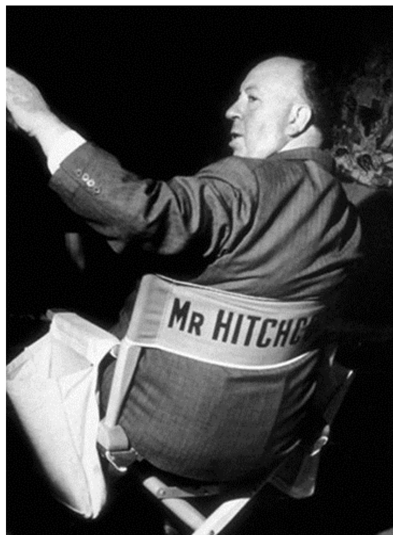
(Top left): Joan Fontaine as the nameless second Mrs. DeWinter in **Rebecca** (1940), dodging the demonic housekeeper, Mrs. Danvers (Judith Anderson) who desires to push her out a second story bedroom window, and, one year later; once again facing certain death, this time at the hands of her husband, Johnnie Aysgarth (Cary Grant) in **Suspicion** (1941), the film for which Fontaine took home her Best Actress Academy Award. Hitchcock had begun his directorial tenure in England during the silent era, and in reviewing a goodly number of his talkies today one finds that the precepts of that distinct silent cinema style never entirely left him. Hitchcock's heroines give glances, either of paralytic fear or 'come hither' seduction – but always with purpose, meaning and a subtext that could never be explained away…even by pages of dialogue.

(Previous and above): **Saboteur** (1942) is Hitchcock's second, and arguably least well known, wartime espionage thriller. Barry Kane (Robert Cummings) is wrongfully accused of arson of the aircraft carrier plant where he worked and where his best friend, Ken Mason (Virgil Summers) is burned to death. Even without sufficient evidence, everyone instantly believes that Barry is guilty. In his quest to clear his name Barry meets Pat Martin (Pricilla Lane) who doesn't believe in his innocence for one minute. Barry also comes face to face with the leader of the saboteur's organization, Charles Tobin (Otto Kruger). Over the course of the next two hours their paths will frequently cross, each time placing Barry in grave danger. The climax to **Saboteur** takes place on a stylized creation of the Statue of Liberty, as saboteur henchman Frank Fry (Norman Lloyd) is caught by Barry. Fry tumbles over the side and Barry's attempts to save him prove futile. Hitchcock's symbolism: the saboteur – the very essence of threats against America - dies by falling from New York's famed landmark, the concrete form of that essence of freedom he has sought to destroy: poetic justice to say the least.

**Lifeboat** is an extraordinary movie and not just because it happens to be made by Hitchcock. Steinbeck's screenplay manages to divide the audience's sympathies. Yes, Willie is a murderer. Yet, in murdering him the survivors become that which they sought to survive; their hands as bloody as the vanquished. However self-preservationist their own motives have been – and arguably, they have been - their altruism is deflected beneath a subliminal parallel between both sides of the international conflict; loosely translating into 'do unto others before they do unto you.' The ending of the movie also proved problematic with the censors in that it failed to concretely resolve the fate of the survivors. Will they be rescued? Or will the American war ship continue to cruise in search of other Nazi war craft?

**Lifeboat** was Hitchcock's most finely wrought and complex character drama to date. The performances throughout are top notch. However, Hitchcock infuriated Steinbeck when he called in writer Ben Hecht to rework several key sequences including the film's ending. The greater insult however was to go to Hitchcock. Misperceived and reviewed by some of the nation's top critics as being un-American and worse – pro-fascist propaganda, Fox's CEO Darryl F. Zanuck pulled **Lifeboat** shortly after its New York premiere, despite the fact that it had solid opening weekend box office receipts to back its artistic merit and was doing steady business thereafter. In the days when one's political loyalties could be so easily misconstrued, brought into question and placed under the microscope of governmental investigation, saving one's face in the industry was far more prudent than reaping the benefit of the almighty dollar. As a result, **Lifeboat** would remain buried in the Fox vaults for the next 40 years.

A pair of projects brought Hitchcock back under Selznick's autocratic control; **Spellbound** (1945) and **Notorious** (1946); the first, a psychological thriller, the latter, arguably Hitchcock's most sublime tale of Nazi espionage. Despite the fact that Selznick packaged the latter for a sell-off to RKO Pictures he remained an active participant in the shaping of the film's development from start to finish. In essence, both films bear Selznick's stamp of meticulous structure and planning. In point



(Above left): rehearsing Cary Grant on the set of Suspicion. (Middle): providing some off camera direction to one of the grips on the set Dial M for Murder. (Right): all smiles with Tallulah Bankhead in the 20th Century-Fox commissary before production on Lifeboat gets underway. Hitchcock was always immaculately dressed; either in a suit or sport coat, dress pants, crisp white linen shirt and dark tie. When Grant and Hitchcock made **To Catch A Thief** the sweltering temperatures on the Riviera forced Hitchcock to forgo his usual dress code and appear in a short-sleeved shirt, however, still with its collar buttoned right up to his chin. For Hitchcock, his wardrobe was as much about professionalism as it was about creating a trademark presence.

of fact, Hitchcock had begun **Spellbound** with great ambitions, most of them stamped out by the time the final edit reached theaters.

After initial apprehension, Hitchcock had persuaded Selznick to purchase the rights to the novel '*The House of Dr. Edwardes*' for $40,000. Hitchcock also scored a minor artistic coup by suggesting to Selznick that the renown painter Salvador Dali stage the elaborate dream sequence that would suggest an amnesiac's psychoanalytic nightmare. Selznick was more than interested in producing **Spellbound**; having recently undergone treatment under a psychiatrist's care to cope with the untimely death of his beloved brother Myron. In fact, Selznick's own therapist, May Romm is listed in the movie's opening credits as a technical advisor on the story.

**Spellbound** begins in earnest with the introduction of Constance Petersen (Ingrid Bergman); a psychotherapist toiling in her clinical analyses at Green Manors; an out of the way county sanitarium. Although Constance's own sexual repressions translate into professionalism they also become the brunt of Dr. Fleurot's (Jon Emery) cynical jokes and flirtations. Constance's desire is stirred by the arrival of the sanitarium's new chief of staff, Dr. Anthony Edwardes (Gregory Peck); replacing Dr. Murchison (Leon G. Glenn); who, so we are told, suffered some sort of mini nervous breakdown not so very long ago and is being forced into retirement. However, before long certain phobias begin to manifest in Edwardes' character. He becomes frightened by vertical lines and the color white and breaks into a rant during a routine operation. But these outbursts only seem to draw Constance romantically nearer, at the same time exciting the mother instinct within her to guard Edwardes from mounting outside skepticism. When the sanitarium is alerted to the fact that the man currently in their employ is not who he seems, but actually suspected in the disappearance of the real Anthony Edwardes, Constance steals away with the stranger, rechristened John Brown, on a search for the truth.

Hitchcock's battles with Selznick on the set of **Spellbound** were daily and exhausting. At one point the director pleaded with Selznick to buy out the rest of his studio contract and find another director to complete the film. Selznick retaliated with the threat of a lengthy lawsuit, forcing Hitchcock back into service. He also encountered resistance from Salvador Dali, who had planned an elaborate dream sequence far too costly and much too lengthy for the purposes of the film. Although Hitchcock convinced Dali to reduce his scale – many sequences that were filmed were eventually excised by Selznick from the final release print to tighten Dali's meandering symbolism. None of these edits pleased Dali's artistic sensibilities or Hitchcock's, who was to discover considerable changes made to his final edit by Selznick without his consent. Hitchcock would later dismiss **Spellbound** as just another 'manhunt' caper wrapped up in 'pseudo-psychoanalysis'. Despite this most unhappy work experience **Spellbound** was a colossal hit.

(Above left): appearing bored as he toys with the oversized telephone seen beneath the opening credits of **Dial M For Murder** (1954). The prop was also used for a moment in the movie where Hitchcock wanted an extreme close up of Tony Wendice's (Ray Milland) thumb dialing the numbers to his own apartment – the telephone call that lures his wife, Margo (Grace Kelly) onto her presumed murder. Hitchcock was forced to shoot '**Dial M'** in 3D, but sidestepped the gimmick of the process, instead photographing a distinct foreground, middle ground and background that gave the audience the uneasy feeling they too were in the room while the various plotting was taking place. (Right): looking curiously incensed, or at the very least perplexed, by whatever Grace Kelly has to say. Kelly was Hitchcock's favorite 'cool blonde'. Indeed, when she effectively announced her retirement from the movies after **To Catch A Thief** (1955) Hitchcock was bitterly disappointed. Kelly's soon-to-be husband, Prince Rainier was a frequent house guest of the Hitchcocks. Hitchcock had purchased the rights to **Marnie** while he was preparing **Psycho** (1960) and actually had screenwriter Joseph Stefano take a crack at adapting the novel into a screenplay. After nearly seven years of marriage Kelly had given every indication that she might be ready to return to the movies, something His Royal Highness would not permit. When Princess Grace politely declined Hitchcock's offer to star in **Marnie** the indignation felt was a wound that cut deep. It is rumored that Hitchcock never forgave Grace her snub and did not talk to her for years. Thereafter, Hitchcock was so soured on the project he shelved **Marnie** for nearly four years, reconsidering his haste only after actress Tippi Hedren had made a stunning success in her debut for Hitchcock in **The Birds** (1963).

Immediately following its premiere Hitchcock was plunged into preproduction on **Notorious** (1946) an entirely different matter. Free of most of the angst and headache that had dogged their previous collaborations, Hitchcock was afforded rare freedom in artistic expression on the set. For all intent and purposes Selznick bowed out of the project to pour his efforts into **Duel in the Sun** (1946) a costly western designed to showcase his new love – actress Jennifer Jones – in an all-star spectacle he sincerely hoped would rival the majesty and box office of **Gone With The Wind** (1939). Selznick would eventually sell off his rights as a package deal to RKO that included stars Ingrid Bergman, Cary Grant, and Hitchcock's services for a slick $800,000, plus half the revenue made from the finished film. In the meantime, Selznick sunk this initial outlay into **Duel in the Sun** – a super-colossus that was quickly spiraling out of control.

Based on the novel by John Taintor Foote, Ben Hechte's screenplay for **Notorious** introduces us to Alicia Huberman (Ingrid Bergman) whose father has just been convicted of being a Nazi spy. Alicia's notoriety as a party girl garners the attention of the FBI who send their special agent, T.R. Devlin (Cary Grant) to 'convince' Alicia into participating in their infiltration of a Nazi League stationed in Buenos Aires. Devlin falls in love with his secret agent; a complication magnified after Alicia agrees to marry one of her father's old Nazi allies, Alexander Sebastian (Claude Rains) to keep up appearances. However, from the start Alex's mother Anna (Leopoldine Constantin) is skeptical of the union.

At a gala given at Sebastian's home Devlin discovers uranium being smuggled in wine bottles inside the cellar, accidentally breaking one of the bottles. To cover up his snooping Devlin embraces Alicia under Sebastian's watchful eye, thereby drawing Alex's suspicion away from him but placing it squarely on his wife's marital fidelity. It is a superficial diversion at best and later Alex discovers the truth about Alicia. Thereafter he and Anna elect to quietly poison Alicia. The penultimate rescue of Alicia by Devlin raises the suspicions of the rest of the Nazi plotters who concur that Sebastian is a threat to their organization; one that cannot be allowed to live.

**Notorious** is Hitchcock's most perfectly realized American thriller from the 1940s; full of adult and very stylish nuances; its visual tapestry elegantly lensed by Ted Tetzlaff. Hitchcock was immensely please with himself when he also scored a subtle

coup against the censors who, in their infinite wisdom, had deemed any kiss lasting more than a few seconds equated to salacious sexuality. Placing his camera only inches away from Bergman and Grant's faces, Hitchcock had his actors merely peck at one another over and over again; their kisses interpolated with erotically charged dialogue for almost one full minute. Though none of the aforementioned 'kisses' lasts for more than a second, the cumulative on-screen effect is akin to observing two people in the throes of lustful passion. Immediately following the success of **Notorious** Selznick recalled Hitchcock to begin his final project under his studio contract. Like the circumstances endured on the set of **Spellbound**, the experience of working with Selznick again would prove trying to say the least.

**The Paradine Case** (1947) effectively ended Hitchcock's association with Selznick on a modest thud. In retrospect, the resulting project fails to live up to expectations, even though the film is consistently moody, if nowhere near the caliber of its predecessor. Originally Hitchcock had wanted either Ronald Colman or Laurence Olivier for the role of the barrister, Anthony Keane. There is some speculation that Hitchcock also sought the elusive Greta Garbo as his murderess, Maddalena Paradine. Disinterested in paying for these loan outs from MGM, particularly after his divorce from L.B. Mayer's daughter, Irene, Selznick instead assigned his own homegrown contract players to the cast; a decision that immediately disenchanted Hitchcock and soured him on the project. Although he greatly admired Gregory Peck and thought both Alida Valli and Louis Jourdan to be fine actors, Hitchcock intuitively felt all of them had been miscast.

(This page): **Dial M for Murder** is really a bit of an oddity for Hitchcock in that he usually preferred adaptations of novels to stage plays. *"When you have a hit play it's important that you not do anything to disturb…or shall we say, meddle with that success,"* Hitchcock once pointed out. His adherence to the original stagecraft borders on the religious. **Dial M** is Hitchcock's second to last movie to confine almost all of its action to a single location, in this case – the rather cramped London flat belonging to former tennis pro, Tony Wendice (Ray Milland) and his wife, Margo (Grace Kelly). Margo began an affair with writer, Mark Halliday (Robert Cummings) last year. Unbeknownst to her, Tony knows all about it and has decided to do away with her by blackmailing an old school mate (Anthony Dawson) into killing Margo while he and Mark are out at a stag party – thus providing Tony with the perfect alibi. The plan goes hopelessly awry however when Margo accidentally stabs her attacker to death with a pair of scissors – one of only two moments where Hitchcock obviously showcases 3D's spatial plain to stunning effect; Margo's hand reaching deep into the audience for her weapon of choice.

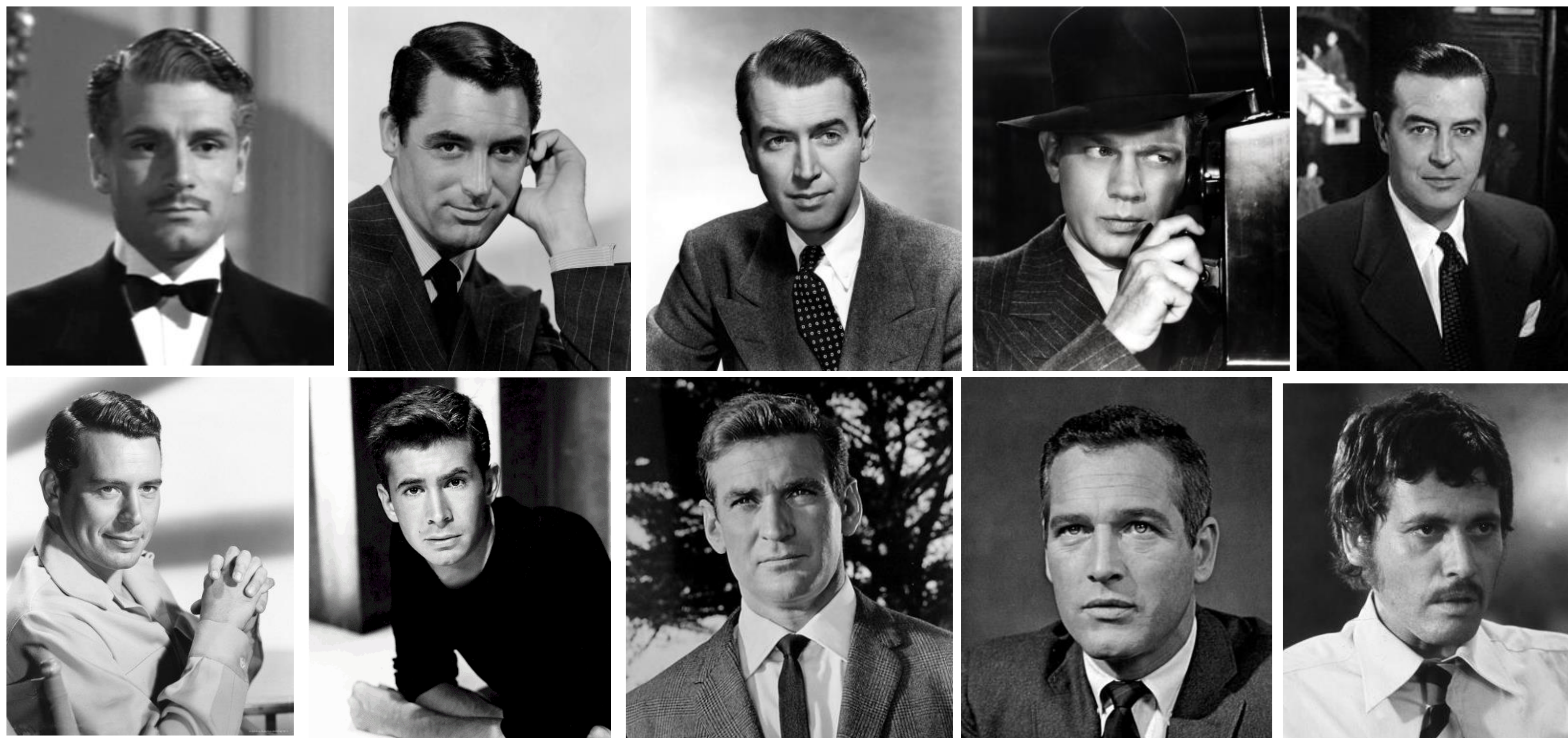
(Above): The winning team. Alfred met Alma while she was an editor working in England. The two shared a love for cinema and story-telling and Alfred quickly came to rely on Alma's skills and opinions with regards to choosing new projects. Indeed, throughout his Hollywood tenure Hitchcock never made a move before consulting Alma first, frequently engaging her to collaborate with his screenwriters on the final draft to be photographed. Despite rumors to the contrary, theirs was a life-long symbiotic union; two halves of the same life; each making unique and lasting contributions both on and off the movie screen. In accepting his AFI Lifetime Achievement Award in 1979, Alfred sought to thank the four people who, as he put it, had given him *"affection, appreciation, encouragement, and constant collaboration."* Hitchcock went on to say, *"First of the four is a film editor. The second is a script writer. The third is the mother of my daughter, Pat. And the fourth is as fine a cook as has ever performed miracles in a domestic kitchen…and their names are Alma Reville."*

Nevertheless, the project progressed at a grueling ninety-two day shoot – the longest of any Hitchcock schedule to date. It had been Selznick's intension to create yet another colossus out of this modest mystery/thriller – an extensive, and expensive, courtroom melodrama incorporating obsessive love as its subplot. In retrospect, Selznick's movies post **Gone With The Wind** increasingly suffered from this imposed elephantiasis; Selznick's deliberate desire to make every movie a lavish road show infrequently at odds with the more modest expectations of the material he was working from. **The Paradine Case's** script is by Selznick and Ben Hecht. Hitchcock almost willingly acquiesced to Selznick's demands for a really big movie. It is rumored that the rough cut of **The Paradine Case** ran nearly three hours. But for once Selznick felt that a film could, in fact, be too long and after having disposed of Hitchcock's services once and for all, he went to work whittling the narrative down to a modest 125 minutes.

Though the cuts are not damaging to the overall continuity of the story they do tend to reduce various characters to mere cardboard cutout representation. Imminent personalities such as Charles Laughton and Ethel Barrymore – cast as tawdry philanderer, Judge Lord Thomas and Lady Horfield - simply float in and out of the story rather than becoming an integral part of it. Even the central story is rather threadbare and, in viewing the film today, one wonders what more there might have been to sustain an audiences' interest for three hours.

The plot concerns one Maddalena Anna Paradine (Valli), the late wife of a blind colonel whom she is accused of poisoning to death. It seems Mrs. Paradine has been having an affair with her husband's valet, Andre LaTour (Jourdan). On the advice of legal counsel, Sir Simon Flaquer (Charles Coburn) Maddalena hires a handsome hotshot attorney, Anthony Keane (Peck) as her defense. But the trial is made problematic when the married Keane begins to invest much too much of himself in Maddalena's innocence. In fact, he has fallen under her hypnotic spell. Keane's wife, Gay (Ann Todd) is patient in her devotions, allowing her husband his fancies, all the while knowing that they will come to not; for Maddalena is guilty as charged.

Given the severity of Selznick's editing, the distillation of Hitchcock's sprawling narrative and the diffusion of suspense into tepid melodrama **The Paradine Case** remains a rather polite and often engaging melodrama. There are no surprises along the way, no great psychological complexities to wade through and no rivalry between the various characters once the audience has figured out that the accused is in fact destined to die on the gallows. **The Paradine Case** did average box office upon its initial release. Although it arguably did not advance Hitchcock's stature in Hollywood, it most certainly gave him the added pleasure of knowing it was to be his last movie for Selznick.



(Above): Hitchcock's men. While Hitchcock's women have all been variations on a central theme – the aloof ice princess – the men who have populated the director's most memorable movies are as diverse as they have proven, at times, difficult to pin down. Whether dangerously elegant or strangely brooding, there is no such thing as the 'typical Hitchcockian hero. This seems to have impugned Hitchcock's movies from 1963 onward, the gradual morphing of that untouchable star presence, as say embodied in a Cary Grant or James Stewart having given way to more down to earth and 'of the moment' leading men of action, yet curiously diffusing the potency of their iconography. (Top row from left): Laurence Olivier – **Rebecca**; Cary Grant – **Notorious, To Catch A Thief, North By Northwest**; James Stewart – **Rope, The Man Who Knew Too Much, Rear Window, Vertigo**; Joseph Cotten – **Shadow of a Doubt, Under Capricorn**; Ray Milland – **Dial M for Murder**. (Bottom row from left): John Forsythe – **The Trouble With Harry**; Anthony Perkins – **Psycho**; Rod Taylor – **The Birds**; Paul Newman – **Torn Curtain**; John Finch – **Frenzy**. Newman, Finch, and finally, Bruce Dern (not pictured) in Hitchcock's penultimate movie, **Family Plot** in particular seem ill suited to the essential needs of a Hitchcock thriller; contradicting Hitch's past paragons with all their gritty, harder edged realism.

Hitchcock's first effort as a freelance director and his first film in color was **Rope** (1948) for Transcontinental Pictures. The original story is based partly on the Leopold Loeb case, but more directly derived from Patrick Hamilton's modestly successful stage play; '*Rope's End'*. In the original, a pair of homosexual school mates has strangled one of their straight colleague for kicks, throwing a party for the deceased's family while the body is still hidden somewhere in the house. The film went one step further, placing the body inside a rather large credenza and then serving food and drinks to the family from its closed top converted into a dining table.

To augment the oddity in this rather perverse exercise the murderous duo also invites their old college professor Rupert Cadell (played by James Stewart in the film) for two reasons: first because he is supposed to have instilled in them Nietzsche's theory of the superman, thereby providing the impetus of justification for their thrill kill, and second, because Cadell is suggested to have had a homosexual relationship with at least one of the killers. Given the climate of censorship in Hollywood at that time, Hitchcock could not directly suggest any of the aforementioned aspects about the crime, though he did succeed in creating a rather sycophantic closeness between Brandon Shaw (John Dall) and Philip Morgan (Farley Granger). Arthur Laurents' screenplay made valiant attempts to maintain the homo-erotic mood.

In hindsight, the chief problem with **Rope** is in its central casting of James Stewart as Rupert Cadell, the boy's criminology professor. Unable to project the subtext of homosexuality onto his own squeaky clean persona Stewart places the film's chief premise off balance, for no such intimate understanding between Brandon, Philip and Rupert seems viable. Stewart is thus left with the mundane exercise of detecting their crime and bringing his former pupils to justice. Perhaps feeling more than a tad insecure about his role, James Stewart reportedly told an interviewer midway through the shoot that *"the only thing that's been rehearsed around here is the camera"* – a bit of uncharacteristic bitterness that, if not entirely, then at least for the most part, was true. His comments were leaked in the trades before **Rope** had its premiere. When it was finally released **Rope** did respectable business at the box office, but it was by no means a resounding success.

(Above): Hitch on Hitch. The Hitchcock persona became so ingrained after the debut of '*Alfred Hitchcock Presents'* that Hitchcock frequently found himself playing a part in stills taken while on vacation or in private life. While many have shied away from keeping up appearances, or even lamented the fact that the public thought of them only as their public image, Hitchcock seemed to relish the perversity in his following; striking an appropriately distance pose, rarely appearing to have anything to smile about, and even when he did, not without a strange sort of grimace written across his face. The Hitchcock that Alma knew, however, and the one that his daughter Pat and granddaughter Mary continue to wax affectionately about is neither as morose nor as distantly haunted as these images would suggest. Beyond the cameras Hitchcock was fun-loving, good natured, generally even-tempered and most plainly genuine. Detractors have their stories to tell – but most of these have to deal with some sort of noncompliance on their part to follow the master's lead and do as they were commanded (and being paid) to do.

The next two years were trying for Hitchcock. **Under Capricorn** (1949) was a miserable flop – both artistically and financially. Rebounding with another production for Transcontinental, **Stage Fright** (1950), Hitchcock cast the sultry Marlene Dietrich as greedy chanteuse, Charlotte Inwood. In the flashback that opens the story Charlotte arrives on the doorstep of her lover, Jonathan Cooper's (Richard Todd) apartment with her dress all bloodied. She has presumably just shot her husband to death and is seeking an alibi. To protect Charlotte, Jonathan returns to her home to get her a clean change of clothes. However, in attempting to make the homicide look like an accidental killing during a burglary, Jonathan is discovered by the upstairs maid who alerts the police. Fleeing the scene, Jonathan relies on his friendship with Eve Gill (Jane Wyman) to aid him in his cover up of the crime and escape. Eve is desperately in love with Jonathan, taking him to hide out at her father, Commodore Gill's (Alistair Sim) remote seaside cabin while the trio plots their next move. There's just one problem: everything until this point in the narrative has been a lie told from Jonathan's perspective. As such the rest of the story quickly becomes a rather benign and meandering '*who done it?*' as Eve masquerades as a maid in Charlotte's house with the hopes of discovering some evidence against her.

Hitchcock redeemed himself in the public's estimation with his next thriller: his first for Warner Brothers (actually Warners' had distributed **Rope**, but that picture was not made under the studio's aegis; rather bought outright upon its completion). **Strangers on a Train** (1951) is a terrifying excursion into the mind of a psychotic. Loosely based on the dark elegant novel by Patricia Highsmith, Hitchcock wanted and received the services of hard-boiled detective writer Raymond Chandler for the screenplay. A master of dialogue, Chandler's narrative construction left something to be desired. Thus, Hitchcock then turned the project over to Czenzi Ormonde to polish its continuity. The story begins in earnest with a chance meeting between two men, one a sycophantic mama's boy, Bruno Anthony (Robert Walker), the other an all-American hunk and tennis pro, Guy Hanes (Farley Granger). After forcing a luncheon meeting on Guy, Bruno confides in him a plausible way of committing the perfect murder. Two strangers meet and swap crimes – each murdering a total stranger, thereby foiling the motive necessary for any criminal investigation to convict.

In retrospect, the next two films Hitchcock did for Warner Brothers were rather straight forward 'set pieces': the crisis of conscience potboiler, **I Confess** (1953) and **Dial 'M' for Murder** (1954); the latter Hitchcock was encouraged by the studio to shoot in Warner Color (a disastrous, grain-enhancing color process) and the 'then new' process of 3D. **I Confess** is the story of Father Michael Logan (Montgomery Clift) a Catholic priest who, after learning that his gardener, Otto Keller (O.E. Hasse) has brutally murdered the church's solicitor to cover up his own embezzlements is unable to divulge the confession to satisfy the canons of the law, bound by his own sacred vow of silence.

(Above): Hitchcock held a very conservative opinion of what art should be and infrequently his films reference this disdain for 'modern art'. One recalls the way a police officer bristles and stares at a contemporary painting hanging in the foyer of Lina and Johnnie's home in Hitchcock's Suspicion (1941), or the moment when Bruno cackles uncontrollably at a demented portrait of Francis of Assisi that his mother has attempted to paint in Strangers on a Train (1951). These 'in jokes' attest to Hitchcock's personal tastes and remain hidden gems inside his movies that fans continue to seek out and pick apart. (Right): the family Hitchcock attempting to enjoy dinner at New York's Stork Club in 1944. Hitchcock doesn't seem to mind the impromptu photo op, although Alma, and Pat in particular look as though they wish the photographer would just go away.

Despite solid performances from the entire cast and a fairly taut climax the rest of the George Tabori/William Archibald screenplay is a rather unevenly paced affair, further hampered by a lengthy flashback in the middle that needlessly fleshes out the romance between Ruth and Michael. Hitchcock shot the flashback deliberately through heavy gauze and with a swell of Dmitri Tiomkin's syrupy underscoring – a cheap sort of Valentine meant to evoke the fuzziness of memory through time. Yet, in Clift Hitchcock has a problematic hero; the actor much more convincing as the chaste priest of the present than as the ardent romantic suitor from the past. So too is Ann Baxter far too much the sophisticate with a closeted woman's heart; her regression to a school girl's infatuation in the flashback unable to mask that more worldly self behind her mask of pretend and faux naiveté.

Hitchcock once confided that when all creativity fails a director can always fall back on a proven stage hit easily transformable into a presumably equally popular film. But Hitchcock also advised against 'opening up' the play; rather a suggesting a strict – nee religious – observance to the original stagecraft. For the most part, Hitchcock took his own advice on his next project; **Dial M for Murder** (1954); based on the play by Frederick Knott who also, at Hitchcock's behest, wrote the screenplay. **Dial M for Murder** is one of Hitchcock's most unusual masterpieces; his first and only foray into 3D, and the first time he worked with Grace Kelly – who came to epitomize the stereotype of the 'cool blonde' that arguably Hitchcock spent the rest of his American tenure looking to invoke from all his other various leading ladies.

The story concerns Tony Wendice (Ray Milland) a former tennis pro who marginally regrets giving up his racket for a quiet married life to socialite Margot (Grace Kelly). Tony's distemper is fueled by the discovery that his wife has been having an affair with successful American novelist, Mark Halliday (Robert Cummings). When Mark arrives in London for a visit Tony invites him to a stag party, thereby leaving Margot quietly home alone to get murdered.

Previously, Tony had exposed to his old college mate, Charles Swann (Anthony Dawson) his own knowledge of Swann's blackmail, his spurious exploits with women and his hinted involvement in the mysterious death of a wealthy dowager. To forget all that he knows Tony proposes to Swann that he kill Margot for a few thousand pounds. As there is no correlation between Swann and Margot or Swann and Tony for that matter the police will never suspect him of the crime, leaving Swann all the more richer and Tony free to collect a sizable insurance claim on his wife. With the very real prospect of going to jail for his other crimes hanging over his head, Swann reluctantly agrees to murder Margot for Tony instead.

But Tony's plan goes hopelessly awry when Margot accidentally kills her attacker in self-defense instead. Maliciously, Tony sets about to concoct a scenario whereupon it appears as though Swann was trying to blackmail Margot for her affair with Mark, thereby making her killing of him look like as a very desperate act motivated by her need to conceal the affair from Tony. At first this alternative theory gains the attention of Police Inspector Hubbard (John Williams). Margot is arrested and put on trial for murder. However, as Mark grows ever more suspicious of the facts Tony begins to plot anew, hoping to incriminate and exact his own revenge on both lovers.

As per the studio's request, Hitchcock shot **Dial M for Murder** in 3-D, one of the 1950s gimmicks designed to lure audiences away from television and back into theaters. Unlike most films exploiting the process Hitchcock used this polarizing image trickery sparingly. There are only two distinct moments when the action on the screen appears to lunge beyond the proscenium of the theater and into the audience. In the first instance, Grace Kelly's hand reaches behind her for the scissors that will mortally wound Swann in the back during his attempted strangulation of her. In the second example, Hitchcock allows a vital bit of evidence, Tony's hidden key discovered by Inspector Hubbard in the front hall, to be put on display; Hubbard's hand slowly advancing from the screen with the evidence to convict.

For the rest Hitchcock was very circumspect about limiting the 'gimmick' of 3D; creating a definite foreground, middle ground and background, in effect placing his audience within the confined spaces of Tony and Margo's apartment for the ultimate bit of voyeurism. The audience is unsettlingly trapped between these last two plains, making them complicit in the murder plot and ultimate frame up of Margo; Hitchcock ever so slightly manipulating the cinematic space within the room to contain the audience within the action taking place seemingly around them. In the end, all of Hitchcock's planning was largely for not. By the time **Dial M for Murder** had its premiere the brief 3D fad had significantly cooled and only the flat version of the film was given a wide release. In retrospect, the beauty of Hitchcock's pacing is that it does not require 3D to sell the story. The movie works just as well in its 2D conventional presentation.

**Dial M for Murder** is really the last Hitchcock movie of its kind. For the most part, Hitchcock left the mediocrity of his mid-40s career behind; his mid-1950s movie tenure producing an unprecedented string of smash hits, culminating in more than a handful of truly outstanding cinematic masterpieces; 1959's **North By Northwest** tipping the scales with a startling departure: **Psycho** in 1960. Three years later Hitchcock would effectively put a period to this run with his only real foray into horror - **The Birds** (1963). A year later, with the release of **Marnie** (1964) Hitchcock seemed to have suddenly – and quite unexpectedly – passed his prime.

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