

OLLI: Spring 2012: BRITISH HITCHCOCK

Alfred Hitchcock: Chronology of His Life:

from *Cahiers du Cinema: Masters of Cinema: Alfred Hitchcock* by Bill Krohn

1899

13 August. Born in Leytonstone, London. Alfred Joseph Hitchcock is the third child of William and Emma Hitchcock. He has a brother, William, and a sister, Ellen (Nellie). The father is a greengrocer, and the family lives in rooms over the shop.

1906

The Hitchcocks move to Limehouse, near the London docks.

1906-17

An avid reader in his youth, he discovers Poe (his favourite writer), Buchan, Chesterton and Flaubert. He also discovers film and theatre.

1910

Enters St Ignatius' College. He studies with the Jesuit fathers but continues to live at home.

1913

Enters London School of Engineering.

1914

Hired by W. T. Henley's Telegraphic Works, Hitchcock is popular with his fellow employees and edits the company newsletter, *The Henley Telegraph*. Death of his father.

1916

Enters Goldsmiths' College, where he studies commercial illustration.



Shooting of *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (1935) with Madeleine Carroll and his wife and frequent collaborator Alma Reville.

1917

Rents a flat in London. He is promoted to the advertising department at Henley's and learns about filmmaking by reading professional publications.

1920

Hitchcock sees J. M. Barrie's play *Mary Rose* about a young girl who is carried off by fairies. For the rest of his life he will dream of filming it.

1921

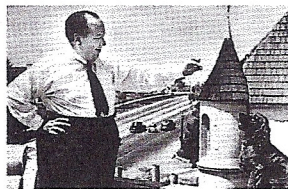
Hired by Famous Players-Lasky in Islington, first to write and draw intertitles, then as artistic director. He meets Alma Reville and studies screenwriting, with Jeanie MacPherson, Cecil B. DeMille's muse, and other writers from Paramount.

1922

Famous Players closes. Hitchcock stays on at the Islington studio, making himself useful in various capacities. He writes screenplays, including a treatment, *Goodnight Nurse*, which was recently rediscovered and sold at auction.

1923

Production interrupted of *Number 13*, which would have been Hitchcock's first film as a director. He joins the Select Organization, directed by Michael Balcon. He becomes Graham Cutts's assistant director on five films and hires Alma Reville as his assistant.



In his first house in Hollywood in the 1940s.



Rehearsal with his daughter Patricia who plays a minor part in *Strangers on a Train* (1951).

1924

The Select Organization becomes Gainsborough Productions. Hitchcock works as an assistant on *The Blackguard*, co-produced by UFA in Berlin, where he meets F. W. Murnau and observes the shooting of *The Last Laugh* and very probably the shooting of Fritz Lang's *Der Nibelungen*.

1925

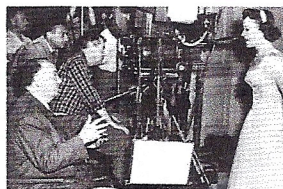
Promoted to director by Balcon, he makes two films in Munich: *The Pleasure Garden* and *The Mountain Eagle*, both written by Eliot Stannard, who would be the screenwriter of all his first films. On a ship in the middle of a storm he proposes marriage to Alma. He makes friends with the intellectuals of the London Film Society, in particular Ivor Montagu and Angus MacPhail, the inventor of the MacGuffin.

1926

Filming of *The Lodger*. The distributor C. M. Woolf refuses to take the film. Hired by Balcon to 're-edit' it, Ivor Montagu, without changing much, saves the film.

1927

The Lodger is a big success. Marriage to Alma. Announcement of Hitchcock's departure to British International Pictures. Obligated to remain at Gainsborough for a few more months, he makes *Downhill* and *Easy Virtue*. At BIP he makes *The Ring*, for which he is the only credited screenwriter (something that will never happen again). The start of his collaboration with cameraman Jack Cox, with whom he will make twelve films. Alma becomes pregnant.



Shooting of *Strangers on a Train* (1951): Patricia plays a senator's daughter.

1928

Birth of Patricia Hitchcock.

1929

Blackmail is filmed in two versions, silent and sound. Makes *Juno and the Paycock*, 'the first all-sound film by Hitchcock', a print of which is burned in a public square in Belfast.

1930

Hitchcock directs three episodes of *Elstree Calling*, a promotional film for BIP that traces what will be the cardinal points of Hitchcock's future career: theatre, cinema and television. *Murder!* is also filmed in a German version (*Mary*). Return to UFA in a country en route to fascism.

1931

Failure of the ambitious *Rich and Strange*.

1932

First contacts with Hollywood producers.

1934-38

Return to Islington studios, home of Michael Balcon's new company, British Gaumont Pictures. With Charles Bennett, Angus MacPhail and Ivor Montagu, he invents the Hitchcock thriller in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *The Thirty-Nine Steps*, *Young and Innocent* and *The Lady Vanishes*. International success despite a second run-in with the distributor C. M. Woolf over *The Man Who Knew Too Much*.



Cooking with Patricia in the 1950s.

1939-40

Moves to Hollywood. Filming of *Rebecca* and *Foreign Correspondent*. Selznick wins the Oscar for Best Picture for *Rebecca*.

1941

Oscar for Joan Fontaine for *Suspicion*.

1943-44

During the making of *Shadow of a Doubt*, Hitchcock's mother Emma dies in England. Makes two short propaganda films in England, *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure malgache* (Hitchcock's only French-language film), with the producer Sidney Bernstein, who will become his partner in 1948. He is visited at his hotel by Samuel Fuller, former journalist, writer and soldier. Hitchcock asks Fuller what he's doing in England. 'If I told you that,' growls Fuller, 'I'd have to kill you.'

1945

Second trip to England (in third class) to view images of the death camps and write a documentary, *Memory of the Camps*. The film is never screened and the last reel, about Auschwitz, is 'lost'.

1948-49

Films *Rope* and *Under Capricorn* for Transatlantic Pictures, the company he has created with Sidney Bernstein.



A Pharaonic profile.

1950-54

Four films for Warner Bros. Patricia Hitchcock acts on film for the first time in *Stage Fright* and *Strangers on a Train*.

1953

Birth of Patricia Hitchcock O'Connell's first daughter, Mary Alma.

1954-56

Rear Window marks the beginning of his contract with Paramount and the first of four collaborations with the dialogue specialist John Michael Hayes.

1954

First encounter with the *Cahiers du cinéma* group during the filming of *To Catch a Thief* on the Riviera. Birth of Teresa O'Connell, his second granddaughter.

1955-63

The series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* is on the air every week.

1957

Return to Warner Bros. for *The Wrong Man*. Vera Miles, who was supposed to star in *Vertigo*, gets pregnant and is replaced by Kim Novak.

1958

Alma Hitchcock, suffering from cancer, is cured thanks to an experimental treatment. April 13. 'Lamb to the Slaughter' is broadcast, starring Barbara Bel Geddes — the most famous episode of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*.



Alfred Hitchcock, Alma Reville and their daughter Patricia on the set of *Psycho* (1960).

1959

Hitchcock appears in *Tactic*, an educational broadcast about cancer that he 'directs' on-camera as a specialist in fear. *North by Northwest* is a blockbuster for MGM. Birth of Kathleen O'Connell, his third granddaughter.

1960

Since Paramount doesn't understand Hitchcock's desire to make *Psycho*, a morbid novel by a lurid writer, he finances the film with revenues from his TV series and films it with his TV crew. The film is a big success to the astonishment of everyone, Hitchcock included.

1962-66

Takes up residence at Universal, becomes a stockholder and surrounds himself with a solid team of collaborators for *The Birds* and *Marnie*. His long-time editor George Tomasini dies of a heart attack; Hitchcock is alienated from his protégée Tippi Hedren because of personal differences; his cameraman, Robert Burks, doesn't come back for *Torn Curtain* because Hitchcock wants to shoot more scenes than ever using back projection.

1963

Interviewed by François Truffaut for *Hitchcock*; sends a copy of *The Birds* to Truffaut to be screened for Jean Cocteau, who is dying.



At work with Alma Reville in the 1960s.



In front of a portrait of his daughter by the painter Nicole Kidman in the 1960s.

1968

Receives the Irving Thalberg Award, the only 'personal' Oscar Hitchcock ever received.

1968-72

Topaz bombs, but Hitchcock recovers his box-office standing by making *Frenzy* in London — it makes more money than *Psycho*.

1971

Becomes Chevalier of the Legion d'Honneur.

1974

Heart attack. Has a pacemaker implanted.

1975-76

Making and triumphal release of his last film, *Family Plot*. Shortly after that, Alma suffers a severe stroke.

1976-79

Works on the screenplay and pre-production of *The Short Night*, but his health doesn't permit him to make the film.

1979

Receives the Lifetime Achievement Award of the American Film Institute. Is knighted by the Queen.

1980

29 April. Death of Alfred Hitchcock.

1982

6 July. Death of Alma Hitchcock.



Alma Reville in the kitchen of the Bellagio road house in the 1970s.