

Alfred Hitchcock Presents Notes

Episodes For Class:

Banquo's Chair (Aired May 3, 1959)

The Morning After (Aired January 11, 1959)

Alfred Hitchcock Presents was a television anthology series created, hosted and produced by Alfred Hitchcock. It aired on CBS and NBC between 1955 and 1965 featuring dramas, thrillers and mysteries. Between 1962 and 1965, it was renamed *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*. Alfred Hitchcock directed 18 episodes during the run of both series. *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* aired weekly on Sunday nights at 9:30PM on CBS from 1955 to 1960. The show aired later on Tuesday nights at 8:30PM on NBC from 1960 to 1962.

Alfred Hitchcock Presents is best remembered for its opening sequence. Hitchcock enters in silhouette from the right side of the screen into a simple outline caricature (which Hitchcock drew) of Hitchcock's profile. He then walks to center screen to overtake the caricature while the theme music of Charles Gounod's "Funeral March Of A Marionette" is heard. After the title sequence, Hitchcock greets his audience with him saying "Good evening" followed by an introduction of the evening's story. The series was originally 25 minutes per episode and expanded to 50 minutes in 1962 when it was retitled *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*.

Alfred Hitchcock Presents included 268 episodes during its seven year run. Another 93 episodes were produced for *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*.

Some of the guest stars appearing on *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* were Patricia Hitchcock (Alfred Hitchcock's daughter), Dick York, Robert Horton, Robert Vaughn, Clint Eastwood, Robert Redford, Inger Stevens, Steve McQueen, Audrey Meadows, Walter Matthau, Claude Rains, Joan Fontaine, Burt Reynolds, Vera Miles, Peter Lorre, Bette Davis, Jessica Tandy, Roger Moore, John Cassavetes, Peter Falk, Ricardo Montalbán and many others.

Alfred Hitchcock Presents received 13 Emmy Award nominations in various categories and won three times.

A revival of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* debuted in the fall of 1985 with colorized introductions by Alfred Hitchcock. The new series lasted only one season before NBC cancelled it. The series was next produced for three more years by the USA Network.

A few fun items: In 1958, "WHY" Alfred Hitchcock's Original Mystery Board Game challenged players to solve the mystery of what happened to 6 masqueraded party-goers as they left the party and took shelter from a storm in an old house, never to be seen again. The object of the game is to capture one ghost, one weapon and one motive card. Also in 1958, Imperial Records released the album *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: Music to Be Murdered By*. The tunes included were I'll Never Smile Again, I Don't Stand A Ghost Of A Chance With You, After You've Gone, Alfred Hitchcock Television Theme, Suspicion, Body and Soul, Lover Come Back To Me, I'll Walk Alone and The Hour of Parting.

Alfred Hitchcock was born Alfred Joseph Hitchcock in Leytonstone, Essex, England. One of his favorite stories for interviewers was about his father sending him to the local police station with a note when he was five years old. The policeman looked at the note and locked him in a cell for a few minutes, saying, "This is what we do to naughty boys." This experience left Hitchcock with a lifelong phobia of law enforcement.

While in school, Hitchcock's favorite subject was geography. He became interested in maps and the timetables of trains, trams and buses. In 1913, he enrolled in night classes at the London County Council School of Engineering and Navigation. In 1917, he joined a cadet regiment of the Royal Engineers and took part in theoretical briefings, weekend drills and exercises.

Soon after, Hitchcock took an interest in creative writing and became a founding editor and business manager of The Henley Telegraph where he submitted several short stories. Henley's promoted him to the advertising department, where he wrote copy and drew graphics for electric cable advertisements. He also enjoyed watching films, plus the American movies of Charlie Chaplin, D. W. Griffith, Buster Keaton and particularly Fritz Lang.

He read in a trade paper that Famous Players–Lasky, the production arm of Paramount Pictures, was opening a studio in London. They were planning to film The Sorrows of Satan by Marie Corelli, so he produced some drawings for the title cards and sent his work to the studio. They hired him and he began working for Islington Studios as a title-card designer.

When Paramount left London in 1922, Hitchcock was hired as an assistant director by a new firm run by Michael Balcon, later known as Gainsborough Pictures.

By 1927, Hitchcock had established himself as a name director with his first thriller, *The Lodger: A Story Of The London Fog*. Two years later, Hitchcock began work on *Blackmail* when its production company, British International Pictures, converted its Elstree Studios to sound. This film was the first British "talkie".

In 1933, Hitchcock signed with Gaumont-British, again working for Michael Balcon. His first film for the company, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* in 1934 was a success and his second film, *The 39 Steps* in 1935 gained him recognition in the United States.

In April of 1939, the Hitchcock family moved to Hollywood. From then on, he would make many memorable films which include *Strangers On A Train*, *Dial M For Murder*, *Rear Window*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *Vertigo*, *North By Northwest*, *Psycho*, *The Birds*, *Marnie* and *Torn Curtain*. During his career, he would make at least 36 cameo appearances in his films.

Alfred Hitchcock was nominated five times for an Academy Award as best director, he was nominated six times as best director by the Directors Guild of America and received three nominations from Cannes. He never won in any of these categories. He was awarded the Irving Thalberg Memorial Award at the 1967 Academy Awards ceremonies. He delivered the shortest acceptance speech in Academy Award history - he simply said "Thank you".

He has two stars on the Hollywood Walk of Fame for Motion Pictures at 6506 Hollywood Boulevard and for Television at 7013 Hollywood Boulevard in Hollywood, California.

Banquo's Chair - Cast

John Williams (Inspector Brent) - is best known for his role as Chief Inspector Hubbard in *Dial M For Murder*, a role he played on Broadway, in Alfred Hitchcock's 1954 film and again on television in 1958.

In addition to *Dial M for Murder*, he appeared in Hitchcock's *The Paradine Case*, *To Catch A Thief* and in 10 episodes of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. For Billy Wilder, he appeared in *Sabrina* and *Witness For The Prosecution*. During the 1960's, most of his work was in television, including nine episodes on *Family Affair* taking over Sebastian Cabot's duties as Brian Keith's butler when Cabot had health problems.

Kenneth Haigh (John Bedford) - first came to public recognition for playing the role of Jimmy Porter in the play *Look Back In Anger* in 1956 opposite Mary Ure in London's West End Theatre. He also briefly appeared uncredited in the Beatles' *A Hard Day's Night*. His other film roles were as Brutus in *Cleopatra* and starring as Napoleon in *Eagle in a Cage*.

Haigh also made guest appearances on television in the programs *Thriller*, *The Twilight Zone*, *Studio One* and *Playhouse 90*.

Reginald Gardiner (Major Cook-Finch) - His first role in films was in the Alfred Hitchcock directed *The Lodger: A Story Of The London Fog* in 1927. He would work in nearly 100 movies.

His comic presence could be seen in *A Damsel in Distress*, *The Man Who Came To Dinner* and *Cluny Brown*. In later years, Gardiner became a regular on television as co-star of *The Phyllis Diller Show*, *The Pruitts of Southampton* in 1966. He could also be seen in episodes of *Perry Mason*, *77 Sunset Strip*, *Green Acres* and *Petticoat Junction*.

Max Adrian (Robert Stone) - Born in Ireland, he was a founding member of both the Royal Shakespeare Company and Laurence Olivier's National Theatre. Adrian traveled to America in 1956 to appear in Leonard Bernstein's operetta *Candide* on Broadway.

Adrian made his debut with two films, *The Primrose Path* and *Eight Cylinder Love* both in 1934. On television, he made appearances on *Perry Mason*, *One Step Beyond*, *Playhouse 90* and *The Third Man*.

Tom Dillon (Sergeant Balton) - was also born in Ireland. Among his uncredited film appearances were *Going My Way*, *The Thin Man Goes Home*, *Mildred Pierce* and *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. On television, *Climax!*, *My Little Margie*, *I Led Three Lives* and *The Ray Milland Show* were some of his credits.

Hilda Plowright (Mae Thorpe) - Her 27 year career in films and television included roles in *77 Sunset Strip*, *One Step Beyond*, *The Loretta Young Show*, *A Star Is Born*, *Abbott and Costello Meet Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* and *Now, Voyager*.

George Pelling (Lane) - Most of his work was on television programs such as *The Time Tunnel*, *12 O'Clock High*, *The Farmer's Daughter*, *77 Sunset Strip* and *Whirlybirds*.

The Morning After - Cast

Robert Alda (Ben Nelson) - His career began in vaudeville, as a singer-dancer. Alda went on to perform on radio and in burlesque. He made his film debut as George Gershwin in *Rhapsody in Blue* in 1945. He also had great success on the Broadway stage in such productions as *Guys and Dolls* and *What Makes Sammy Run*. Robert Alda is the father of actor Alan Alda.

Jeanette Nolan (Mrs. Trotter) - began her acting career in the Pasadena Community Playhouse and made her radio debut in 1932 at the age of 20 in *Omar Khayyam*.

Additionally, she appeared in more than 300 television shows, including episodes of *Perry Mason*, *I Spy*, *MacGyver*, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* and as a regular on *The Richard Boone Show* and *The Virginian*. Nolan was cast as a witch several times on television episodes of *The Twilight Zone*, *Thriller* and *Night Gallery*. She received four Emmy Award nominations.

Dorothy Provine (Sharon Trotter) - graduated from the University of Washington with a degree in Theater Arts. Three days after arriving in Hollywood, she got the role of the notorious bank robber in *The Bonnie Parker Story* in 1958.

On television, she is best remembered for her period roles as 1890's saloon singer Rocky Shaw in *The Alaskans* and as Pinky Pinkham in the Warner Brothers adventure series *The Roaring 20's*.

In motion pictures, she had prominent roles in *It's A Mad Mad Mad Mad World*, *Good Neighbor Sam*, *The Great Race* and *That Darn Cat!* Provine made her last film appearance with Dick Van Dyke in the comedy *Never A Dull Moment* in 1968.

She occasionally sang on the "LIVE" stage and appeared briefly as a duo with George Burns in a 1963 Las Vegas nightclub act.

Fay Wray (Mrs. Nelson) - In 1933, Fay Wray was approached by producer Merian C. Cooper, who told her that he had a part for her in a picture in which she would be working with a tall, dark leading man. What he didn't tell her was that her "tall, dark leading man" was a giant gorilla. The picture turned out to be the classic *King Kong*.

She is regarded as Hollywood's first "scream queen" due to her roles in *King Kong* and early Technicolor thrillers *Doctor X* and *Mystery Of The Wax Museum*. Additionally, Wray co-starred in *The Vampire Bat* and *The Most Dangerous Game*.

Fay Wray was originally offered the role of the elderly Rose DeWitt Bukater in *Titanic*. She turned down the offer. Wray was also offered a cameo role in the remake of *King Kong*, but turned it down because she did not like the script.

She made several guest appearances on the television programs which included ~~77~~ *Sunset Strip*, *Hawaiian Eye*, *The Real McCoys* and *Wagon Train*.

On August 10, 2004, two days after her death, the lights on the Empire State Building in New York City (seen in her most popular film, *King Kong*), were dimmed for 15 minutes in her memory.

On February 8, 1960, she was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame located at 6349 Hollywood Blvd. in Hollywood.

Dorothea Lord (Maid) - During her brief four year career in television, Lord was seen in programs such as *The Tales Of Wells Fargo*, *M Squad*, *Maverick*, *Bourbon Street Beat*, *Suspicion* and *77 Sunset Strip*.

REFERENCES

The Internet Movie Database
Wikipedia