

### Hitch LWS 3 Alfred Hitchcock and women

Alfred Hitchcock dressed up  
as Norman Bates's mother for *Psycho*, 1960



#### What can you remember about Hitchcock's childhood?

##### 1. Listen to the first clip once and answer the questions:

What did Hitchcock think of the murderers (according to Spoto)?

What thing interested him most in victims' experience?

How did Hitchcock's mother use to leave the house?

Now, read the transcript and try to fill the gaps with the correct forms of the words in brackets (part A). Listen again, check your answers and fill the gaps in part B with only one word each.

A.

As a teenager, Alfred Hitchcock grew \_\_\_\_\_ (thrill) with crime literature. Starting with the works of Arthur Conan Doyle and moving on to what \_\_\_\_\_ (essence) were early true \_\_\_\_\_ (criminal) books, accounts of actual criminal cases and investigations.

Spoto says Hitchcock came to think of the \_\_\_\_\_ (murder) he studied as his heroes rather than their victims or the people who caught them. When he did focus on the tales of the victims' experience, the thing that \_\_\_\_\_ (interest) him most was how much they 'd suffered.

Alfred left school in 1913 when he was 14 and he spent the next several years doing mix of odd jobs, \_\_\_\_\_ (art) experimentation an occasional rough attempts at some kind of \_\_\_\_\_ (second) education. He attended many plays and grew enthralled by the young art of filmmaking.

But he had no time at the moment to consider that as a career option. On December 12, his dad died.

B.

Hitchcock was only fifteen and suddenly found himself caretaker to a very demanding mother.

- Ugh! Psycho!
- Maybe, a little bit. Quote: My mother was \_\_\_\_\_ about her home and her person. She never left the house without herself at her best: her \_\_\_\_\_, her \_\_\_\_\_, her dress, her shoes perfectly polished, a well-kept \_\_\_\_\_ – inside as well as outside, and gloves whenever possible.

##### 2. Listen to this snippet and fill the gaps with prepositions \_\_\_\_\_

- Now while he was still \_\_\_\_\_ school and as young man Hitchcock's mother expected him to come \_\_\_\_\_ her bedside and describe \_\_\_\_\_ excruciating detail what he'd done that day.
- When he was married, his mom accompanied him and his wife \_\_\_\_\_ vacations \_\_\_\_\_ the time they got married \_\_\_\_\_ her death.



- Unfortunately, there's not as much detail \_\_\_\_ the relationship as I'd like, or at least I wasn't able to find it. But every detail I was able to find makes it seem like a little bit weird [Yeah] she was a bit \_\_\_\_ demanding lady.
- Right. Especially since he kinda took \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ his dad, that's kinda weird.
- Yeah, almost like "You're my new husband" [Yeah] You know what I mean, there's like a creepy thing happening.
- When it's kind \_\_\_\_ what you have happening \_\_\_\_ Psycho.

### 3. Listen to the snippet. Was the silent film industry in Britain a good place for women? What had Alma Reville done before she met Hitchcock? \_\_\_\_\_

Shadow the pieces.

\_\_\_\_\_ Who was the only one who took him under the wing? Who noticed him?

\_\_\_\_\_ I think the person who was really responsible for launching Hitchcock on to the world was producer Michael Balcon. [Malcolm Balcon, yes] And Balcon started to notice Hitchcock's talent.

\_\_\_\_\_ And while we're talking about this period, we mustn't forget that young woman who was sitting there and helping him all the time – Alma Reville wasn't she already in the picture?

\_\_\_\_\_ - She is, yes. She is a hugely important figure in Hitchcock's life.

- Later – Mrs. Hitchcock.

\_\_\_\_\_ She, actually, started out in the film industry before he did. The silent film industry in Britain was actually a really good place for women. But Alma by the time met Hitchcock, she was already a very respected editor, she'd done some assistant directing, she'd even acted in a film as well.

\_\_\_\_\_ And Hitchcock was very intimidated by her at first. He saw this lovely, petit, red-headed young woman on the studio floor and he didn't dare speak to her. He felt sort of she seemed too in control and it made him feel sort of anxious, naïve in comparison.



### 4. Look at the chunks. Where do you think they belong in the transcript? Try to find the correct place for each piece (there is one extra space). Listen and check

convey the forcefulness

bossing an elephant

in her own right

in charge

hitched her career

- This tiny, red-haired woman and this even at that stage very corpulent man, didn't someone once say it was \_\_\_\_\_ like watching a sparrow \_\_\_\_\_ about?
- They did, yeah.

- She was \_\_\_\_\_.



- She was very much. Her physique didn't really

\_\_\_\_\_ of her personality. It's possible that if she hadn't

\_\_\_\_\_ **as it were** to Hitchcock's, that she would have

gone off and had a very successful career \_\_\_\_\_.

**Adverb** [ edit ]

**as it were** (not comparable)

1. Used other than figuratively or idiomatically: see *as*, *it*, *were*.

2. Used to indicate that a word or statement is perhaps not exact though practically right, as if it were so. [quotations ▼] [synonyms ▲]

Synonyms: so to speak, in a manner of speaking, in a way

3. Used to draw attention to the use of a metaphor, sometimes to prevent confusion or to highlight wordplay. [quotations ▼]

She gave all of the women seated at the restaurant food for thought, **as it were**.

Concerns that cloud seeding might "steal" water from an area a cloud is traveling toward—robbing Peter to water Paul, **as it were**—have been dispelled.

## 5. Look at this verbs. How do you think they relate to Hitchcock and Alma's relationship?

*completely ignore*

*snub*

*refuse to acknowledge the person's existence*

*serenade*

*nagging*

### **Nagging**

annoy or irritate (a person) with persistent fault-finding or continuous urging.



**Ex.** Stop nagging. I'll do it as soon as I can.

Listen to the snippet and check your theory, then put the lines in order

A. \_\_\_\_\_

- Yeah, yeah, if you liked a lady, you would kind of serenade her.
- He snubbed her.
- Alma Reville (I think Reville) [Yeah, yeah] was a free-lance editor with the company and apparently 1921 Alfred Hitchcock's way of flirting was to completely ignore her. Even when she was right next to him, and never [...] speak to her.
- Yeah, I think no one had tried this almost nagging. He is like a pioneer. Year, a pioneer of pick-up artistry.
- Well, see, and that worked because back then I don't think anyone did that.
- Yeah, he snubbed her. He, like, refused to acknowledge her existence for like months and months.

B. \_\_\_\_\_



Listen to the next snippet and decide whether the statements are true (t) or false (f).



Hitchcock stopped ignoring Alma and started serenading her.

Once he dropped by Alma's place and asked if she would accept a position as cutter on the picture he was working on.

When they began working more closely together, Hitchcock explained to Alma that he was very shy when it came to women.

He still more or less ignored her.

He viewed his position, the assistant director, as higher than the cutter.

It was unthinkable for a British male to admit that a woman has a more important job than his.

Now, read the lines from the dialogue and explain/rephrase the words and expressions ***in bold italics***:

He's wanna ***hit on this girl*** who has a better job than he does.

We're starting to get into ***the sketchiness*** now.

That was ***the common thinking*** I guess.

C. Listen to the snippet \_\_\_\_\_. Where did Hitchcock pop up the question?

Listen again and read out the transcript. Ask questions for the 'answers' in bold.

- So, he proposed to her while they were on board of the ship from Germany to England ***in the middle of a dreadful storm at sea***. So, that was very romantic and dramatic proposal [On a ship, wow!] Yeah, she's sick and everything.
- They got engaged ***in 1921*** but they didn't get married until ***1926***. Why? Because ***Hitchcock didn't want to get married until he had directed three feature films***, no. [It's a hard rule]. Here's how he described it – well, his explanation for why he had this rule: I had wanted to become, first, a movie director and, second, Alma's husband — not in order of emotional preference, to be sure, but because I felt ***the bargaining power implicit in the first was necessary in obtaining the second***.
- Gees! It's not enough for her to like him, you know, he's gotta like add to the... [Every relationship is about that]... she must have been hard to win over.
- Yeah, it seems like. Cause she had a pretty good career of her own going at that time.
- Yeah, he wanted like to outmatch her.





- Yeah, exactly. And it does seem like she worked with him for his whole career, they were collaborators, but it does seem she kind of gave up having like her own independent career in order to sort of make his better.
- Yeah, being a fan of his films, I would say that a lot of **her collaboration with him** — it's some of the best [yeah] he's done.

**So, we've learnt something about Alfred Hitchcock's attitude toward his mother and his wife. What about other women, for example, actors?**

**6. Read the quote and listen to the short clip. How do they characterize the director?**

**7. Listen to the next snippet and answer the questions \_\_\_\_\_ :**

What film shooting Hitchcock was horrid to Tippi Hedren in?

Was Tippi Hedren an actress?

What did Tippi advertise?

Who drew Hitchcock's attention to Tippi Hedren?

How long did it take to shoot the final scene in The Birds?

What happened to Tippi at the end of the shooting?

**8. Listen, complete the chunks and retell the snippet paying particular attention to the grammar \_\_\_\_\_**

would express her totally understandable \_\_\_\_\_

at some of the \_\_\_\_\_ coming out of Hitchcock

"had pulled her out of the \_\_\_\_\_ heap"

had made her into a \_\_\_\_\_

thousands of girls could have \_\_\_\_\_ her

would have been \_\_\_\_\_ with

was under the \_\_\_\_\_

