

WG and Hitchcock

Sir Alfred Joseph Hitchcock, KBE (1899–1980) is one of the most influential and extensively studied filmmakers in the history of cinema. Known as "the Master of Suspense", he directed more than fifty feature films in a career spanning six decades; the consistent quality of his work is reflected in their cumulative forty-six Oscar nominations and six wins.

Born in Leytonstone, Essex, Hitchcock entered the film industry in 1919 as a title card designer and made his directorial debut with ninety-minute silent *The Pleasure Garden* in 1925. His first successful film, *The Lodger* (1927) helped to shape the thriller genre, his *Blackmail* (1929) was the first British "talkie" and two of his thirties epics, *The 39 Steps* (1935) and *The Lady Vanishes* (1938) are regarded as among the greatest British films of the 20th century.



Alfred Hitchcock circa 1972

Hitchcock's move to Hollywood in 1939 was followed by a string of successful films including *Rebecca* (Best Picture winner) and *Foreign Correspondent* (also nominated; both 1940), *Suspicion* (1941), *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) and *Notorious* (1946). After a brief dip in form in the late forties, Hitchcock returned strongly with *Strangers on a Train* (1951) and *Dial M for Murder* (1954) – indeed, by 1960 he had directed four films often ranked among the greatest of all time: *Rear Window* (1954), *Vertigo* (1958), *North by Northwest* (1959) and *Psycho* (1960). Although the first and last of them garnered his fourth and fifth Best Director nominations, this was an award that eluded him to the last.

WG's twenty-sixth novel, *Marnie*, was published in the United States on 8 January 1961; three days later Hitchcock placed an anonymous bid of \$25,000 with the William Morris Agency, Beverly Hills for its screen rights. After talking it over with WG, the agency rejected the bid, whereupon Hitchcock doubled it and revealed his identity; on 16 January his offer of \$50,000 was accepted.

WG confirms in *Memoirs* that this turn of events "wholly delighted" him.¹ On 4 April, eleven weeks after sale of the rights was agreed, he wrote to make initial contact with the director:

I have been an admirer of your work for so very long, and I think I have seen every film you have made since [1934's] THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH. In 1947 when my first film TAKE MY LIFE was being made, the director and producer of it, and I, went to the Old Bailey to get the atmosphere of a court scene and I was very disappointed that we had missed you by one day, since you had been there the day before on a similar mission in connection with THE PARADINE CASE.

I thought your last film PSYCHO one of the most brilliant.²

WG goes on to apologise for the "slightly unusual way" in which payment for the rights was requested; this comprised the purchase by Hitchcock's representatives of an insurance company annuity which would pay WG a dividend each May the First from 1962 to 1972, thus spreading the income to minimise the tax burden. Though Hitchcock's advisers called the request "rather unique" (Robert Winokur to Herman Citron, 10 April 1963), they did not demur.

On 27 April 1961 the director replied. After first noting that adaptation of the novel was already underway with the locale of the story shifted to America's Eastern seaboard, because "it is here that they have most of the race tracks", Hitchcock launched into a litany of complaints:

I was a little disappointed with your agents in New York who seemed reluctant to cooperate in helping to see that the book got some exploitation and advertising by Doubleday.

I did discover at various bookshops that they were selling out and having to reorder, so I made a proposition to Doubleday that I would match them in their cost of advertising the book further. Their response was rather half-hearted. They [said] that once a

book was out and on its way it would be too late to start to develop an advertising campaign.

I tried to put some pressure on the William Morris office in New York. The head of their literary department ... seemed very off hand and even disclaimed you as a client with the indication that you belong to Christopher [\[Mann\]](#) or the William Morris West Coast Office.

So there you are – it did seem a shame to me, however, because many people who have read the book here have enjoyed it enormously and it got quite a good word-of-mouth. But as you probably know, that is not quite enough to get book sales for a book. I was quite prepared to match Doubleday for a goodly amount. And, I attach a letter from their head man in New York [\[sadly not in the archive\]](#) which will enable you to see what sort of reaction I received.

WG's reply, dated 2 May 1961, seeks first to understand what might have gone wrong:

I have two agents in England who work in close co-operation, Christopher Mann Ltd. who deal with my film work, and A. M. Heath who handle the literary side. This means that in America The Mann Office is represented by the William Morris Agency and Heaths by Brandt & Brandt. I had always imagined ... that a similar co-operation existed over there, since many authors are dealt with in the same way. Evidently not.

He confirms that a "rude letter" is on its way from the Mann Office to William Morris and that Heaths are writing to Carol Brandt re Doubleday's "lack of co-operation", which particularly perplexes WG because

it was not as if the book had not provided them with some profit to play about with. As you will probably know, MARNIE was a Readers Digest Condensed Book Selection for January and ... under the terms of their publishing contract Doubledays keep one half of the receipts from the American R. D. Edition, which have so far been \$60,000. This means that apart from any money they may make from the ordinary edition of the book, they have already received \$30,000 without lifting a hand.

In a letter to Carol Brandt dated 11 May 1961, Doubleday's "chief editor" Ken McCormick expresses his "distress" on learning of these problems

because we're so totally in the wrong. I don't think there is an author on our list to whom we feel more friendliness or more respect than Winston Graham. He works hard; he writes wonderful books for us that sell well and do brilliantly in book club and reprint. He's a model author. That somehow we should have goofed and not worked out the advertising arrangement with Hitchcock, it seems to me, is preposterous, but it happened. For that, my abject apologies to you and Winston.

He states that he has instructed his advertising director to make an arrangement with Hitchcock's people such that both sides contribute \$2000 to "an immediate MARNIE campaign", then reveals that reprint rights have been sold to Fawcett for a "lively" \$25,000 advance plus "bonus arrangement". He goes on:

Nothing would please us more than to see a successful movie of MARNIE; first out of purely selfish motives because there's nothing I love quite so much as a very good suspense movie ... [but] second, and far more important to Winston, you and Doubleday, is the fact that a very good movie will make a difference in the Fawcett sale of the forthcoming paperback, and produce, we hope, royalties beyond the advance ... The word from here on is ACTION.

Things, then, were off to a bad start, due mainly, it seems, to poor communication between the multiplicity of agencies concerned: on WG's behalf, William Morris and Christopher Mann (US and UK film), Brandt & Brandt and A. M. Heath (US and UK literary) and Doubleday (US publisher) plus, on Hitchcock's side, MCA and Herman Citron (his West Coast film and literary agents) and, of course, the rights buyer himself.

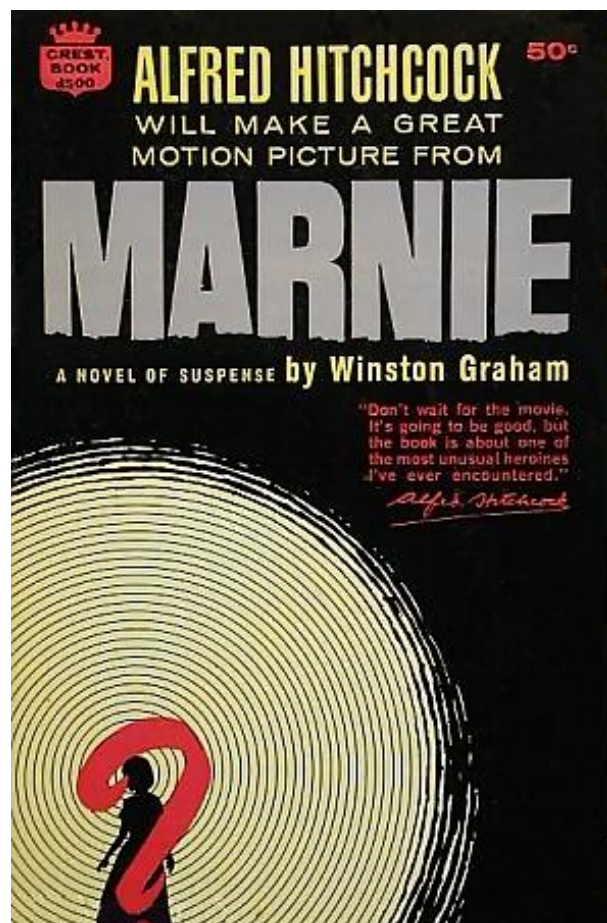
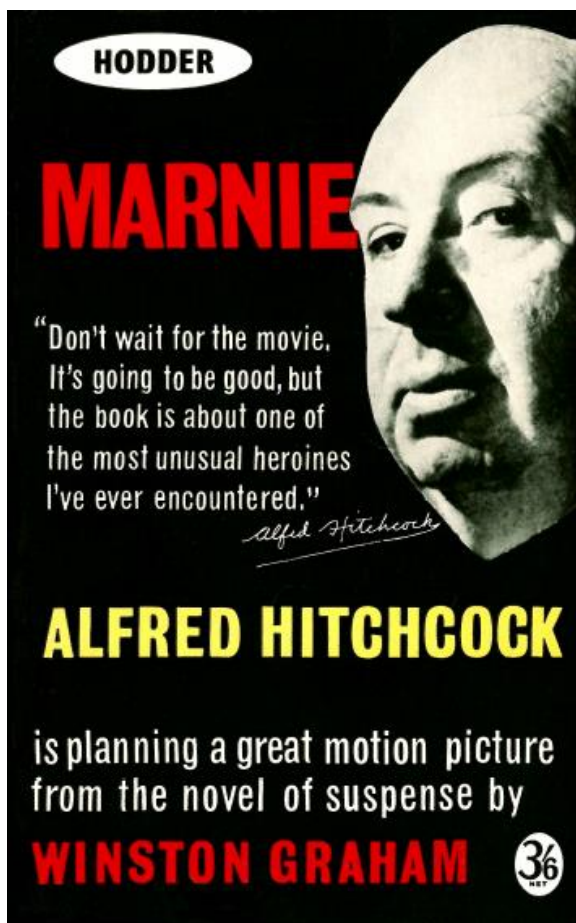
WG wrote to Hitchcock again on 18 May. After acknowledging receipt of the letter from Doubleday's chairman John Sargent to the director (i.e. the one Hitchcock had previously referred to as "from their head man in New York") WG concedes:

I don't feel that their expenditure of \$2,000 is exactly going to rock the Doubleday empire to its foundations, but at least it is a move in the right direction.

WG's next letter, dated 8 June 1961, reports that the advertising contribution has increased from \$2,000 to \$5,000 per side, and also reveals why: because Hitchcock saw fit to reject Doubleday's earlier offer:

Very many thanks ... No doubt we shall all benefit to some extent; but I have a feeling that I shall benefit most. I'm extremely grateful.

Featuring Hitchcock's famous profile and a quote of his that will subsequently appear on numerous editions of the novel (see examples below) in both English and other languages,³ Doubleday's publicity campaign duly runs through July and August, with large display ads placed in major newspapers and book review media such as the *Herald Tribune*, *New York Times Book Review*, *New Yorker*, *LA Times* and *Publisher's Weekly*. In the UK, Hodder & Stoughton place similar ads in the *Sunday Times* and *Sunday Telegraph*.⁴



From (i) Hodder and (ii) Fawcett Crest, both 1962: note that in both cases Hitchcock's name is more prominent than Graham's

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After four letters in nine weeks, WG waited six months before writing again. In a letter dated 12 December 1961 he laments that Doubleday's jointly-funded advertising campaign was not more imaginative; also that running it in July and August "was not their brightest idea" – even so, it "can have done nothing but good". WG also hints that he'd like to be kept informed of the film's development: "I shall be glad to have any progress report you care to send along." But collaboration, he would find, was not Hitchcock's way.

As well as exchanging letters, the two men spoke on the telephone – WG records that Hitchcock was "agreeable and complimentary"⁵ – and also met on a number of occasions: in Claridge's three weeks after the UK opening of *Marnie* (thus in late July or early August 1964), probably also in Rome a few weeks later when the film opened there, and in Hollywood during the shooting of *Torn Curtain* in 1966.⁶ Yet if the unchanging formal salutations – *Dear Mr. Hitchcock / Dear Mr. Graham* – of their letters are anything to go by, at no point is there any hint of mutual sympathy.

On 19 March 1962 it was announced that Princess Grace of Monaco – Grace Kelly as was – would be returning after six years away from the screen to play Hitchcock's *Marnie*. The subsequent headlines around the world dramatically increased demand not only for the book but also its author: "All hell broke over my head," WG recalls in *Memoirs*.⁷ It was more invaluable publicity, of course, which Hitchcock must have relished, but WG did not.

The *Daily Express* caused particular problems. *Marnie's* UK serialisation rights had already been sold to Amalgamated Press, who ran a three-part abridgement in *Home* magazine from January to March 1961. But now Express Newspapers, underbidders in that sale, resolved to serialise the novel a second time. After a "bitter legal battle ... finally settled out of court"⁸, Express Newspapers did eventually serialise *Marnie*, in five parts from 1 to 29 February 1964 in *Woman's Mirror* – but long before then, Princess Grace had withdrawn from the project, to be replaced by Tippi Hedren, the leading lady Hitchcock had introduced in 1963's *The Birds*.

However, back in March 1962, the *Express* was determined to wring from the story every drop of juice it could. Their Saturday the 24th issue carried a photo of Princess Grace making her first public appearance (at "a Monte Carlo wedding yesterday") since the announcement of her proposed return to acting. "While Grace prepares to turn back into a movie star, the script for her film is being worked out," readers were assured, "and top Express writers Leonard Mosley in Hollywood and Peter Evans in New York will be telling you about it."

On Tuesday 27 March the paper launched a "penetrating Express series" concerning "Princess Grace's emergence from palatial retirement" with copy from both men. In "Take One" Evans reports an interview with scriptwriter Evan Hunter, who six weeks earlier had been engaged by Hitchcock for £30,000 to produce a screenplay from WG's novel. Though his "toughest assignment" yet, Hunter was confident that a first draft would be completed within two months. Leonard Mosley's text is interesting enough to reproduce in full:

TAKE TWO

She's a girl who cringes at a kiss

WHAT I THINK ...

The problem facing Hunter and Hitchcock in bringing Marnie to the screen is not simply one of making palatable a heroine who is both an unrepentant criminal and an emotional block of ice.

They need to give her a change of locale and status too. For the character of Marnie in the original novel by Winston Graham is an English girl – and not a very top-drawer English girl either.

Feckless

She has ironed out her ugly provincial accent with a course of elocution lessons, but when she is agitated or excited the refinement crumples and she spits out oaths and execrations in a gorbimey argot right out of the slums where she was born.

Hardly Grace Kelly, is it?

When Marnie was a child she was so neglected by her feckless mum that some of her more hoynedish schoolmates used to gang up on her, pin her down on the playground concrete and triumphantly pick the lice out of her hair.

Can you imagine it? Lice in the golden hair of one of the Philadelphia Kellys! Not even in make-believe you can't.

And that emotional block which makes her despise sex, cringe when a man touches her, and hit out in loathing when she is kissed on the mouth.

Marnie got that way because her mother was a part-time tart during the Hitler war, who picked up casual soldiers off the street.

Marnie used to see what went on, a small child in a dark corner, listening, watching and shuddering.

And one day, watching, she saw her mother take the unwanted baby she got from one such encounter, strangle it and hide the body in a suitcase under the bed.

Shampoo

What, Princess Grace of Monaco playing the part of the daughter of an infanticide?

It just won't do.

So Hunter and Hitchcock are giving Marnie a shampoo and a lift in social status. They are washing the lice right out of her hair and the smell of the backstreet gutters out of her background.

She will be a clean, long-limbed American girl in their version – Grace Kelly, in fact, with a kink. Still a crook. Still frigid. Still a case of sexual aberration, but because there is an elegant skeleton in her cupboard rather than a strangled baby under the bed.

How will she emerge in the new version?

TOMORROW: How she might emerge if I had been writing the story ...

What would WG have made of this? But there was worse to come: the following day, Mosley's "Take Three":

This is the script I would write for her

The trouble for me really started, I suppose, that first morning when I arrived in New York from Chicago – though it certainly did not feel like trouble then.

I left the train and walked up the ramp to the main concourse of Grand Central Station, and all the way I was laughing inside myself, because for all the notice people took of me I might have been a discarded train ticket scuffling about on the ground.

And you might have got as big a kick out of being ignored as I did if you had known what was underneath the dowdy exterior I presented to the world that morning.

I made for the nearest ladies powder room and locked myself in a cubicle and there I began to make the changes that would transform me from an ugly duckling back into a swan. It was really very simple.

Shabby

I slipped off the heavy woollen skirt which had flopped for too long round my legs.

I took off the shabby grey cardigan and the blouse underneath it. I kicked off the flattie shoes.

I loosened my bra and let my figure take its natural shape, and wriggled into the smart-fitting sheath I took from my bag, plus the first stiletto-heeled shoes I had worn for months.

Off came the horn-rimmed glasses. And last of all – and what a relief that was – I eased off the mousy brown wig I was wearing and let loose the blonde hair underneath.

And then, as I looked at myself in the mirror, I ran my hands over my figure and knew what a chrysalis must feel like when it turns into a butterfly.

I was myself again – and it was good to see that I was young and smart and beautiful still.

It took only a moment to stuff the shoes and the old clothes into the case and snap it shut.

The case might have come from any store and there were no markings on the clothes.

I came out of the cubicle, looked around to see if anyone was there, and then pushed the case behind a wash basin.

Buried

It felt almost like disposing of a body. For inside that case was a girl who for the past three months had been me.

Now I was burying her for good.

When I walked out of the powder room door the only mementoes of her I carried away with me were the mousy brown wig stuffed inside my handbag – plus the 2,000 dollars it had helped me to steal.

This time as I strode across the concourse, people noticed me all right.

Men paused in the rush for the office to admire me. Typists and secretaries had envy in their eyes.

A grinning redcap rushed up saying: "Shall I get you a cab, lady?" and led me out into the street as if he were escorting a princess.

I wonder how he would have acted if he had known that what I really am is a thief. I had not felt so good since I stole money for the first time at the age of twelve.

Yes, a thief – and a good and successful one, which women rarely are. The trouble with most female crooks is that they are afraid of working alone. They either team up with a man or they have a man in the background to whom they hand over the money once they have stolen it.

Princess

As a child I was fascinated by the tale of the "Sleeping Beauty" who was awakened from her sleep by the kiss of a Fairy Prince and her heart was warmed and they lived happily ever afterwards.

It does not work out that way for me: I freeze whenever a man touches me, instead of mellowing under his tenderness.

And why not? Working as a lone wolverine I have got away with it every time – a week's takings from a cinema in Seattle, the holiday fund of a group of workers for whom I acted as treasurer at a small factory in Arizona, the petty cash from a garage in Utah.

What are men compared with money? The money to keep me in good clothes and expensive perfumes when I am not operating. The money to pay the doctor's bills and the little luxuries for my invalid mother in Connecticut.

Though what she would say if she knew where the money came from I do not know. I expect she would die of shame.

Maybe that is what she is going to do if I do not get out of the jam I am in at the moment.

For though it all seemed bright with promise that first morning at Grand Central Station, it could not be more desperate now.

Comfort

What a fool I was for thinking that this was not only going to be a big job but a smooth one too.

The way I had worked it out seemed water-tight, and the money I would make from it would keep mother and me in comfort for years.

Consider the set-up. The jewellery shop on Fifth-avenue where I went to work does a million dollars' worth of business yearly with every type of customer from bankers mollifying their wives to Texan millionaires trying to buy their way into the bedrooms of the latest starlets.

Its shelves and its safes are loaded with trinkets even a maharajah would slaver over.

And I was determined to have part of it. I had worked and schemed for months to get the job as confidential secretary to one of the two partners.

My boss was John Halliday, the quiet one, and the other was his playboy cousin Roger Miller.

They had both accepted my references and credentials with confidence. And that was not surprising ... as I had forged them myself.

Now that I was installed in the store I was in no hurry. My plans were to settle into the job for six months at least, to win the confidence of the partners, to learn the routine, and then at the right moment to take my pick and skip to Europe over the week-end – from whence I could send for my mother.

But I made a mistake by looking for once exactly like myself. On all my other jobs I had always been the dowdy one, sallow, wigged and desexed.

Explorer

This time, because the job needed it, I indulged myself in my own clothes, my own perfume, and my own hair. It was not too bad to be ogled by the customers. At least there was always a counter or space between me and them.

But with Roger Miller it was different. He had a way of always being in a doorway when I came through so he brushed against me as I passed. "I should have been an explorer," he grinned as I struggled by him. I knew what he meant.

He had roving hands and I flinched at the contact. But what could I do? If I complained it would mean leaving the job – and leaving the haul I had set my heart on.

One evening I had been working late on letters for John Halliday and when I came down to let myself out of the shop there was no one there and the front door was locked. I looked round and I saw it lying there as if someone had forgotten it.

It was one of the prize possessions of the store, a diamond and emerald necklace. I knew it was a trap, but I could not help it.

I picked it up and put it on and looked at it in one of the tiny mirrors on the counter – and the way it lay on my skin and sparkled made me feel like a princess all over again.

At which two arms came under my own and enveloped me and a face pressed into my neck. "Don't take it off, my dear," said Roger Miller in my ear. "If you're a nice girl there's no reason why you should ever take it off."

And he began impelling me gently towards the retiring room we kept for our rich clients at the back of the store.

TOMORROW: Tempted ... by 50,000 dollars

Reading this dross must have dismayed WG, who wasted no time in cabling Hitchcock:

Anxious to know if you authorized Leonard Moseley's [sic] serial commenced March 28 in Daily Express.

Roger Miller had come up to the car and he peered at me, still looking sheepish.

"I want to apologise to you," he said. "I'm sorry, terribly sorry."

"Good," said John Halliday. "And now that's over, let's go in and get married."

He did not say another word until we were inside the chapel, and then he said:-

"Come on, child. Smile."

And as the preacher came forward I began to realise there was obviously more to life than money. There was MEN.

**THE
END**

The director telephoned the author, presumably to disclaim any involvement, after which WG had to endure Mosley's Takes Four and Five, published on Thursday 29 and Friday 30 March, before, at last, the dust began to settle.

Left: "Take Five", conclusion, *Daily Express*, 30 March 1962

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Another long pause in the author / director correspondence was ended in November 1963 when WG sent Hitchcock a copy of his then-latest novel, *The Grove of Eagles*. In the accompanying note, WG said of his book:

It belongs to the Jekyll side of my literary nature and is therefore historical and highly unfilmable. Don't bother to read it, therefore, but stick it on your shelf, and then, if either you or your wife happen to go down with a cold sometime, this might make desirable bedside reading.

Quite what Hitchcock would have made of it after *Marnie* is anyone's guess. Nonetheless, in a letter dated 10 December 1963 he sends thanks for the gift and confirms that he has "the man who plays James Bond -- Sean Connery in the part of Mark"; then, unexpectedly, contrition:

This I have to say to you with bowed head: there have been some story changes made ... [Examples follow] ... You must be patient with me, the changes haven't been made for the sake of change, there is a reason for all of them.

These lines appear to be rather disingenuous – by now, after all, the film is in its third week of shooting and WG has still not even seen a script. There seems to be no reason to believe that Hitchcock ever sought or hoped to receive or would welcome, much less respond to any input from the source novel's author, even though he seems here, belatedly, to invite it. Whether or no, on 18 December WG writes back offering his twopenn'orth:

I'm not frightfully fussy about keeping to the letter of a book. I feel when a film is made the book has to be unpicked almost to the original idea and then rebuilt in the new medium, maybe using a lot of book material but only if it contributes in the best way to the re-telling ...

I think the only thing I am rather anxious about is the spirit of the thing. To me, Marnie and Mark have got to go to war in earnest [otherwise] it becomes conventional comedy drama ... Unless Mark is genuinely sexually jealous of Marnie, unless Marnie really hates Mark the night after she has been made love to against her will, unless they themselves take it desperately seriously, the heart and the originality will drop out of the book.

Here am I, talking to a master – Sorry. Perhaps the anxiety arises a little from your choice of Sean Connery ... The two James Bond films do tend to type him a little.

One senses WG's disquiet; that he feels his story is possibly not in safe hands. He goes on to say that, although he'd like to, he can't come over to visit the set because he's presently "crawling about a nursing home" recuperating after an operation. But he hints that a trip across the Atlantic the following summer would suit him well:

... If a Hollywood premiere of the film took place sometime in the summer or early autumn, and other things were favourably fixed, I might come over for that. Do you think you could ask your secretary to keep me informed?

Then, early in the New Year, WG finally receives a copy of Hitchcock's script, which prompts another letter, dated 9 January 1964. WG begins by praising the "very exciting ... remarkably excellent" script and says he "can see Sean Connery perfectly in the part he has to play" before diffidently acknowledging "practically only one qualm, which surfaced slowly through the last quarter of an hour of reading":

This was that the script makes Marnie just that bit too tough right to the finish for the sudden happy ending to be acceptable ... Pursuing this for a moment, in the book while there was little or no relenting so far as Marnie was concerned in her attitude towards sex, there were various indications that she found herself unable to hate all the rest that Mark stood for. In the film there only remains the scene at the party before she meets Strutt – vital and excellent – and her sudden inability to steal the money from Mark's safe. While I see very well the reason for not having Mark involved in the hunting accident, I think this is a major loss. When they were both lying there in need of her, Marnie's choice of her hated husband in preference to her beloved Forio is pivotal if one is going to see her as a troubled human being on whom constant kindness is beginning to leave its mark.

If she has to shoot Forio, is it not a mistake that any look of satisfaction would come over her face when she's done it? (I know this is meant as a psychological link-up with her having

killed the sailor.) Similarly, just after this ... she says things 'sweetly, reasonably' and 'reasonably, pleasantly' and ... wears a cunning expression, all of which seems to indicate a state of mind bordering on insanity, where I would have thought bitter distress would have been ample reason for her to have been dangerous with the gun.

I would not presume to make any of this comment ... were it not that the end [of the film] presupposes a sudden cure, and the more insane she looks the harder this will be to swallow. You and I know, and maybe audiences don't, that to uncover the cause of a repressed psychological trauma is only the first big step towards a cure ... but the more reasonable we could make it all, I think, the better.

That tell-tale "we" speaks volumes – WG must hope that Hitchcock will at least consider his concerns, despite any suggestion from the director that he is or ever was actually minded to do so. WG then goes on to propose an alternative ending:

Might Mark and Marnie perhaps go downstairs at the very end and get into the car to drive away. He puts his arm round her again, offering her protection and sympathy, and she has the same old revulsion and starts away – then half checks herself, stares at him unsmiling through her tears. She says: "Give me a little more time, Mark, please. Just a little more time. I'm – so lost." And he, quietly accepting that he has won, nods at her gently and says: "I can wait, my love. Now I can wait."⁹

No response from the director is archived.

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WG's last three Hitchcock letters (at least, of those that survive) are to the director's secretary, Suzanne Gauthier. On 27 May 1964 he writes to ask for "a dozen or two" stills from the film, a couple of the artist's original film-set drawings or designs "so that the walls of my study are decorated with pleasant reminders" and a signed photograph of Tippi Hedren to hang alongside those of his other films' leading ladies.

After acknowledging WG's letter on 15 June, Miss Gauthier writes again on 6 August enclosing a selection of stills and a signed portrait of Miss Hedren. She

regrets being unable to send any set sketches since all were "very badly damaged and bent" during production of the film.

On 18 September 1964 WG acknowledges receipt of Miss Gauthier's parcel and states his intention of writing to Miss Hedren "to thank her for the very charming inscription".

As well as making feature films, Hitchcock hosted (and directed some episodes of) the TV series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1955-1965) and also lent his name to a number of short fiction compendia: *Twelve Stories They Wouldn't Let Me Do on TV*; *Games Killers Play*; *Not for the Nervous*; *Stories That Go Bump in the Night* etc. On 6 July 1966 WG wrote to Miss Gauthier once more, enclosing a copy of his short story AT THE CHALET LARTREC

which it occurred to me might be suitable for inclusion in one of Mr. Hitchcock's volumes such as NOT FOR THE NERVOUS etc. Anyway, I send it along, and if it isn't suitable, perhaps you could let me know. It has been published in a magazine called John Bull, now extinct. It was printed in 1955 or 1956 [actually 1947] but since then I have entirely rewritten it.

The story eventually made its way via Hitchcock's literary agent, Herman Citron to a Random House, New York reader called Lee Wright. On 18 July 1966 he tried to let WG down lightly:

It is a good story, but unfortunately it's simply not horrible enough. The volume we are now working on ... is called ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS: STORIES THAT SCARED EVEN ME and you can imagine they're pretty gruesome. However, I shall certainly keep your story in mind for some future collection. Many thanks for giving us a chance to read it.

Wright copied the above response to Citron together with a rather more frank covering note:

I don't know how close a friend Winston Graham is, but I think this should do the trick. The story is adequate, but not really first rate for any collection.

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There is one more interaction to record: in 1975, WG sent Hitchcock a copy of *Woman in the Mirror* inscribed *To Alfred Hitchcock from Winston Graham with admiration and regard* – if there was a letter with it, or one in return, they seem not to have been preserved.

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Despite the broad hint dropped in his letter of 18 December 1963 (see page fourteen), WG appears not to have attended the US premiere of *Marnie*; more surprising still, he seems to have missed the UK one also. WG told Tony Lee Moral that "he went to see the film when it was released in London with his son Andrew"¹⁰ – i.e. as a paying customer. Possibly he was invited to the premiere but could not attend for some reason – and it seems from comments made in *Memoirs* that he was at the Rome opening.

And what did he make of the cinematic rendering of his novel? When reporter González Sosa asked him in 1970 what he thought of the film, WG guardedly replied:

*The critics said it was good. It seemed to me that something was missing. It may be that the author of a work has high expectations and believes that the adapter and director who made it into a film have not taken full advantage of it.*¹¹

Twenty-five years later, during an interview with Victoria Hinton of the *Daily Express*, the conversation turned once again to Hitchcock's *Marnie* and, this time, no longer obliged to be "polite", he didn't hold back:

*I didn't like the film at all; the story was distorted and a lot of subtler points were lost. When it came out, the critics disliked it, but now they look on it as one of the most important of Hitchcock's canon. God knows why.*¹²

Sooner or later, truth will out.

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NOTES AND SOURCES

^{1, 5, 6, 7, 8} *Memoirs of a Private Man*, Macmillan, 2003, Book One, Chapter Nine

² All original documents referenced in this article are held by The Margaret Herrick Library, the Fairbanks Center for Motion Picture Study, 333 South La Cienega Boulevard, Beverly Hills, California, 90211, USA

³ German and Japanese to name but two

^{4, 10} *Hitchcock and the Making of Marnie* by Tony Lee Moral, The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2013

⁹ Needless to say, the film does *not* end this way

¹¹ *El Eco de Canarias*, 3 November 1970

¹² Victoria Hinton, *Daily Express*, 18 November 1995

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