MURDER (British International Pictures, 1930) Directed by Alfred Hitchcock Producer: John Maxwell; scenario, Alma Reville from "Enter Sir John" by Clemence Dane and Helen Simpson, and an adaptation by Hitchcock and Walter Mycroft; Camera, Jack Cox; editor, Charles Frend; Sets, John Head; also made in a simultaneous German version under the title "Märy", starring Alfred Abel, Olga Tschechowa, Paul Graetz; 92 minutes.
With Herbert Marshall (Sir John) Nora Baring (Diana Baring) Phyllis Konstant (Dudie Markham) Edward Chapman (Ted Markham) Miles Mander (Gordon Druce) Esme Percy (Hannel Pene) Donald Caldhrop (Ivan Stewart) and A.E. Jeffrey, Mathew Boulton, Violet Farebrother, Ursella Willis, Esme Chaplin.

Bolstered by the sudden acceptance and success of their late silents which, thanks to German influence and much actual German talent had raised their films to standards comparable with Europe and Hollywood, Britain was over-ambitious and over-confident in its first year of talkies. For the most part they were too long, too slow, too dialogue-ridden and too crude technically to match American and the best European sound standards. They faltered, entered a period of economic retrenchment, and began to regain lost momentum. "Murder" is a typical product from this very early sound period. It opens beautifully with a visual style still very reminiscent of the Germans; it closes excitingly. In between it is less dynamic, its entertainment value today somewhat less than spectacular, but its academic value as Hitchcock's first all-talkie thriller quite considerable. It also remains one of his very few genuine who-dun-it mysteries, a genre he disliked intensely because of its formula and limitations. It also has some sociological interest in its commentary on changing mores and morals: an important plot element lies in the villain's relations - a lack of them - with the heroine, In the original story, and as implied here, he is a homosexual. Since that was censorship unacceptably then (except for broad comedy purposes) it was changed, and wrap-up dialogue explains that he was a half-breed "with black blood". Attitudes - and censorship strictures - have of course totally reversed themselves here over the past 40 years! "Murder" is a primitive film, one for study rather than relaxed enjoyment, but an important Hitchcock milestone. Those more concerned with expertise than film history can be reassured that the co-feature presents Hitchcock at his most polished best.

== Intermission, 10 minutes ==

YOUNG AND INNOCENT (Gaumont-British, 1937) Directed by Alfred Hitchcock Produced by Edward Black; scenario by Alma Reville and Charles Bennett from Josephine Tey's novel "A Shilling for Candles"; camera, Bernard Knowles; Art Direction, Alfred Junge; music, Louis Levy; editor, Charles Frend; starring as "The Girl Was Young", 80 minutes.
With Derrick de Marney ("Robert Terraria") Nora Filben (Erica) Percy Marquet (Colonel Burgoyne) Edward Rigby (Will) Harry Clare (Erica's aunt) Basil Radford (Uncle Basil) John Longdon (Detective Kent) George Curzon (Guy) and George Merritt, Pamela Carne, Torin Thatcher, J.H. Roberts, Jerry Verno H.F. Maletby, Peggy Miller, Anna Konstant, John Miller, Beatrice Varley, Frank Atkinson, Syd Crossley.

Perhaps the strongest appeal of "Young and Innocent" today is in its obviously being a kind of blueprint for Hitchcock's most recent thriller, "Frenzy". In its murder, its method of murder and in its basic construction it is solidly a much more gentle forerunner of what is still probably the best thriller of the '70's. The fifth of Hitchcock's six thrillers for Gaumont-British, it is the quietest, the least melodramatic, and possibly the least appreciated. Rather like John Ford relaxing after "The Quiet Man" to make "The Sun Shines Bright", this seems to be Hitchcock doing just as he pleases - throwing in sequences that he's always been anxious to do but never had a spot for, and getting out into rural England to enjoy the sunshine, the rain, the sun, the rain, and the very English humor of the English police. Only "The Lady Vanishes" and " Jamaica Inn" were to follow before he left England for Hollywood.

While it was never one of his major British films, "Young and Innocent" was the one that suffered most from American editing (and a meaningless and far less subtle retitling). Others, like "The 39 Steps", were just snipped at, but here, much to Hitchcock's dismay, the whole sequence of the children's party, virtually a reel, was lopped out entirely - without any evidence that the plot depended on that. The film that resulted is of the full British version. Although the cut was efficient and did speed up the film, its absence was felt: in such a leisurely film, the elimination of a sequence designed to add suspense at a given point is quite serious. Time is the real menace in this film; as in so many Hitchcock films, the audience knows immediately what is going on and who the villain is, but the protagonists do not, and there is no direct confrontation between hero and killer until the very end.
The opening sequence, so theatrical that one tends not to take it seriously, then pays off doubly with the beautiful shots of the corpse being washed ashore, the swell of the surf raising one arm so that it seems to be swimming in death. The quarry sequence, which has absolutely nothing to do with the rest of the film, provides one of the few melodramatic thrills and is obviously thrown in for its own sake, and because the locale justifies it. Hitchcock's fascination with miniatures is also well on display, as in the intricately designed railway siding sequence. It would surely have been easier and more economical to go to one of a dozen London suburbs which had identical set-ups and shoot it live. But not only does Hitchcock use the miniature but also has the gall to hold the shots long after it has become obvious that the set is a miniature. The final sequence of the killer's collapse is dramatically perhaps a little silly - but cinematically fascinating, one of those tremendous tour-de-force single shots which in itself justifies the whole picture. (Hitchcock took two days to plan and shoot this scene, and also re-used its basics in his later "Notorious"). In fact, the film has even less logic than usual for Hitchcock, rather surprisingly in view of the stress on naturalistic backgrounds and comedy (J.H. Roberts' defending counsel is a gem) and the playing-down of high-powered melodrama. But if Hitchcock controls the excitement, he certainly doesn't tone down his own performance, mugging it up almost like Fernandel in a lovely little cameo as a photographer outside the police station.

Wm. K. Everson

FILM SERIES 18, with a stress on mystery and melodrama, will be outlined far more fully in the upcoming Bulletin and calendars; in the meantime, herewith a brief rundown of the programs. Many of the films are important, have rediscoveries, and at least half of them have never been on television.

October 5: THE PREVUE MURDER I: SPECTER (Director Robert Florey, a "B" classic, with Gail Patrick, Reginald Denny); AFTER THE THIN MAN, 2nd and best of the series with Powell, Loy, James Stewart. Oct 12: NIGHT WORLD, a 1932 Underworld "Grand Hotel" with Lew Ayres, Boris Karloff and Busby Berkeley production numbers; DANTE'S INFERNO, brilliant hokum spectacle and art direction, with Spencer Tracy, with Edward G. Robinson, Claudette Colbert; OKAY AMERICA, 1932, dir. Tay Garnett, high-powered semi-political melodrama with Lew Ayres, Maureen O'Sullivan; Oct 26: THE LAST OUTLAW, a John Ford cast (Harry Carey, Hoot Gibson, Tom Tyler, Henry B. Walthall) in a modern western that he wrote and planned to direct but unfortunately didn't; ROBIN HOOD OF ELDORADO, William Wellman's romanticized version of the bloody career of Juquin Hurietta, with Warner Baxter and Norge; both films from 1936.

Nov 2: Rarely seen early Bogarts: BIG CITY BLUES, 1932, with Joan Blondell, directed by Hervyn Leroy; excerpts from A DEVIL WITH WOMEN (1930) and A HOLY TERROR (1931); and BULLDOG DRUMMOND (1929), voted one of the best films of its year, and a marvellously visual, tongue-in-cheek adventure; with Ronald Colman, Joan Bennett, production design by William C. Wenzles.

Nov 9: Two fine sea melodramas following in the wake of "Mutiny on the Bounty" -- SLAVE SHIP (Tay Garnett) with Warner Baxter, Wallace Beery, Mickey Rooney, George Sanders, and SOULS AT SEA (Henry Hathaway) with Gary Cooper, George Raft, Frances Dee, Harry Carey, both from 1937.

Nov 16: STOP NEW YORK (1937) a lively Hitchcockian thriller, directed by Robert Stevenson, with a dash of science-Fiction; Anna Lee, John Loder; GREEN FOR DANGER (1946) Even more in the Hitchcock mould, written and directed by his old scenarist Leauder and Gilliat; literally the perfect movie murder mystery; Alastair Sim, Sally Gray, Trevor Howard.

Nov. 30: Two silent Milestones: EASY VIRTUE - Alfred Hitchcock opens up Noel Coward's play; with Isabel Jean, Ian Hunter; and PAID TO LOVE, Howard Hawks reshapes a Rutianian melodrama into comedy; very rarely shown; George O'Brien, William Powell, Virginia Valli; both from 1927.

Dec. 7: THE MAN WHO CHEATED (1931) Raoul Walsh transforms America's Sweethearts - Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell - in a strong, meaty tale of drug addiction and Chinese bordelloes! A VILLAGE TALE (John Cromwell, 1935) A little-known but very powerful film, a "Peyton Place" of its day, and most unusual for the genteel mid-30's; Randolph Scott, Kay Johnson.

Dec.14: THIRTEEN WOMEN (1932) A fondly remembered and oft-requested film, a bizarre murder mystery with a dash of the occult; Ricardo Cortez, Irene Dunne, Myrna Loy; and FOUR MEN AND A PRAYER (1936) In his only foray into the so-called "B" material with grade "A" production trappings including a South American revolution; Loretta Young, David Miven, George Sanders, Richard Greene, C. Aubrey Smith.