

## The Murderer in the Garden: Something Rotten in Alfred Hitchcock's *Frenzy*

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In 1733, the English artist William Hogarth completed a series of paintings titled *A Rake's Progress*, a sequel to his previous series, *A Harlot's Progress* (1731–32). In *A Rake's Progress*, Hogarth dramatizes the misadventures of young Tom Rakewell, who loses his money, health, and sanity in London. In the third painting, as Rakewell's downward "progress" becomes explicit, Hogarth shows him in a tavern, his body drunkenly splayed over a chair while a prostitute expertly steals from him. The painting's mise-en-scène conveys not only Rakewell's individual dissolution but general chaos and decay, from the broken crockery, discarded clothing, and quarrelling customers to the marks on many of the women's faces—possibly beauty spots, but also potential indications of venereal disease, as Jenny Uglow has argued, thereby foreshadowing Rakewell's future of disease and madness (252-253). In the background a prankster sets fire to a map of the world—her act hinting at universal destruction.

That the tavern pictured was a real location—the Rose Tavern in London's Covent Garden—created an immediate jolt of reality for viewers of *A Rake's Progress* while reinforcing Rakewell's danger: the Rose, and Covent Garden as a whole, was infamous for vice and criminal activity. The Garden's long, diverse history suffuses the Rose painting—a history including serving as a convent garden, fashionable residence, center of a fruit and vegetable market, and the locale of entertainments from theatres to brothels. The resulting image succinctly conveys consumption and criminality, appetite and pollution: a rottenness connected not only to the fictional Rakewell's world but the artist's own society.

More than two hundred years later, London-born film director Alfred Hitchcock uses a number of London locales, including Covent Garden and its Market, in his own spectacle of vice and

contamination: *Frenzy* (1972). In their story of a serial sex murderer, Hitchcock and screenwriter Anthony Shaffer choose locations specifically associated with London history and Hitchcock's filmography to convey a decay both actual and metaphoric.

Much excellent theoretical work on *Frenzy* has been done by scholars such as Tania Modleski and Robin Wood, particularly in the film's representations of gender and sexuality. This essay intersects at points with this work, yet the main focus is a mise-en-scène analysis utilizing historical research and literary texts to examine how Hitchcock uses *Frenzy*'s locations, particularly the Garden and its Market, to paint, like Hogarth in *Progress*, a satirical, ambivalent vision of the film's characters, London, and humanity itself.

I focus on two strands Hitchcock utilizes to develop a trope of rottenness: pollution and the garden. The first encompasses the city's contamination (from actual waste to citizens' figurative corruption) and the history of London locales, especially Covent Garden, as sites of crime and dissolution; the second addresses Hitchcock's engagement with the garden: "the Garden" of Covent Garden, including the physical space and history of Covent Garden Market as site of actual abundance and rot, and the symbolic freight of gardens in Western culture as places of fecundity and life, decay and death.

Based on Arthur La Bern's 1966 novel *Goodbye Piccadilly, Farewell Leicester Square*, *Frenzy* concerns the efforts of Scotland Yard's Chief Inspector Oxford to locate a serial killer: the "Necktie Murderer." The protagonist is Richard "Dick" Blaney, a barman who has lost his job at The Globe, a Covent Garden pub. Blaney seeks solace from Bob Rusk, a green grocer in Covent Garden Market, and contacts his ex-wife Brenda. When she is strangled, Blaney is suspected; he must avoid the police and discover the real culprit. Rusk's assistance masks his own murderous activity, including his murder of Blaney's girlfriend Babs. Oxford eventually believes in Blaney's innocence and follows him, discovering Blaney in Rusk's flat, standing over a corpse. Rusk enters, ready to conceal the body, and Oxford arrests him as the film ends.

A film called *Frenzy* had been in Hitchcock's mind for some time, albeit with a very different diegesis. Hitchcock planned a New-York based film called *Frenzy* in 1967 but, as scholar Raymond Foery notes in *Frenzy: The Last Masterpiece*, Lew Wasserman, head of Universal Studios, did not approve it (9-10). Hitchcock then received La Bern's novel of a London-based killer and sought Wasserman's consent; Foery argues he received this, in part, as Wasserman foresaw the publicity generated by the director's return to his origins (10-11).

Hitchcock had strong roots in England's capital. Born in the London suburb of Leytonstone, he worked as a title-card designer and writer, then director, for Famous Players-Lasky in London. Many of Hitchcock's early films are located, at least in part, in London, from *The Pleasure Garden* (1925) and *Blackmail* (1929) to *Sabotage* (1936) and *The 39 Steps* (1935). One of the most interesting of these in terms of Hitchcock's use of the city is *The Lodger* (1927)—termed the first “Hitchcock” film for its display of the visual, aural, and narrative devices with which the director would become associated. *The Lodger's* portrait of a city whose fog-filled streets conceal a serial killer anticipates *Frenzy*, in which the hustle and bustle of ordinary London locales obscures horrific acts.

Covent Garden and its Market is one of *Frenzy's* most important London locales in terms of both screen time and symbolic resonance: literally and figuratively its throbbing, rotten heart. Covent Garden plays a significant role in La Bern's novel as the location of the murderer's flat and many of his activities; however, as La Bern's title indicates, other areas are also important. That Hitchcock shifts more attention to Covent Garden is not remarkable—Hitchcock and his collaborators typically reworked his films' source material—but the effects are significant.

A number of reasons, personal and professional, may have encouraged this emphasis. For one, Hitchcock's father, a wholesaler, had once owned a stall in the Market, as Clive Boursnell notes in *Covent Garden: The Fruit, Vegetable, and Flower Markets* (142). The Market also had a nostalgic appeal given its centuries-long presence in the city, a presence endangered by plans to move it some

miles away. A further attraction was the area's international fame, highlighted in the film's trailer in which Hitchcock discovers a body in a sack of potatoes at the Market: a reference to the concealment of Babs's body. Regardless of the precise reason for Hitchcock's emphasis on Covent Garden and its Market, the result extends La Bern's themes of pollution and crime and foregrounds the rottenness of *Frenzy*'s London.

Pollution, actual and figurative, has long been part of London life, from human and animal waste to industrial debris, from real-life crime, such as the notorious acts of the nineteenth-century serial sex killer Jack the Ripper, to fictional tales of debauchery and decay including Daniel Defoe's *Moll Flanders* (1722) and Charles Dickens's *Oliver Twist* (1838). Nicknames for London type the city as a site of disturbing and exciting excesses; these include "The Great Wen" (i.e., "The Great Boil"), a name coined in the early nineteenth century by reformer William Cobbett, and the 1960s appellation "The Swinging City" (Hughes 136). Other names, such as "The Big Smoke," refer to the city's infamous air pollution, caused by the burning of coal and other industrial pollutants. This caused thousands of deaths while offering a blind to criminals and hindering law enforcement, threatening the city's moral and legal order (Bell & Davis 389-94). London's waterways, including the Thames, were particular locations of contamination. As the city's size and resulting waste increased, the unsavory aspects of the city's streams and rivers became popular topics for writers and artists, such as Jonathan Swift's 1710 survey of abject confluence titled "A Description of a City Shower."

As a Londoner, Hitchcock was aware of the city's multiple forms of pollution, and as early as *The Lodger* he showcases this contamination onscreen by combining London's fog-shrouded locations, dangerous waterways, and human transgression. *The Lodger* concerns a serial sex killer who murders blondes, while an innocent man, the title's lodger, is pursued for the serial killer's crimes: the theme of the "wrong man" and melding of actual and metaphoric decay anticipating *Frenzy*. The films' openings, introducing tropes of abjection and criminality, provide an

immediate parallel: the sighting of a woman's body on the Thames Embankment next to the river in *The Lodger's* first minutes setting up a similar discovery in the Thames in *Frenzy*.

*Frenzy's* title sequence and first scene reveal how Hitchcock introduces the viewer to the film's visual and narrative tropes of rottenness. The film begins with a helicopter shot of London's gleaming buildings and ancient landmarks as the camera moves along the Thames, echoing the royal barges that once progressed up and down the river. The bold, bright score by British composer Ron Goodwin foregrounds ritual and spectacle, providing a grand entrance into the diegesis and announcing Hitchcock's return to his homeland and the city in which he first achieved success. London seems grand, perfect: yet as the sequence continues, Hitchcock hints at sinister sights and acts in the river and streets below.

The camera descends as it nears the iconic Tower Bridge, preparing to go through the impressive structure's upstretched leaves. As it does a tugboat, moving screen right to left, crosses the camera, leaving a thick puff of black smoke; the clear, bright prospect is dimmed as the dark smear obscures the view. The camera moves through the bridge, completing its celebratory progress, yet the puzzle of the smoke and its potential meaning remains: is this a hint of pollution, a flash of menace, or simply a reminder of the river's industry and its waste? The moment is fleeting, but it gains resonance as the first scene begins.

A cut transports the viewer to a new sight nearby: a stately government building on the Thames's South Bank shown in a bird's-eye view. The camera moves closer, revealing a politician speaking to a small crowd by the river. As the audio becomes clearer the viewer joins the crowd to listen to the politician discuss a return to the sights of the past when "marsh marigolds rioted on the banks, and kingfishers swooped and darted about, their shadows racing over the brown trout." The politician's words paint a picture of a diminished, yet treasured, natural world soon to be restored through the cleansing of the polluted, poisoned river.

If the initial camera move along the Thames emphasizes the river and city as relatively clean, prosperous, and mighty, the speech

reveals what is hidden underneath—centuries of human presence, industrial production, and accumulated remains of all kinds. Despite the pleasing rhetoric, the reference to pollution echoes the tugboat’s smear of contamination; at the same time, the politician’s focus on a natural world of past plenty prepares the viewer for Covent Garden and its Market, where crime and commerce, abundance and rottenness mingle.

The politician is interrupted by a man situated close to the river, who cries out, “Look!” The crowd turn to the man and the source of his alarm: the naked body of a woman, a tie around her neck, floating down the Thames, the body’s state and gender foregrounding the victimization of women both in real life and as a Hitchcock trope. The politician’s promise to address pollution is disrupted, and politician, crowd, and viewer confront a visceral reminder of contamination—not the waste products of mankind’s industry, but of mankind himself—returned. And as the crowd’s members, including the director in his trademark cameo, discuss the crime’s details, the politician’s words are entirely forgotten.

Their dialogue connects this horror with London’s history of crime, moving beyond the visible pollution of the smoke and the body to, like the politician’s speech, the past—a past of corruption and violence particularly aimed at women. A woman’s voice notes of the killer, “He’s a regular Jack the Ripper.” A man, Herb, corrects her, “Not on your life, he used to carve them up,” his voice lingering on “carve,” emphasizing the unnatural nature of an act usually connected with a block of wood or a dinner roast, not person. He then enlarges on these long-ago crimes’ gruesome nature: “[He] sent a bit of a bird’s kidney to Scotland Yard once, wrapped in a bit of violet writing paper.” Herb’s wife tries to silence him, but he continues, “or was it a bit of a liver?” His words hang in the air as Hitchcock juxtaposes marital discord and murder.

Hitchcock builds on this combination as he details the politician’s reaction to the body. As he looks at it, he inquires nervously, before his handlers hustle him away, “Is that my club tie?” The politician spares no thought for the woman, only the tie that might link him and his social set to the crime’s scandal. If Herb’s behavior foreshadows

the avid, prurient interest in crime, criminal appetites, and appetites in general of many of the characters, so too does the politician's self-interested separation from and disavowal of pollution and crime. Such attention to, and simultaneous repudiation of, contamination moves beyond the diegesis: as Laura Mulvey and Modleski argue, Hitchcock directly engages viewers' own scopophilic tendencies.

Along with the creation of suspense, Hitchcock uses the film's opening to quickly and viscerally highlight a pollution whose remains cannot be concealed. A crucial element is the placement of the camera's eye and, with it, the actual and metaphoric position of the viewer. That, in the film's first moments, camera and viewer float high above the city and the bodies within it, distant from violence and waste, provides, for example, a notable separation. However, as the camera approaches Tower Bridge and the smoke obscures the view, camera and viewer are almost at ground level, no longer distant from pollution. While Hitchcock briefly moves to a bird's-eye view as the first scene begins, the move toward the crowd to overhear the politician's speech and view the body quickly brings the viewer literally and figuratively back to earth.

Hitchcock's treatment of the body's discovery also resists separation from crime and pollution; in transitioning from a full shot to a close-up, the director reinforces the reality of the woman's death while denying the viewer distance from her remains. The visceral connection with contamination created by this literal closeness is heightened by Herb's graphic dialogue, linking this body to other bodies and centuries of crime and waste. Once detached from the city's pollution and crime, the viewer is now deeply embedded in it.

This insistence on a close connection to London's bloody, illicit history is made material not only in the body, but in the tie: the murder weapon and the killer's hallmark. Usually an ordinary item of clothing, this tie is a loaded object. In referring to it, the politician emphasizes its importance and indicates that it is, in its association with the murderer, emblematic of violence and waste. Fittingly, the camera then moves from a close-up of the tie around the victim's neck to a nearly identical one being tied by an ordinary-looking man in a shabby bedroom. Through this graphic match, Hitchcock

moves from one locale of pollution to another, linking the woman's body, the reminder of pollution, to her possible killer. The tie and its pollution are visually and symbolically passed on, and the man, Richard Blaney, is connected with the body's abjection and violent end. This sense of a contaminated Blaney develops in the sequence that follows in Covent Garden and its Market, located not far from the Thames, as Hitchcock adds to the opening's strand of pollution with a second strand: the garden.

The sequence begins as Blaney finishes tying his tie, goes downstairs to The Globe, the pub in which he works, and takes a drink, an act that reinforces the match's link of Blaney with transgressive desire. While a desire for drink is not necessarily the same as a drive to murder, drinking at work brands Blaney as a man who fulfills his appetites regardless of consequences: here, being fired from his job and subsequent expulsion. Blaney protests his innocence to the manager, Forsythe, seconded by Babs, yet he is marked as criminal by both Forsythe and the viewer.

The character's suspect nature is visually and aurally reinforced in the next scene through the use of *mise-en-scène* and music. As Blaney stops in the street outside the pub to buy a paper, a prominent sign referencing the murderer's activity connects Blaney to this violence, and the score turns ominous. Yet just a moment later, the visual and aural darkness lighten as Blaney proceeds towards the Market and Rusk. Bright trumpet bursts and a return to the opening's grand theme provide a vision of the Market and its bustling vendors foregrounding abundant life and business. In the company of this energy and, soon, the amiable Rusk, Blaney appears less villainous, though a sense of contamination remains.

The scene in the Market that ensues develops the men's characters against the background of pollution Hitchcock has built. As they chat, Blaney reveals his firing, and Rusk teasingly asks, "You weren't pissing in the beer again, were you?" He then offers help: a betting tip and some grapes. Rusk's line further connects Blaney with uncleanness, foregrounding the latter's pollution against his own alignment with order and abundance.

This association of Blaney with a pollution and criminality linked to the Necktie Murderer and London crime builds in the next scene, set in a nearby pub. Blaney orders a large brandy, drinking again, as Hitchcock focuses on a solicitor and a doctor discussing the Necktie Murderer and sexual psychopaths. Blaney then berates the bartender for bringing him a barely-full drink and ups his order to a “triple,” his behavior paralleling the men’s discussion of the killer’s antisocial actions and overt appetites, thereby emphasizing his possible guilt.

Although the men’s dialogue initially focuses on the Necktie Murderer, they soon link this individual to a long line of criminals: acknowledging, almost celebrating, this history, echoing Herb’s earlier relish. For instance, when one voices the need to catch the Murderer quickly, the other demurs: “We haven’t had a good juicy series of sex murders since Christie, and they’re so good for the tourist trade. Foreigners somehow expect the squares of London to be fog-weaved, full of hansom cabs, and littered with ripped whores, don’t you think?” This dialogue connects literal and figurative pollution: the fog-shrouded streets and the violent criminals in those streets, from Jack the Ripper to John Christie, the latter of whom killed a number of women, including his wife, in the 1940s and 1950s (Linnane 54-55). It also links crime and consumption. The comment emphasizes the thrill of chills as a tourist come-hither, foregrounding Hitchcock’s own commodification of viewer fascination with London’s sensational past—including the trade in, and murder of, women. The location of this scene, in addition to the previous scenes in the Garden, heightens the film’s focus on voyeurism and criminality for the viewer aware of Covent Garden’s illicit past, so vividly portrayed in Hogarth’s *Rose* painting.

While both Hogarth and Hitchcock foreground Covent Garden’s unsavory aspects, the area once had a different reputation, serving as a convent garden in the medieval period and a modish residential neighborhood in the seventeenth century (Whitfield 51; Waller 125-26). Yet as the fashionable moved on and brothels and gambling houses moved in, the area gained a reputation for transgressive pleasures and crime, a reputation reinforced in fictional texts set in,

or played at, the location: from Hogarth's visual satire and Defoe's *Moll Flanders* to John Gay's *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), which was first performed at the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre near Covent Garden. And if the location had a general association with vice, the specific environment of the pub scene, the real-life Nell of Old Drury, had its own reputed illicit history: the site of assignations between King Charles II and his mistress, actress Nell Gwyn ("History").

If the scene's discourse of criminality gains additional resonance through this connection to Covent Garden's rich history, the location also aids Hitchcock's thematic connection of pollution with transgressive appetite. The combination of food/life and rotteness/death links the scene to the film's opening, particularly the disjunction of the politician's early promise of abundance and cleanliness and the body's abjection. This disturbing, satiric mix foreshadows the running joke of the dinner scenes between Oxford and his wife, whose conversations about crime comically counterpoint the Murderer's activities.

This initial Covent Garden sequence, with its references to actual and figurative pollution, both develops the film's first strand of rotteness and introduces the second: the Garden's own history and the symbolism of the "garden" as a place of both fruitfulness and decay. The Garden's association with commerce and agriculture stretches back centuries; in his introduction to Boursnell's *Covent Garden: The Fruit, Vegetable, and Flower Markets*, Peter Ackroyd writes, "The area was first marked out by the Saxons as a place of trade and barter, given the name of Lundenwic or market-place of London" (6-7). A fruit and vegetable market was approved in 1670 and expanded in 1830; as *Frenzy* reveals, it was still bustling in the 1970s (7). The Garden and its Market soon became so closely aligned with London that it became shorthand for the city itself, and, as Foery argues, Hitchcock capitalizes on this: "For Hitchcock, the inclusion of Covent Garden was not only nostalgic; it was emblematic. It was meant to stand as a classic image of London in the same way that his colleague [François] Truffaut might use the Eiffel Tower to signify Paris" (34). Yet there is something rotten, actually and figuratively, in this Garden, as both Hogarth

and Hitchcock indicate, and little separates the wholesome from the filthy. In *Frenzy*, not only do the bright and beautiful become no more than refuse but, more disturbingly, the seemingly fresh and fragrant conceal corruption. Such is the case for the city, Covent Garden, and the Garden's inhabitants, including Blaney and Rusk.

The word "garden" is usually resonant with images of abundance and quiet, yet in Western culture gardens are also associated with loss, as in the biblical story of the Garden of Eden. Numerous artists utilize the rich resonance of gardens as sites of both peace and violence, particularly William Shakespeare, who includes gardens as locations for love's sunny discoveries in his comedies and sites of dissolution and death, real and allegorical, in his tragedies and histories. For instance, *Hamlet's* tragedy originates in a garden with the murder of Denmark's king by his own brother, a crime whose pollution encompasses not simply select individuals or the court itself, but the entire realm. No wonder then that the guard Marcellus avows, "Something is rotten in the state of Denmark" (1.4.90).

Similarly, Hitchcock indicates there is something rotten in London, in which purity and decay, seeming and truth are confused, troubling differentiation. In this, Hitchcock follows Shakespeare, who creates diegeses that are literally and figuratively unstable to explore the dark, dank region of men's souls—most famously in *Macbeth*, in which, as the witches note, "Fair is foul, and foul is fair" (1.1.11). Their line refers to multiple elements at once: the shifting weather and mysterious, fog-bound setting; the tide of the distant battle; and their own nature, as well as that of the yet-unseen Macbeth. In *Frenzy*, this confusion plays out in divisions within characters' natures, relationships between characters, and London's own identity as both paradise and purgatory: no surprise then that in *Frenzy*, as *Macbeth*, the setting is itself a character.

Perhaps the most overt garden symbolism within *Frenzy* is a connection between the "garden" of Covent Garden and its Market and the Garden of Eden through each site's dual association with pleasure and pain, abundance and lack. This is a connection played out in Blaney: modern-day Adam, sinner and victim, whose fall from grace is foreshadowed by the tie, realized in the forbidden drink,

and emphasized in expulsion from the aptly-named Globe. That Blaney is linked to a profound human disobedience and rottenness is referenced in Forsythe's line to Babs as she follows the exiled Blaney: "This is Covent Garden, not the Garden of Love, how about starting work?" The line alerts viewers to the shift from the Thames to Covent Garden while highlighting the locale's symbolic meaning and setting up the dual nature of this space and its inhabitants. Forsythe notably opposes the Garden as a space of commerce with love, specifically "the Garden of Love": a blissful-sounding spot evoking both pagan Arcadian space and Garden of Eden. While a lost Eden might offer memories of abundance and peace, Forsythe's words hint that despite its sumptuousness nothing of this kind is in this Garden, as illustrated by Blaney, a lonely figure of lack within the bustling crowds and commerce.

In contrast to Blaney, Covent Garden, the Market in particular, is presented as a place of community and abundance seemingly devoid of danger or corruption, its confident prosperity paralleling the film's first view of London. Hitchcock and composer Gordon emphasize this by repeating the upbeat, triumphant theme of the title sequence in the Market's introduction. This aural punctuation promises a return to earlier assurance and order. Yet just as the film's opening muddies this initial reading of the city, so Hitchcock complicates the Covent Garden sequence as it continues, introducing the darker side of the garden/Garden in the form of Rusk.

The camera first reveals Rusk standing amidst produce crates, eating an apple as he notes figures in a book: a mundane, benign image. The fruit and crates are perfectly in context given Rusk's trade and the Market surroundings, yet they contain clues to Rusk's hidden nature and the garden's darker symbolism. Rusk's consumption of the apple, for instance, associates him, like Blaney, with appetite; while an appetite for food is natural, this emphasis on bodily desire points to other, hidden, appetites. The apple references the Garden of Eden, foreshadowing Rusk's role as a figure of deception and evil and setting up Brenda's murder a few scenes later in which the apple, everyday foodstuff and cultural symbol, returns as Brenda's lunch, taken and consumed by Rusk. This continues the

association of Rusk and appetite, albeit ironically: Rusk's attempted rape of Brenda reveals he is impotent, unable to achieve sexual consummation, even as the murder and the consumption of the fruit seem, momentarily, to satisfy him.

The appearance of the apple in Rusk's introduction hints that the garden of Covent Garden and its Market, as Forsythe indicates, is charged with disobedience and sin. That Rusk is embedded in the Market connects him to the Garden's complex history of abundance and rottenness, enhancing the latter. While Rusk's malevolence destroys lives within and beyond the Garden, the film's multiple references to crime and consumption remind the viewer Rusk is not unique, but part of a history of contamination suffusing Garden and city. Fittingly, the next murder occurs in the Garden: the act's horror intensified by the area's lively milieu and connection to abundance and fruitfulness. The sequence begins as Babs quits her job and exits *The Globe*, the camera moving in as she pauses, unsure of what to do, and the sound leaching away. With a soft inquiry of "Got a place to stay?" Rusk appears, as if from nowhere. He offers his flat as refuge, she agrees, and they walk through the bustling Flower Market with its colorful blooms, chatting about the future, and enter a building. They climb the stairs to Rusk's flat; as they enter, he says, "I don't know if you know it, Babs, but you're my type of woman"—the latter portion of the line paralleling the line he utters before Brenda's murder. The door closes and the camera glides backward slowly, silently, down the staircase and along the corridor to the front door, street sounds gradually filtering in. As the camera moves through the door a man carrying a bag of potatoes passes, wiping the screen. The camera pulls back, taking in the sight and sound of men carrying produce and vans bearing merchandise crossing in front of the building; there is no clue, visual or aural, of Babs's struggle. A cut to another location and characters—the Oxfords dining and discussing the killer—signals Babs's end.

In its location and nature Babs's murder is both a twin to, and a contrast with, Brenda's, which takes place in an office set in a maze of alleyways off busy Oxford Road. In both cases, the surroundings' normalcy and liveliness make the deaths all the more shocking, even

if here, unlike the graphic first murder, the act is largely unseen. Notably, filming Babs's murder in the Garden lets Hitchcock build on the earlier Garden scenes and their disjunctions, for example emphasizing the Garden's fruitfulness in the lush flower displays Babs and Rusk pass on the way to her death and using the Market's vibrant activity as a stark contrast to the moments of silence.

The move from Babs's murder to the Oxfords emphasizes such disjunction tonally and visually. Given the viewer's knowledge of what has just transpired in the scene, Mrs. Oxford's offering of alien, inedible foods to Oxford while they discuss the Necktie Murderer's activities both lightens and complicates the mood. Comedy is provided by Oxford's negotiation of foodstuffs—a soup of dismembered fish heads and a miniscule roast quail with grapes—that thwart his desire: the former disgusting and strange, the latter offering only a bite. The soup of fish parts recalls the Thames body while the quail's inadequacy to quell Oxford's appetite rhymes with Rusk's impotence. The food's abject, insufficient nature contrasts with Covent Garden's abundance, while the scene's mix of desire and disgust, appetite and death parallels, with a difference, the women's murders. Through the scenes of the Oxfords with their satiric focus on detection, marriage, death, and dining—scenes not found in La Bern's novel—Hitchcock parallels sexual and alimentary appetites, draws out the plot's suspense, and ironically comments on it.

The action then returns to Covent Garden as a figure in an apron and cap—Rusk, disguised as a Covent Garden worker—transports a sack to a truck, placing it inside. Rusk's disguise, while ultimately a sham and an example of misdirection, explicitly connects the Garden and its denizens with crime. Rusk returns to his flat to celebrate with food and drink, indulging his appetites as he contemplates the fulfillment of his murderous desire, believing both body and crime hidden. As he does, he reaches for his distinctive “R” tiepin to pick his teeth and discovers it missing. Rusk must return to the truck and wrestle with dusty potato sacks that make him sneeze, threatening to reveal his location, and Babs's foot, which pokes him in the face; in these darkly comic moments he is increasingly vulnerable, no longer in control. Rusk's forced confrontation with the physical

remains of his actions and the uncomfortable juxtaposition of comedy and horror reaches a pitch when Rusk breaks his penknife trying to extract the tiepin from Babs's clenched fingers, then breaks her fingers to obtain it.

This act, particularly the pronounced snap of those fingers being broken, provides, some scenes on, perhaps the most chilling, yet witty, rhyming of the Oxfords and Rusk, dining and murder: a parallel whose psychological and cultural dimensions Modleski discusses (103-16). In this scene, Oxford negotiates another strange meal while discussing the condition of the body and the killer's identity. As he speaks, Mrs. Oxford selects a thin breadstick, snaps it in two, and eats it. Her behavior annoys her husband, who grumpily voices a desire for "plain bread," foregrounding his distaste for alien foodstuffs, and bristles at her second-guessing of his detection. The scene allows Hitchcock to once more satirically mingle food and bodies, appetite and disgust: a mixing facilitated by the actual and symbolic use of the Garden and its Market.

Hitchcock's use of the Garden amplifies *Frenzy's* themes of crime, appetite, and contamination and highlights these aspects of the film's characters, particularly the rotteness associated with Blaney and Rusk. Bringing the men together in Covent Garden, Hitchcock compares and contrasts them in a similarly disjunctive setting, mingling the fresh and fetid, the pleasing and the blighted. Hitchcock plays with his characters' and viewers' expectations of the rumpled, disgruntled Blaney, seemingly villainous, and Rusk, who conceals his appetites under serenity and bonhomie, like Lady Macbeth's suggestion to her ambitious husband to "bear welcome in your eye,/Your hand, your tongue; look like th' innocent flower,/But be the serpent under't" (1.2.64-66). As is often the case in Hitchcock films, the characters are doubles, yet also opposites, distorted reflections of each other. For instance, the "R" of Rusk's tiepin reminds the viewer his initials "BR" are the reverse of Blaney's "RB." The men's names originate in La Bern's novel; however, the fact that Hitchcock and Shaffer retain the initials, linking the men, serves to trouble distinctions of fair and foul within *Frenzy*, further blurring lines, including those between licit and illicit desire.

In addition to its use as a backdrop for the characters' appetites and crimes, the Garden plays an important role in the film's representations of gender and sexuality. Uneasiness about male/female relations, particularly on the part of men regarding women and the sexual and emotional abundance women may offer, suffuses the film. Notably, women are constantly associated with appetite, both sexual and alimentary, but not nurture/fulfillment. The most overt connection of a female figure to gardens/the Garden and abundance/rotteness in *Frenzy* is Rusk's mother, who comes from Kent, which Rusk describes as "the garden of England." This rosy-cheeked, red-headed Eve appears benign and ordinary in her short screen appearance, though given the history of maternal figures in Hitchcock films, most notably *Psycho* (1960), the appearance of Rusk's mother and her explicit connection with gardens inserts a sinister note.

That Covent Garden was historically a place in which women's labor and bodies were traded adds an extra layer of meaning. The use of the pub Nell of Old Drury, for example, recalls the commodification of women's bodies, whether displayed onstage in Nell Gwyn's case or sold in the Rose Tavern. As noted earlier, the association of bodies, particularly female bodies, with pollution is presented in Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress* in the women's spots—potentially related to venereal disease. Anticipating *Frenzy*, Hogarth's image foregrounds the anxiety caused by the circulation of bodies viewed as variously attractive and abject, vulnerable and dangerous within a location—Covent Garden—with a similarly double nature.

Filmic antecedents of Hitchcock's visual and thematic treatment of the "garden" of Covent Garden in *Frenzy* date from *The Pleasure Garden*, his first complete directorial work, to *Vertigo* (1958). While some of these films' gardens are actual gardens, references to gardens in Hitchcock's films are often metaphoric, as in *The Pleasure Garden*: whose opening scenes, introducing the showgirl protagonists, are set in The Pleasure Garden, a theatre. This "Garden" is a place of plenitude for its owners, who profit from displays of beautiful women to customers, and for viewers enjoying filmic representations of Roaring Twenties London, but it is also

a place of corruption and vice where men ogle women, steal their purses, and openly pursue them.

When gardens do appear in physical form in Hitchcock's films they are often linked to death, indirectly or directly: from the killing of a dog for digging in the garden in *Rear Window* (1954) to the discovery, burial, and rediscovery of Harry Worp's corpse in the pastoral Vermont woods in *The Trouble with Harry* (1955). The unquiet rest of Worp's corpse, which refuses to stay buried, foreshadows the return of the repressed—pollution and the body—in *Frenzy*'s opening minutes.

The connection between gardens and graves/death is made most explicit in *Vertigo*, particularly in the Mission Delores sequence, set in the Mission's cemetery. Having trailed a woman named Madeleine, actually an imposter, to the Mission, detective Scottie sees her slip out of the church. Following her, he emerges into an idyllic space: the cemetery in which the long-dead Carlotta Valdes, Madeleine's ancestor, is buried. Its yellow roses and flowering vines are lovely, but it is also a garden of death, foreshadowing the deaths of the real Madeleine and the imposter and negating any future for Scottie's erotic fixation on "Madeleine."

Perhaps the most intriguing film to combine pollution, garden, and city is an unrealized project discussed by Hitchcock and director François Truffaut in the latter's *Hitchcock*. The film would have begun with the process of buying fresh produce, moved to preparation and dining, and then to the food's end as waste. Noting the literal and figurative meaning of this progress, Hitchcock argues, "So there's a cycle, beginning with the gleaming fresh vegetables and ending with the mess that's poured into the sewers. Thematically, the cycle would show what people do to good things. Your theme might almost be the rottenness of humanity" (qtd. in Truffaut 320).

While this film was never made, elements of its focus on pollution and corruption, both overt and covert, and the use of mise-en-scène to convey such contamination exist in *Frenzy*. It is fitting then that *Frenzy* ends in Covent Garden with the revelation of Rusk's crime and his arrest. This ending concludes a work that is not only a unique, provocative film in its own right, but one that

encapsulates much of Hitchcock's personal and professional history, including his previous films' formal and narrative tropes. In its focus on pollution and the garden, *Frenzy* also performs an essential role in ongoing discourses about pollution, crime, London, and urban spaces in general. In both celebrating and critiquing the rottenness of the city and its inhabitants, Hitchcock's *Frenzy*, like Hogarth's *A Rake's Progress*, entices and horrifies as it paints a picture of consumerism, crime, and consumption: the interplay of "The Great Wen" and the glorious garden.

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