

FILM STUDIES
PACKET 1

APRIL 13TH - 17TH

DISTANCE LEARNING

MRS. JULIE RAVEN-SMART

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Jupiter Grades



ALFRED HITCHCOCK
&
REAR WINDOW (1954)

REVISED MOVIE LINK

REQUIRED VIDEOS TO VIEW

[THE ART OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK \(6:25\)](#)

[BIOGRAPHY VIDEO \(3:57\)](#)

FILM -(1954) ([REVISED LINK REAR WINDOW](#)) 1 HR 35:31)

REQUIRED READING

HITCHCOCK BIO (BELOW)

INTO REAR WINDOW ...SLIDES ABOUT FILM AND CHARACTERS

AFTER VIEWING FILM, "AFTER REAR WINDOW" *THIS WILL HELP WITH TEST

REQUIRED TEST

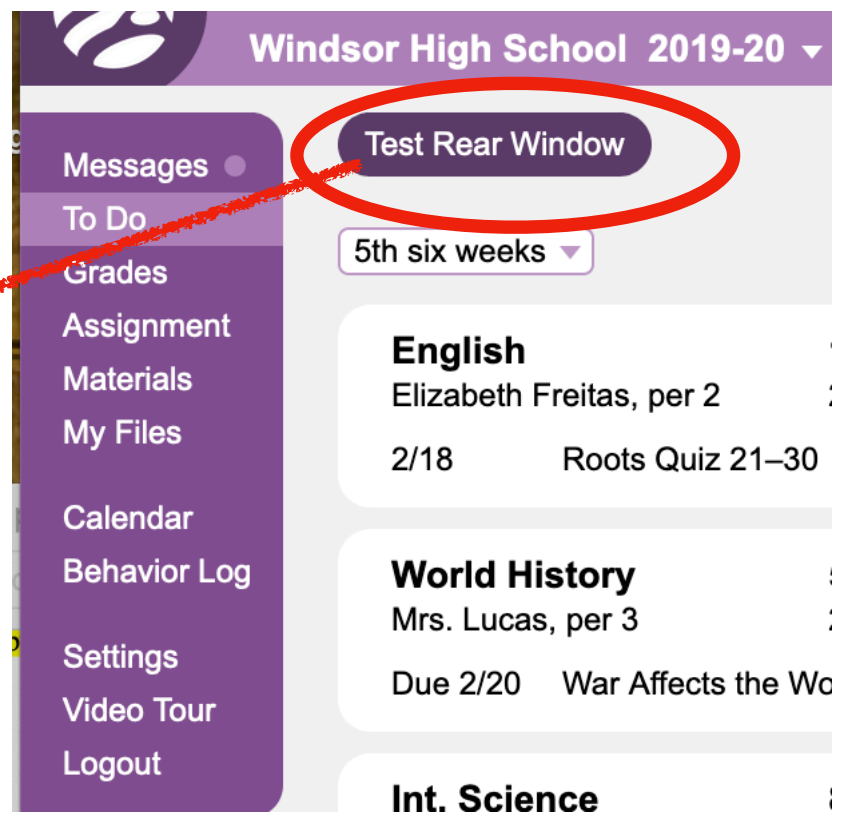
(OPEN 4/17, 4/18)

ONLINE TEST, LOG INTO JUPITER GRADES UNDER STUDENT LOG IN

SEE EMAIL FROM RAVEN ABOUT SETTING UP JUPITER ACCESS

LOG INTO JUPITER ACCOUNT, SEE EMAIL FROM ME TO STUDENT OR PARENT TO SET UP ACCOUNT AND PASSWORD.

SEE THIS AND CLICK ON BUTTON FOR TEST TO BEGIN



ALFRED HITCHCOCK

Filmmaker Alfred Hitchcock was nicknamed the "Master of Suspense" for employing a kind of psychological suspense in his films, producing a distinct viewer experience.

Who Was Alfred Hitchcock?

Famous **director and filmmaker** Alfred Hitchcock worked for a short time in engineering before entering the film industry in 1920. He left for Hollywood in 1939, where his first American film, *Rebecca*, won the Academy Award for Best Picture. Hitchcock created more than 50 films, including the classics *Rear Window*, *The 39 Steps* and *Psycho*. Nicknamed the "Master of Suspense," Hitchcock received the AFI's Life Achievement Award in 1979. He died in 1980.

“Fear isn't so difficult to understand. After all, weren't we all frightened as children? Nothing has changed since Little Red Riding Hood faced the big bad wolf. What frightens us today is exactly the same sort of thing that frightened us yesterday.”
—Alfred Hitchcock

Early Life

Alfred Joseph Hitchcock was born in London, England, on August 13, 1899, and was raised by strict, Catholic



parents. He described his childhood as lonely and sheltered, partly due to his obesity. He once said that he was sent by his father to the local police station with a note asking the officer to lock him away for 10 minutes as punishment for behaving badly. He also remarked that his mother would force him to stand at the foot of her bed for several hours as punishment (a scene alluded to in his film *Psycho*). This idea of being harshly treated or wrongfully accused would later be reflected in Hitchcock's films.

Master of Suspense

Hitchcock attended the Jesuit school St. Ignatius College before going on to attend the University of London, taking art courses. He eventually obtained a job as a draftsman and advertising designer for the cable company Henley's. It was while working at Henley's that he began to write, submitting short articles for the in-house publication. From his very first piece, he employed themes of false accusations, conflicted emotions and twist endings with impressive skill. In 1920, Hitchcock entered the film industry with a full-time position at the Famous Players-Lasky Company designing title cards for silent films. Within a few years, he was working as an assistant director.



“The only way to get rid of my fears is to make films about them.”
—Alfred Hitchcock

Movies: 'Rebecca,' 'Psycho' and 'The Birds'

In 1939, Hitchcock left England for Hollywood. The first film he made in the United States, *Rebecca* (1940), won an Academy Award for best picture. Some of his most famous films include *Psycho* (1960), *The Birds* (1963) and *Marnie* (1964). His works became renowned for their depictions of violence, although many of his plots merely function as decoys meant to serve as a tool for understanding complex psychological characters. His cameo appearances in his own films, as well as his interviews, film trailers and the television program *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* (1955-1965), made him a cultural icon.

Death and Legacy

Hitchcock directed more than 50 feature films in a career spanning six decades. He received the American Film Institute's Life Achievement Award in 1979. One year later, on April 29, 1980, Hitchcock died

peacefully in his sleep in Bel Air, California. He was survived by his lifetime partner, assistant director and closest collaborator, Alma Reville, also known as "Lady Hitchcock," who died in 1982.

**“I never said all actors are cattle; what I said was all actors should be treated like cattle.”
— Alfred Hitchcock**



INTO REAR WINDOW



1 hr 52mins.

Rear Window




GENRE: *Suspense*
Released: 1954
Director: Alfred Hitchcock
Rated: G

Setting: Greenwich Village, Manhattan, NY 1954
A wheelchair-bound photographer spies on his neighbours from his apartment window and becomes convinced one of them has committed murder.

OSCARS
NOMINATIONS

Best Director
 Best Writing, Screenplay
 Best Cinematography, Color
 Best Sound, Recording



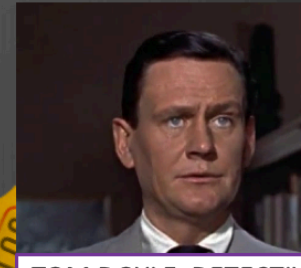
LB "JEFF" JEFFERIES



LISA CAROL FREMONT



STELLA MCCAFFERY, nurse



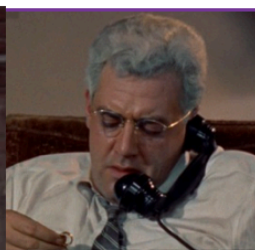
TOM DOYLE, DETECTIVE



MARRIED FIRE ESCAPE COUPLE



MARRIED, fighting couple



SINGLE, songwriter guy



NEWLYWEDS



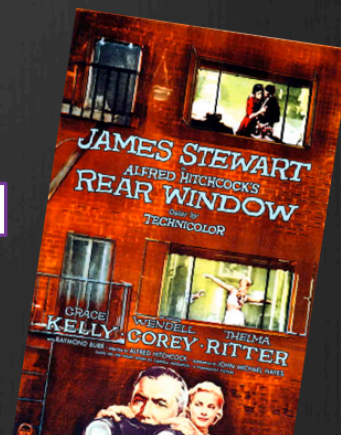
SINGLE, Miss Lonelyhearts



SINGLE, Miss Torso, dancer



SINGLE, DEAF WOMAN



THINK ABOUT DURING THE FILM

Besides the thriller mystery of *Rear Window*, it has a theme of the conflicts in male & female relationships, not only in Jeff's apartment, but around the entire courtyard. Relationships in different phases (just married, long time married, dating, single, young family, etc.) Watch for those examples in the windows and balconies.

After the **initial image**, the camera floats around Jeff's apartment giving you information about his occupation and his accident and broken leg/hip. It is Greenwich Village, summer in New York, 1954. These middle class apartments do not have air conditioning, so everyone's windows are open during this heat wave (one married couple even sleeps out on the fire escape because its cooler). Jeff and Lisa have been dating a while, though they seem to be complete opposites. Jeff will discuss with his workman's comp/insurance nurse, Stella, how Lisa is probably expecting a marriage proposal soon, and he doesn't want to get married. Also think about how Jeff being in a cast confines him from the typical actions of a Leading Male throughout the film (**he** will need rescuing). Also watch for the appearance cameo of director Alfred Hitchcock in the film itself.

The Protagonist and His Apartment Neighbors	
L. B. "Jeff" Jefferies (James Stewart)	the lead character (protagonist), a successful globe-trotting action photographer for a magazine, who is confined to his apartment with a broken leg in a cast
Songwriter (Ross Bagdasarian)	a young musical composer/songwriter who lives in his studio and struggles to make an income; his piano playing provides some of the soundtrack
"Miss Torso" (Georgine Darcy)	a sexy, tall, voluptuous young dancer, who exercises in skimpy outfits and battles against numerous suitors
"Miss Lonelyhearts" (Judith Evelyn)	a lonely, solitary middle-aged woman, who drinks and takes pills, and lives below the Thorwald's apartment
Lars Thorwald (Raymond Burr in a pre- <i>Perry Mason</i> appearance) and wife Anna (Irene Winston)	a hard-working, costume-jewelry traveling salesman living with his bedridden, nagging invalid wife; Thorwald is suspected of a hideous murder, the killing and dismemberment of his wife
Man and Woman on Fire Escape (Frank Cady and Sara Berner)	a dog-loving couple who lives above the Thorwald's apartment, but spends most of the time out on their fire escape (to escape the summer NYC heat); their dog is suspected to have been murdered by Lars Thorwald because it was digging in the flowerbed (where body parts were buried?)
Newlyweds (Rand Harper and Havis Davenport)	an amorous man and woman on honeymoon, in their new apartment, with the shades usually drawn
Songwriter's Party Guest with Poodle (Bess Flowers)	a woman with a dog
"Miss Hearing Aid" (Jesslyn Fax)	an older woman with hearing device, usually in her yard creating abstract art
"Woman with Bird" (Iphigenie Castiglioni)	



AFTER REAR WINDOW

IN DEPTH ANALYSIS OF FILM (IF NO INTERNET AVAILABLE READ THIS, THEN TAKE QUIZ)

Background [Filmsite.org](#)

● **Rear Window** (1954) is an intriguing, brilliant, macabre Hitchcockian visual study of obsessive human curiosity and voyeurism. John Michael Hayes' screenplay was based on Cornell Woolrich's (with pen-name William Irish) original 1942 short story or novelette, *It Had to Be Murder*.

This film masterpiece was made entirely on one confined set built at Paramount Studios - a realistic courtyard composed of 32 apartments (12 completely furnished) - at a non-existent address in Manhattan (125 W. 9th Street). Each of the tenants of the other apartments offer an observant comment of marriage and a complete survey of male/female relationships (all the way from honeymooners to a murderous spouse), as the main protagonist watches / spies / spectates through his 'rear window' on them. Remarkably, the camera angles are largely from the protagonist's own apartment, so the film viewer (in a dark theatre) sees the inhabitants of the other apartments almost entirely from his point of view - to share in his voyeuristic surveillance.

Concurrent with the crime-thriller theme of mysterious activities of apartment neighbors is the struggle of the passively-observant and immobile protagonist (James Stewart), a magazine photographer who is impotently confined to a wheelchair while recuperating in his Greenwich Village apartment and fearful of the imprisoning effects of marriage. He struggles, as he does with his plaster cast, to overcome his noncommittal feelings and reluctance to get married to his high-fashion model fiancée-girlfriend (Grace Kelly). In the midst of the most tense situation in another context, she daringly flashes a wedding ring to him to clue him in with the 'evidence.'

This film - one of Hitchcock's greatest thrillers, especially in its final twenty minutes, received only four Academy Award nominations (with no Oscars): Best Director, Best Screenplay (John Michael Hayes), Best Color Cinematography (Robert Burks), and Best Sound Recording. Un-nominated for her erotically-charged performance in this film as a rich society woman, the glowingly-beautiful Grace Kelly won the Best Actress Oscar in the same year for her deglamourized role in *The Country Girl* (1954). This was her second of three films for Hitchcock (she had already made [Dial M for Murder \(1954\)](#) and would next star in [To Catch a Thief \(1955\)](#)), before leaving acting in 1956 to marry Prince Rainier of Monaco. And this was Stewart's second of four appearances for Hitchcock (he had already starred in *Rope* (1948), and would go on to be featured in *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956) and [Vertigo \(1958\)](#)).

In brief, the protagonist and some of the neighboring characters (with the hero's manufactured names) in the courtyard apartments are:

The Protagonist and His Apartment Neighbors	
L. B. "Jeff" Jefferies (James Stewart)	the lead character (protagonist), a successful globe-trotting action photographer for a magazine, who is confined to his apartment with a broken leg in a cast
Songwriter (Ross Bagdasarian)	a young musical composer/songwriter who lives in his studio and struggles to make an income; his piano playing provides some of the soundtrack
"Miss Torso" (Georgine Darcy)	a sexy, tall, voluptuous young dancer, who exercises in skimpy outfits and battles against numerous suitors
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Two other characters include Jeff's grouchy, caustic masseuse Stella McCaffery (Thelma Ritter) from the insurance company, and a disbelieving cop Thomas J. Doyle (Wendell Corey), Jeff's old war-time buddy.

Many films have paid homage to Hitchcock's masterpiece, including Roman Polanski's *The Tenant* (1976, Fr.), and Brian de Palma's erotic thriller *Body Double* (1984).

The Story & Film Observations

Underneath the credits, jazz music plays as the bamboo shades rise slowly over four vertically-rectangular windows in a small Greenwich Village apartment. The camera tracks out through the windows, showing the surrounding Lower East Side apartment buildings, lower courtyard and garden. A camera pan follows a meowing cat up a wide set of steps in the foreground of the courtyard, and then keeps moving up to a wide pan of almost the entire complex. Tracking back into the open apartment window, the occupant is asleep, sweating profusely. It is 94 degrees on the thermometer - during a heat wave. Next door in the adjacent loft (of a composer), a radio blares a commercial as its lathered-up occupant shaves:

Men, are you over 40? When you wake up in the morning, do you feel tired and run down? Do you have that listless feeling?

He stops shaving and tunes the radio to a music station.

Then, the camera begins a continuous, almost two minute long panning camera movement. Across the way, an older couple are sleeping on an outside fire escape, curiously head to foot, to escape the intense heat. They stir when their alarm sounds, and below them, an athletic, scantily-clad blonde woman puts on a pink top and suggestively exercises while doing her chores, giving a dancers'-like kick high into the air. Life is beginning to stir. The camera returns to the apartment where it slowly reveals that the man is immobilized. He is alone and confined in a wheelchair. His left leg is in a cast - already inscribed:

Here lie the broken bones of L. B. Jefferies

The camera proceeds to explore L. B. ("Jeff") Jefferies' (James Stewart) second-floor apartment, giving silent clues to his occupation. On the wall are enlarged photos - he is a professional magazine photographer and world-traveler, documenting wars, dangerous sports, racing accidents and other catastrophes, accustomed to paparazzi-style behavior and nosing into other peoples' affairs:

- Smashed 8 x 10 camera equipment
- A spectacular photograph of a racing car accident
- Other photographs, taken on various shoots including a fiery blaze, another car accident, a war scene, an explosion
- More camera equipment
- A framed 'negative' of a blonde woman's face
- The same photograph, now a 'positive' of the woman on the cover of a large stack of LIFE Magazines, labeled "Paris Fashions"

When his editor calls on the phone, he sees two females on the roof terrace across the way crouch down behind the wall to nude sunbathe - they take off their pajamas. A low-flying helicopter soon approaches to spy on the women. Jeff also observes his neighbors' activities outside his window, especially the dancer who attracts his prurient interest, especially when she wiggles her behind. It is learned that seven weeks earlier, he sustained his fractured-leg injury in a crash while he was photographing a car race from the middle of the track to get a "dramatic" photo. The cast will come off a week later: "Next Wednesday I emerge from this plaster cocoon."

Incapacitated and bored, he spends his time staring out the window watching (prying on) his neighbors through the windows of the apartments on the opposite side of the complex's courtyard. Between the side/rear walls of the apartment buildings is a narrow alleyway leading to the street.

[The frames of the windows in the apartments across the way are similar to the individual frames of a strip of cinematic film, and Jeff - as a film director might - derives pleasure from 'film-viewing' the dramas that unfold in peoples' lives. At opposite ends of the courtyard are two artists, one a young piano player/composer of songs (symbolic of sounds), the other a middle-aged modernist sculptress (symbolic of images) - these two correspond to the two main components of a film.]

Because he has been incapacitated for six weeks, he will miss a photo assignment in Kashmir. Jeff begs his editor to get him back on the job:

Jeff: You've got to get me out of here. Six weeks sitting in a two-room apartment with nothing to do but look out the window at the neighbors. ..If you don't pull me out of this swamp of boredom, I'm gonna do something drastic...like what? I'm gonna get married and then I'll never be able to go anywhere.

Editor: It's about time you got married, before you turn into a lonesome, bitter old man.

Jeff: Yeah, can't you just see me, rushin' home to a hot apartment to listen to the automatic laundry and the electric dishwasher and the garbage disposal, the nagging wife.

Editor: Jeff, wives don't nag, they discuss.

Jeff: Is that so, that so? Maybe in the high rent district they discuss, in my neighborhood they still nag.

Editor: Well, um, you know best.

Paralleling his conversation about the difficulties of marriage (more boredom, nagging and oppressiveness), he views a heavy set, grouchy neighbor Thorwald (Raymond Burr) in the opposite apartment return home from work (framed in one window) and argue with his blonde-haired, nagging, sick, negligee-clad wife lying in bed (symbolically separated by being framed in the next smaller, more claustrophobic bedroom window). [Is she arguing with him because she suspects that he is cheating on her?]

To scratch an itch he feels inside his cast, Jeff takes a long Chinese back-scratcher and carefully threads it down inside his cast and relieves the aggravating feeling. [There is the implication of sexual stimulation for the sexually-repressed Jeff.] His sharp-tongued, visiting nurse-therapist Stella (Thelma Ritter), sent by his insurance company, arrives to give him a massage. She scolds and disapproves of him (and the society as a whole "race of Peeping Toms") for his principal pasttime - voyeurism. She condemns him for being more interested in other people's lives than his own, after reminding him that Peeping Toms used to be punished with blindness - she also asks a sexually-charged, euphemistic question about a "red-hot poker":

The New York State sentence for a Peeping Tom is six months in the work house...They got no windows in the work house. You know, in the old days, they used to put your eyes out with a red-hot poker. Any of those bikini bombshells you're always watchin' worth a red-hot poker? Oh dear, we've become a race of Peeping Toms. What people oughta do is get outside their own house and look in for a change. Yes, sir. How's that for a bit of home-spun philosophy?

As she takes his temperature and prepares to set up a bed for his massage, Stella warns that his voyeurism will only lead to trouble. She also notes his sexual impotence by noting that he must have a "hormone deficiency" because "those bathing beauties you've been watching haven't raised [his thermometer] temperature one degree."

He claims he would welcome a little "trouble." With solidly-rooted, home-spun common sense, she also cautions about his lack of roots and commitment, his sidestepping of marriage and his lukewarm attitude toward his girlfriend/fashion model Lisa Carol Fremont (Grace Kelly) - she insists that there must be something wrong with him to reject Lisa's attention:

Stella: I got a nose for trouble. I can smell it ten miles away...I can smell trouble right here in this apartment. First you smash your leg. Then you get to lookin' out the window. See things you shouldn't see. Trouble. I can see you in court now, surrounded by a bunch of lawyers in double-breasted suits. You're pleading: 'Judge, it was only a little bit of innocent fun. I love my neighbors like a father.' And the Judge says, 'Well, congratulations, you've just given birth to three years in Dannemora.'" [Note: Dannemora is a small town in Upstate New York where a maximum security New York State prison named Clinton Correctional Facility is located.]

Jeff: Yeah, right now I'd welcome trouble...You know, I think you're right. I think there is going to be trouble around here.

Stella: ...What kind of trouble?

Jeff (linking his relationship to Lisa with his spying on neighbors): Lisa Fremont.

Stella: Are you kidding? She's a beautiful young girl and you're a reasonably healthy young man.

Jeff: She expects me to marry her.

Stella: That's normal.

Jeff: I don't want to.

Stella: That's abnormal.

Jeff: I'm just not ready for marriage.

Stella: Every man's ready for marriage when the right girl comes along. And Lisa Fremont is the right girl for any man with half a brain who can get one eye open.

Jeff: Oh, she's all right.

Stella: What did you do? Have a fight?

Jeff: No.

Stella: Her father loading up the shotgun?

Jeff: What? Please, Stella.

Stella: It's happened before you know. Some of the world's happiest marriages have, uh, started under the gun, as you might say.

He confesses that Lisa is too much of a "Park Avenue" woman - too rich, "too perfect," spoiled, sophisticated and incompatible for his lifestyle as a globe-trotting, high-risk, ultra-masculine photographer. According to him, her different interests include "expensive restaurants," "a new dress," a "lobster dinner," and "the latest scandal". Stella also highlights one of the film major themes - that Jeff's hyperactive imagination will cause him a LOT of trouble:

Jeff: No, she's just not the girl for me.

Stella: Yeah, she's only perfect.

Jeff: She's too perfect. She's too talented, she's too beautiful. She's too sophisticated. She's too everything but what I want.

Stella: Is, um, what you want something you can discuss?

Jeff: Well, it's very simple, Stella. She belongs to that rarified atmosphere of Park Avenue, you know. Expensive restaurants, literary cocktail parties...Can you imagine her tramping around the world with a camera bum who never has more than a week's salary in the bank? If she was only ordinary.

Stella: You ever gonna get married?

Jeff: I'll probably get married one of these days, and when I do, it's gonna be to someone who thinks of life not just as a new dress, and a lobster dinner, the latest scandal. I need a woman who's willing...to go anywhere and do anything and love it. So the honest thing for me to do is just to call the whole thing off and let her find somebody else.

Stella: Yeah, I can hear you now. Get out of my life. You're a perfectly wonderful woman - you're too good for me. Look, Mr. Jefferies, I'm not an educated woman, but I can tell you one thing. When a man and a woman see each other and like each other they ought to come together - wham! Like a couple of taxis on Broadway, not sit around analyzing each other like two specimens in a bottle.

Jeff: There's an intelligent way to approach marriage.

Stella: Intelligence! Nothing has caused the human race so much trouble as intelligence. Hah! Modern marriage!

Jeff: Now we've progressed emotionally.

Stella: Baloney! Once, it was see somebody, get excited, get married. Now, it's read a lot of books, fence with a lot of four-syllable

words, psychoanalyze each other until you can't tell the difference between a petting party and a civil service exam.

Jeff: People have different emotional levels.

Stella: When I married Miles, we were both a couple of maladjusted misfits. We are still maladjusted misfits, and we have loved every minute of it.

Jeff: Well, that's fine, Stella. Now would you fix me a sandwich please?

Stella: Yes, I will. And I'll spread a little common sense on the bread. Lisa's loaded to her fingertips with love for you - I got two words of advice for you - Marry her!

Jeff (jokingly): Did she pay you much?

Across the apartment complex, Jeff sees a newlywed couple move in - the Newlyweds. The bridegroom completes their marital ritual by carrying his bride across the threshold. They kiss, and then close the blind for privacy. A calliope rendition of the romantic ballad "That's Amore" plays in the background. [They are the only ones in the film who close their shades.] Stella accuses Jeff of being a "window shopper" before leaving.

Later during a reddish Manhattan sunset as Jeff dozes, the courtyard is buzzing with activity - the soprano practices her scales. A shadow [suggesting the negative image on Jeff's table] slowly rises up Jeff's face as Lisa (in close-up) approaches, bends over, and then lovingly kisses him. She rouses and awakens him from his sleep. She is a stylish vision of beauty [recalling the positive image on the cover of the magazine] - an elegant, lovely, affluent, blonde, fashion-model-designer girlfriend. They whisper to each other, as she asks him about his leg, his stomach, and his "love life." When she asks, "anything else bothering you?," he responds impolitely: "Who are you?"

To answer his inquiry, she introduces herself by performing in front of him while glamorously dressed in a \$1,100 haute-couture gown. Used to being looked at by complete strangers, she poses as an exhibitionist in her new, fashionable and expensive Parisian dress. [She desperately tries to distract him from the enticements and attractions of his subjects across the courtyard through his window, although he has predicted her interests correctly - she has "a new dress and a lobster dinner." However, she did not pay for the dress (it was given to her *gratis* as a model/fashion columnist), and she prepared the catered lobster dinner herself - she was not the pampered, spoiled woman that Jeff had characterized. And she would later indulge in danger and daring, life-threatening acts which Jeff believed that he was solely capable of performing as a freelance, globetrotting photographer.]:

Lisa: Reading from top to bottom: (She turns on one lamp light.) Lisa

(She turns on a second lamp.) Carol

(She turns on a third lamp.) Fremont

Jeff: Is this the Lisa Fremont who never wears the same dress twice?

Lisa: Only because it's expected of her. It's right off the Paris plane. You think it will sell?...A steal at \$1,100 dollars.

Jeff: Eleven hundred? They ought to list that dress on the Stock Exchange.

Although he thinks it's only a "run-of-the-mill Wednesday," she expects it will be a "big night":

It's opening night of the last depressing week of L. B. Jefferies in a cast.

She finds an old and worn cigarette box in his apartment, commenting: "It's seen better days...it's cracked and you never use it. It's too ornate. I'm sending up a plain flat silver one with just your initials engraved." He objects to her spending her "hard-earned money" on such things. She opens the door to a uniformed, red-coated waiter from the Twenty-One Club who delivers their lobster dinner and an ice bucket that she has catered. Jeff is unable to pop the cork (both a phallic reference and a marriage reference) so the waiter accomplishes the task -- more symbolism of Jeff's impotence. She promises him: "I'm going to make this a week you'll never forget."

While drinking the wine before dinner, she tells Jeff about her busy work day - a sales meeting, appointments with wealthy notables, luncheon with *Harper's Bazaar* people, two fall fashion showings twenty blocks apart - and then a favor that she did for him with her connections. To keep him in New York shooting fashion photography instead of adventurous assignments overseas, she "planted three nice items in the columns" for him for publicity, to get him a lucrative contract in the local fashion industry. But Jeff snubs her offer - believing that his own lifestyle suits him best. He notes how her contrasting lifestyle clashes with his. He ultimately rejects the new image and identity she has planned and publicized for him:

Lisa: You can't buy that kind of publicity.

Jeff: I know.

Lisa: Someday you may want to open up a studio of your own here.

Jeff: How would I run it, from say, Pakistan?

Lisa: Jeff, isn't it time you came home? You could pick your assignment.

Jeff: Well, I wish there was one I wanted.

Lisa: Make the one you want.

Jeff: You mean leave the magazine?

Lisa: Yes.

Jeff: For what?

Lisa: For yourself and me. I could get you a dozen assignments tomorrow - fashions, portraits. Well now, don't laugh, I could do it.

Jeff: That's what I'm afraid of. Can you see me driving down to the fashion salon in a jeep wearing combat boots and a three-day beard? Will that make a hit?

Lisa: I could see you looking very handsome and successful in a dark blue flannel suit.



Jeff: Let's stop talking nonsense, shall we, hmm?

Lisa (hurt): I guess I'd better start setting up for dinner.

To escape from their romantic tensions, Jeff turns to the window again, while she walks away to get dinner ready. Jeff's neighbors are only known by the names he assigns to them. Across the apartments in Jeff's view, a lonely, middle-aged spinster (Judith Evelyn), dubbed 'Miss Lonelyhearts,' sets a table for two, putting a bottle of wine on the table and lighting the candles. She fantasizes a gentleman caller's entrance and pantomimes his arrival. She ushers him to the table, and then toasts.

[In a parallel to the scene in 'Miss Lonelyhearts' apartment, Lisa prepares their wine and food in the background. He is involved with his own voyeuristic view of other people's lives rather than with Lisa. With his back to Lisa, Jeff raises his glass in a toast to 'Miss Lonelyhearts.' His gesture is unanswered - it is symbolic of his own loneliness, his inability to commit, and his emotional distance from Lisa.] During her entertainment of a phantom lover, Bing Crosby's *To See You Is To Love You* is heard, ironically, from the radio in a neighbor's apartment. The woman sadly buries her head in her hands at the table, as Lisa returns and joins him to watch and sympathize:

Jeff: 'Miss Lonelyhearts.' Well, at least that's something you'll never have to worry about.

Lisa: Oh? You can see my apartment from here, all the way up on 63rd Street?

Jeff: No, not exactly...

The Story (continued)

In the next part of their revealing conversation, Jeff points out a similarity between the apartments of Lisa and the in-shape young dancer dubbed 'Miss Torso' (Georgine Darcy) [nicknamed with a dismembered body part, a strange name given the subject of the film] who is serving drinks and entertaining three male suitors in her apartment. In the midst of their own domestic crisis, both of them use the experience of viewing 'Miss Torso's' apartment to make cutting remarks toward each other about their own strained relationship:

Jeff: ...but we have a little apartment here that's probably about as popular as yours. You remember of course 'Miss Torso,' the ballet dancer. She's like a Queen Bee with her pick of the drones.

Lisa (changing the metaphor): I'd say she's doing a woman's hardest job - Juggling Wolves.

Jeff (watching 'Miss Torso' briefly kiss one of the men on the balcony and attempting to go back inside while he restrains her): She picked the most prosperous-looking one.

Lisa: She's not in love with *him* or any of them.

Jeff: How can you tell that from here?

Lisa: You *said* it resembled my apartment, didn't you?

The blinds are still closed on the newly-wed couple. The heavy-set, morose-looking, costume-jewelry salesman Thorwald serves his bed-ridden, invalid, nagging sick wife a tray of dinner (as she angrily snipes: "Well, I hope they're cooked *this* time.") [Also, a siren grows louder in the background (a foreboding suggestion of an emergency or disaster about to happen).] She tosses away the rose he has placed on the meal tray, symbolic of their unhappy marriage. Then while on the telephone in the living room, the wife gets out of bed and listens to his conversation, mocking him. They argue after she overhears what must be a covert phone conversation he has had with a clandestine lover. [This is the last time the salesman's wife is seen, before her presumed murder.]

[All three women are distorted, possible identities or pathways for Lisa's and Jeff's 'relationship.' The variety of characters visible through his rear window exteriorize the tensions and dynamics of their own lives.]

A middle-aged bachelor, composer/songwriter (Ross Bagdasarian) struggles as he plays at his piano in his posh studio apartment - a man behind him repairs a clock [Director Hitchcock gives his customary cameo appearance]. When served dinner by Lisa, to the accompaniment of the composer's music, Jeff makes a discordant comment about how her high-style dress, manners, and dinner service are beyond him - reminiscent of his earlier complaint voiced with Stella:

Lisa (referring to the composer's music): It's enchanting. It's almost as if it were being written especially for us.

Jeff (referring to the struggle he is having composing): No wonder he's having so much trouble with it.

Lisa: At least you can't say the dinner isn't right.

Jeff (exasperated): Lisa, it's perfect, as *always*.

Following dinner, they argue about the possibility of living together peacefully. She is eager to get a commitment from her reluctant boyfriend, but it would mean he'd have to abandon his career. Jeff is unable and unwilling to compromise and consider any different life style other than his own freewheeling, traveling life of hardship. In fact, he is traumatized by the thought of marriage and giving up his profession as a traveling photographer (or 'voyeur' actually). He argues that she wouldn't fit in and would become an encumbrance to his freedom. During their rough and stormy argument, they appear on the verge of breaking up for good:

Lisa: There can't be that much difference between people and the way they live. We all eat, talk, drink, laugh, wear clothes...

Jeff: Well, now look, now look...

Lisa: If you're saying all this because you don't want to tell me the truth, because you're hiding something from me, then maybe I can understand.

Jeff: I'm not hiding anything! It's just that...

Lisa: It doesn't make sense! What's so different about it here from over there, or any place you go, that one person couldn't live in both places just as easily?

Jeff: Some people can. Now if you'll just let me explain...

Lisa: What is it but traveling from one place to another taking pictures? It's just like being a tourist on an endless vacation.

Jeff: OK. Now that's your opinion. You're entitled to it. Now let me give you my side...

Lisa: It's ridiculous to say that it can only be done by a special, private little group of anointed people...

Jeff: I made a simple statement, a true statement, but I can back it up if you'll just shut up for a minute!

Lisa: If your opinion is as rude as your manner, I don't think I care to hear it.

Jeff: Oh, come on now, simmer down.

Lisa: You - I can't fit in here - you can't fit in there. I mean, according to you, people should be born, live and die on the same spot.

Jeff: SHUT UP! Did you ever eat fish heads in rice?

Lisa: Of course not.

Jeff: Well, you might have to if you went with me. Did you ever try to keep warm on a C-54 at 15,000 feet, 20 degrees below zero?

Lisa: Oh, I do it all the time. Whenever I have a few minutes after lunch.

Jeff: Did you ever get shot at? Did you ever get run over? Did you ever get sandbagged at night because somebody got unfavorable publicity from your camera? Did you ever...those high-heels, they'll be great in the jungle and the nylons and those six ounce lingerie...

Lisa: Three!

Jeff: All right. Three! They'll make a big hit in Finland just before you freeze to death?

Lisa: Well, if there's one thing I know, it's how to wear the proper clothes.

Jeff: Yeah, yeah. Well try and find a raincoat in Brazil, even when it isn't raining. Lisa. In this job, you carry one suitcase, your home is the available transportation. You don't sleep very much, you bathe less, and sometimes the food that you eat is made from things that you couldn't even look at when they're alive.

Lisa: Jeff, you don't have to be deliberately repulsive just to impress me I'm wrong.

Jeff: Deliberately repulsive! I'm just trying to make it sound good. You just have to face it, Lisa, you're not meant for that kind of a life. Few people are.

Lisa: You're too stubborn to argue with.

Jeff: I'm not stubborn - I'm just truthful.

Lisa: I know, a lesser man would have told me it was one long holiday - and I would have been awakened to a rude disillusionment.

Jeff: Oh, well now, wait a minute. Now wait a minute. If you want to get vicious on this, I'll be very happy to accommodate you.

Lisa: No, I don't particularly want that. (She rises and moves away.) So that's it. You won't stay here and I can't go with you.

Jeff: It would be the wrong thing.

Lisa: You don't think either one of us could ever change?

Jeff: Right now, it doesn't seem so.

Lisa (preparing to leave, she begins to put on her long white gloves that she removed when she arrived): I'm in love with you. I don't care what you do for a living. I'd just like to be part of it somehow. It's deflating to find out the only way I can be part of it is to take out a subscription to your magazine. I guess I'm not the girl I thought I was.

Jeff: There's nothing wrong with you, Lisa. You've got this town in the palm of your hand.

Lisa: Not quite it seems. (She puts on her white scarf.) Goodbye, Jeff. (She turns and starts for the doorway)

Jeff: You mean, 'Good night.'

Lisa (standing in the darkness of the doorway): I mean what I said.

Jeff: Well, Lisa, couldn't we just, uh, couldn't we just keep things status quo?

Lisa: Without any future?

Jeff: Well, when am I gonna see you again?

Lisa (hesitantly): Not for a long time...(pause)...at least not until tomorrow night.

When she goes home, Jeff quietly agonizes for a moment, and then turns toward the peacefulness of his dark apartment courtyard. The darkness is shattered by the sharp sound of a loud female scream and the sound of breaking glass. Later on that night, thunder signals a rainstorm approaching as Jeff dozes next to his window. Watching the neighbors again, he interrupts their privacy by observing their movements:

- The sleeping couple on the fire escape come in from the rain.
- Thorwald leaves his apartment in the pouring rain with his heavy case of sample products at 1:55 am. At 2:35 am, he returns with his case (lighter and presumably empty).
- In the composer's studio, the alcoholic musician staggers in - drunk.

- Thorwald again exits with his heavy sample case. Jeff dozes off.
- 'Miss Torso' enters her apartment, while refusing the advances of the same insistent date/one-night stand into her place.
- Thorwald returns with his sample case, again probably empty. Jeff dozes off.
- Early the next morning while Jeff sleeps, Thorwald leaves his apartment with an unidentified middle-aged woman dressed in black. [This woman *could* be Mrs. Thorwald, making all of Jeff's assumptions wrong.]
- During the next day, a workman delivers a block of ice through the alleyway. The female sculptor works on an abstract headless figure of "*Hunger*" on the ground floor, suggesting both gastronomical and sexual needs. 'Miss Torso' dances while going about her daily chores, and a woman lets her little dog down into Thorwald's garden from the fire escape in a pulley-driven basket.

While Jeff receives a massage from Stella, she jokingly remarks that "the insurance company would be much happier if you'd sleep in bed at night instead of in that wheelchair...Your eyes are all bloodshot. You must have been watching out that window for hours." She is worried that one of the neighbors may catch him - a tell-tale foreboding of the future. Jeff replies that he wouldn't mind if it was 'Miss Torso,' "the eat, drink, and be merry girl."

He tells her about his spying on the neighbors, in particular the mysterious comings and goings on the part of Thorwald the previous stormy night. He questions why he would carry his salesman's sample case at that hour: "Well, what would he be selling at three o'clock in the morning?" Stella quickly jokes with speculation: "Flashlights. Luminous dials for watches. House numbers that light up." On the contrary, Jeff believes "he was taking something out of the apartment." Commenting on Thorwald's bad marriage and how he might "run out on her, the coward," Jeff thinks otherwise: "Sometimes it's worse to stay than it is to run."

As they both look and notice that the shades are no longer down in Thorwald's apartment, Thorwald looks back at them. Jeff cautions Stella to back up out of the light and "get out of sight":

That's no ordinary look. That's the kind of a look a man gives when he's afraid somebody might be watching him.

Thorwald is intensely watching the little dog sniffing around the rose bushes in the flower bed of his garden, until the pet is shooed away by a neighbor. [Initially, in a startling moment, it appears like Thorwald is staring at Jeff's apartment.]

To intrude further into the apartment (beyond merely using his naked eye) when his curiosity increases and he becomes engrossed with the evidence of his alleged murder theory, he asks for Stella to take out his binoculars as she leaves. She warns: "Trouble, I can smell it."

Not satisfied with the binoculars, he reaches for a huge, high-powered telephoto lens - not to take pictures but to observe. [The lens is clearly Hitchcock's version of an optical erection, stimulating and allowing him even greater pleasure in his viewing experience. The cast on his leg is a representation of his impotence - unable to act or perform.] With the lens, he sees Thorwald in his living room replacing sample items into his case. And at his kitchen sink, he is viewed wrapping a large saw blade and a butcher knife in newspaper. He also curiously notes that Thorwald's sick wife is absent from the apartment.

Later that evening, the heat has intensified during the day and it is now 82 degrees. While other neighborly residents go about their routine activities, the camera pans back to Jeff's window, where it finds Jeff and Lisa passionately hugging and kissing in his apartment. She has dressed provocatively and come back to make up with him:

Lisa: How far does a girl have to go before you notice her?

Jeff: Well, if she's pretty enough, she doesn't have to go anywhere. She just has to be.

Lisa: Well, ain't I? Pay attention to me.

Jeff: Well, I'm, I'm not exactly on the other side of the room.

Lisa: Your mind is. When I want a man, I want all of you.

While she kisses, hugs and caresses him, she is overlooked and romantically ignored as Jeff becomes more and more obsessed by his neighbor's activities - his voyeurism and impotence are intrinsically linked. They are on totally different wavelengths: he is more interested in his theories and in telling her about what he witnessed the previous night - than kissing her.

Jeff: Don't, don't you ever have any problems?

Lisa: I have one now.

Jeff: So do I.

Lisa: Tell me about it.

Jeff: Why, why would a man leave his apartment three times on a rainy night with a suitcase and come back three times?

Lisa: He likes the way his wife welcomes him home.

Jeff: Oh no. No, no, no. Not this salesman's wife. And why didn't he go to work today?

Lisa: Homework. It's more interesting.

Jeff: What's interesting about a butcher knife and a small saw wrapped in newspaper? Huh?

Lisa: Nothing, thank heaven.

Jeff: Why hasn't he been in his wife's bedroom all day?

Lisa: I wouldn't dare answer that.

Jeff: Well, listen. I'll answer it, Lisa, there's something terribly wrong.

Lisa: And I'm afraid it's with me. (Lisa leaves him to go to the couch and smoke a cigarette.)

Jeff: What do you think?

Lisa: Something too frightful to utter.

Jeff: He went out a few minutes ago in his undershirt. He hasn't come back yet. That would be a terrible job to tackle. [The camera gazes at 'Miss Torso' at the same time.] Just how would you start to cut up a human body?

Lisa (turning on a lamp light next to her): Jeff, I'll be honest with you. You're beginning to scare me a little.

He interrupts her to say that Thorwald has returned to his apartment, carrying a heavy rope and walking into his wife's shaded bedroom. Thorwald, in silhouette, bows and raises up as if he's working (cutting up?) with something in the bedroom. Unconvinced by Jeff's speculative ideas, Lisa suddenly rises and turns his wheelchair away from the window. She is critical that he has become an obsessed Peeping Tom:

Lisa: Jeff, if you could only see yourself!

Jeff: Whatsa matter?

Lisa: Sitting around looking out of the window to kill time is one thing but doing it the way you are with binoculars and wild opinions about every little thing you see is, is diseased!

Jeff: What do you think I consider it - recreation?

Lisa: I don't know what you consider it, but if you don't stop it, I'm getting out of here...What is it you're looking for?

Jeff argues that he is only concerned about the salesman's invalid wife, and that doesn't make him "sound like a madman." Lisa offers a logical reason for why the invalid wife hasn't been attended to all day: "Maybe she died." Jeff pursues her line of reasoning: "Where's the doctor? Where's the undertaker?" Lisa insists that she may be sleeping or "under sedatives." She believes Jeff is irresponsible and wildly speculating, and that "there is nothing to see." Lisa firmly grabs hold of his wheelchair so that he can't turn it around to take a look. Jeff thinks that there is something to see:

Jeff: I've seen it through that window. I've seen bickering and family quarrels and mysterious trips at night, knives and saws and ropes, and now since last evening, not a sign of the wife. All right, now you tell me where she is...

Lisa: Maybe he's leaving his wife, I don't know, I don't care. Lots of people have knives and saws and ropes around their houses and lots of men don't speak to their wives all day. Lots of wives nag and men hate them and trouble starts. But very very few of them end up in *murder* if that's what you're thinking.

Jeff: It's pretty hard for you to keep away from that word isn't it?

Lisa: You could see all that he did, couldn't you?

Jeff: Of course, I...

Lisa: You could see because the shades were up and, and he walked along the corridor and the street and the back yard. Oh Jeff, do you think a murderer would let you see all that? That he wouldn't pull the shades *down* and hide behind them?

Jeff: Just where he's being clever. He's being non-chalant about things...

Lisa: Oh, and that's where you're not being clever. A murderer would never parade his crime in front of an open window.

Jeff: Why not?

Lisa (pointing to the newlyweds' window): Why, for all you know, there's probably something a lot more sinister going on behind those windows.

Jeff: Where? (He smiles) Oh, no comment.

The two of them watch Thorwald tie up a very large wooden crate with a rope, in front of a rolled-up mattress in his wife's bedroom. Lisa is suddenly an intrigued convert to Jeff's point of view. She instinctively realizes that the key to his heart is through his eyes. Significantly, their relationship is suddenly sparked into life and transfigured, and she joins him in an unexpected turnabout. Lisa concludes that his insane, sinister, and imaginative conclusions may be accurate:

Let's start from the beginning again, Jeff. Tell me everything you saw...and what...you think it means.

Much later that night, Lisa (who serves as Jeff's legs) calls to tell him the name and address of the salesman from his apartment letterbox:

The name on the second floor rear mailbox reads Mr. and Mrs. Lars, that's L-A-R-S, Lars Thorwald...125 West 9th Street.

When she asks what Thorward is doing now, Jeff replies (with a deeply ironic statement that actually describes himself): "He's just sitting in the living room in the dark. Hasn't gone near the bedroom." The next morning, Jeff tells New York police detective buddy Thomas J. Doyle (Wendell Corey) on the phone that there is "a little neighborhood murder" that he should come over and investigate. After serving him breakfast, Stella speculates comically about the gruesome, morbid details of how Thorwald disposed of the body:

Just where do you suppose he cut her up? 'Course, the bathtub! That's the only place where he could have washed away the blood. (Jeff looks uneasy and pauses during his meal. He puts down his fork. He nearly chokes on his coffee during Stella's next line.) He better get that trunk out of there before it starts to leak.

Jeff sees 'Miss Torso' hanging out intimate undergarments on her outside clothesline. The t-shirt-clad bridegroom opens the shade of the newlywed's room and leans out, getting some fresh air. His bride calls him back: "Har-ry?" Stella and Jeff watch two parcel-post delivery men arrive at Thorwald's apartment to pick up the wooden crate. Stella runs down to get the name of the freight company from the side of the truck, but she gestures from the alley back to Jeff that she was unsuccessful.

In the next scene, plainclothes cop Tom has arrived. He views the apartment across the courtyard through Jeff's binoculars, but is skeptical of Jeff's theories and deductions about the missing wife. He rebuffs and dismisses his friend's findings, calling them inadequate and full of misinterpreted evidence:

Tom: Didn't see the killing or the body. How do you know there was a murder?

Jeff: Because everything this fella's done has been suspicious. Trips at night in the rain, and knives and saws and trunks with rope, and now this wife that isn't there anymore.

Tom: I admit it all has a mysterious sound. Could be any number of things - murder's the least possible.

Jeff: Well, don't tell me he's an unemployed magician amusing the neighborhood with his sleight-of-hand. Now don't tell me that.

Tom: It's too obvious, a stupid way to commit murder in full view of fifty windows? Then sit over there smoking a cigar, waiting for the police to come and pick him up?

Jeff: Officer, go do your duty. Go pick him up!

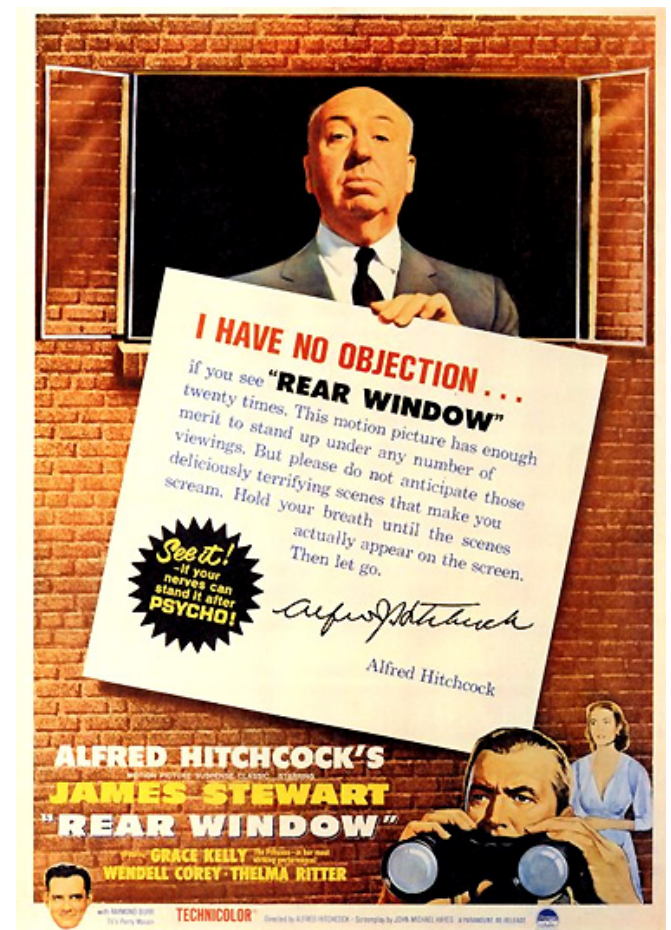
Tom: Jeff, you've got a lot to learn about homicide. Why, morons have committed murder so shrewdly it's taken a hundred trained police minds to catch them. That salesman wouldn't just knock his wife off after dinner and toss her in the trunk and put her in storage.

Jeff: I'll bet it's been done.

Tom: Most everything's been done - under PANIC. This is a thousand to one shot.

He's still sitting around the apartment. That man's not panicked.

Jeff: You think I made all this up, huh?



Tom believes there must be "a very simple explanation" for everything. Laconically, the detective promises to "poke into it a little" on his own before reporting it to the department, finding out where the wife's "trip" took her. After he leaves, Jeff again peers over his window sill, and notices the little dog furiously digging around the rose bushes in the garden. Thorwald approaches the dog and pats it on its way: "Get along." In a parallel shot, Jeff sees the detective through the alley way loitering and 'sniffing around.'

Later in the day, Tom reports back to Jeff with witness accounts that rebuff all of Jeff's speculations. The building superintendent and two tenants saw Thorwald leave the apartment with his wife the previous morning at about 6 am (while Jeff was sleeping) to go to the railroad station. Thorwald allegedly put her on a train to the country. Jeff doesn't believe that anyone actually saw her get on the train: "Well, what good's his information? It's a second-hand version of an unsupported story by the murderer himself, Thorwald." To counter Jeff's persistence, Tom replies: "Now, did anyone, including you, actually see her murdered?"

"Solving the case" rather than appearing "foolish," Jeff demands that Tom go over to Thorwald's apartment for a search before the evidence disappears: "It must be knee-deep in evidence." Tom refuses capitulating to his "amateur sleuth" friend, citing proper judicial procedures and the Constitution's Bill of Rights. He must follow the legal requirements for a judge-issued search warrant (based upon substantial evidence). Jeff becomes passionately sarcastic and critical of his cool and professional detective/friend:

Jeff: What do you need? Bloody footsteps leading up to the door?

Tom: One thing I don't need is heckling.

As Tom prepares to leave, he matter-of-factly informs Jeff of one further finding - the retrieval of a postcard in Thorwald's mailbox from his wife Anna (mailed the previous day at 3:30 in the afternoon). It says that she arrived safely in Meritsville, 80 miles to the north. The postcard's message: "Arrived OK. Already feeling better. Love, Anna." Once he is left alone, Jeff seems disappointed by the news. He extends his reach with the back scratcher to relieve the itch on his big toe.

That night, Jeff observes more activities of his neighbors with the aid of his camera's telephoto lens. Thorwald's actions raise further suspicions in his mind:

- The dog is lowered in the basket to the salesman's garden.
- 'Miss Lonelyhearts' primps in front of her dressing room mirror, takes a few stiff drinks and then goes out, apparently looking for male company.
- The composer entertains well-dressed female guests in his studio.
- 'Miss Torso' rehearses a dance with a male partner and a female choreographer.
- 'Miss Lonelyhearts' enters a restaurant across the street and is seated alone at a table. The view is accompanied by a song with appropriate lyrics: "Many dreams ago, I dreamed many dreams waiting for my true love to appear though each night.." - she also briefly speaks to a passing Thorwald.

- Thorwald arrives home carrying a "EAGLE HEAD" laundry box from the cleaner's, enters his apartment, takes the shirts out of the laundry box and begins packing a suitcase. (Worried that Thorwald is leaving, Jeff frantically calls Tom to come over, and then leaves a message for him.)
- Thorwald talks on the phone in the living room while sifting and rummaging through the contents of his wife's alligator handbag - he handles her rings and jewelry. He lingers on a gold-banded (wedding?) ring. [The woman's purse and jewelry is a Freudian reference to female sexuality.]
- More guests arrive - Village intellectuals - at a noisy party in progress in the musician's studio.

Lisa, wearing a new hat and outfit, enters Jeff's darkened apartment finding him peering out the window. After being briefed by Jeff on Thorwald's latest behaviors ("He's getting ready to pull out for good..."), Lisa explains how she has had a difficult time keeping focused on her work, because her mind has been focused on the mystery. She questions why Mrs. Thorwald would unpredictably leave behind her "favorite handbag" (with jewelry) hanging from her bedpost:

Lisa: It doesn't make sense to me...Women aren't that unpredictable...A woman has a favorite handbag and it always hangs on her bedpost where she can get at it easily. And then all of a sudden, she goes away on a trip and leaves it behind. Why?

Jeff: Because she didn't know she was going on a trip. And where she's going she wouldn't need the handbag.

Lisa: Yes, but only her husband would know that. And that jewelry. Women don't keep their jewelry in a purse, getting all twisted and scratched and tangled up.

Jeff: Well, do they hide it in their husbands' clothes?

Lisa: They do not. And they don't leave it behind either. Why, a woman going anywhere but the hospital would always take makeup, perfume, and jewelry...That's basic equipment. And you don't leave it behind in your husband's drawer in your favorite handbag.

Then, she speculates that Thorwald is involved in an adulterous relationship with a female accomplice in the murder of his wife. Jeff is pleased with her deductive reasoning and hypothesis, and for once erotically attracted to her now that she has begun to take his views seriously:

Lisa:...That couldn't have been Mrs. Thorwald...or I don't know women.

Jeff: Well, what about the witnesses?

Lisa: We'll agree they saw a woman but she was not Mrs. Thorwald, that is, not yet.

Jeff: Is that so? Come here... (She sits on his lap and kisses him.)

While they kiss and talk, Lisa boldly announces that she intends to spend the night with him, to strengthen the potential come-back of their love affair:

Lisa: We have all night...I'm going to stay with you.

Jeff: Well, you'll have to clear that with my landlord.

Lisa: I have the whole weekend off.

Jeff: Well, that's very nice, but I just have one bed.

Lisa: If you say anything else, I'll stay tomorrow night, too.

Jeff: I won't be able to give you any pajamas.

To prove that she can travel light, if necessary, and "live out of one suitcase," she proudly displays her one handbag-sized trick black "suitcase," filled with frilly, pink, overnight lingerie and slippers. With lines dripping of sexual *double entendre*, Lisa meets his challenge of going on an adventure when she offers him an unbelievable trade - her "feminine intuition" for a "bed for the night":

Lisa: You said I'll have to live out of one suitcase. I'll bet *yours* isn't this small?

Jeff: This is a suitcase?

Lisa: Well, a Mark Cross overnight case anyway. Compact, but, uh, ample enough. (She pulls her frilly lingerie from inside.)

Jeff: Looks like you packed in a hurry. Look at this. Isn't that amazing?

Lisa: I'll trade you. My feminine intuition for a bed for the night.

Jeff: I'll go along with that.

She is drawn to listening to the melodious sound of the composer's piano playing ("Mona Lisa") in the apartment across the way during his party, asking:

Lisa: Where does a man get inspiration to write a song like that?... (Lisa reclines on the couch by the window.) It's utterly beautiful. Wish I could be creative.

Jeff (teasing): Oh sweetie, you are. You have a great talent for creating difficult situations.

Lisa: I do?

Jeff: Sure. Staying here all night, uninvited.

Lisa: Surprise is the most important element of attack. And besides, you're not up on your private eye literature. When they're in trouble, it's always their Girl Friday who gets them out of it.

Jeff: Well, is she the girl that saves him from the clutches of the seductive showgirls and the overpassionate daughters of the rich?

Lisa: The same.

Jeff: That's the one, huh? It's funny, he never ends up marrying her, does he, huh? That's strange.

Lisa: Weird. (She takes off her outer jacket.) Why don't I slip into something more comfortable?

Jeff: By all means.

Lisa: I mean, like the kitchen and make us some coffee.

Jeff: Oh, with some brandy too, huh?

For the second time, the newlywed bridegroom (in his underwear) opens the shade, leans out and puffs on a cigarette. Again, his wife calls him back: "Harry." Tom arrives and notices Lisa's nightgown in her open suitcase [often glancing at it like it is incriminating evidence] and the now-boisterous party in the composer's studio. Lisa's first words to Detective Doyle, after an introduction, are: "We think Thorwald's guilty." Tom knowingly glances once more at Lisa's suitcase, and Jeff cautions: "Careful, Tom." [His caution of making rash judgments and jumping to conclusions is, of course, a warning that Jefferies needs to heed himself.]

Lisa has become convinced of the truth of Thorwald's guilt - Thorwald *must* have murdered his wife because, according to her, no woman goes on a trip leaving behind her favorite jewelry (or handbag). After being told their suspicions and Lisa's "feminine intuitions" about the handbag and jewelry, detective friend Doyle concludes that Lars has not murdered and dismembered his wife after having checked out the wife's whereabouts:

Tom: (in close-up) Lars Thorwald is no more a murderer than I am.

Jeff: You mean to say you can explain everything that's gone on over there and is still going on?

Tom: No, and neither can you. That's a secret, private world you're looking into out there. People do a lot of things in private that they couldn't possibly explain in public.

Lisa: Like disposing of their wives.

Tom: Get that idea out of your mind. It will only lead in the wrong direction.

Jeff: What about the knife and the saw?

Tom: Did you ever own a saw?

Jeff: At home in the garage, I had...

Tom: How many people did you cut up with it? Or with the couple of hundred knives you probably owned in your life? Your logic is backward.

Lisa: You can't ignore the wife disappearing and the trunk and the jewelry.

Tom: I checked the railroad station. He bought a ticket. Ten minutes later, he put his wife on the train. Destination? Meritsville. The witnesses are that deep.

Lisa: That might have been a woman, but it couldn't have been Mrs. Thorwald. That jewelry...

Tom: Look, Miss Fremont. That uh, feminine intuition stuff sells magazines but in real life, it's still a fairy tale. I don't know how many wasted years I've spent tracking down leads based on female intuition....

Before leaving, Tom discusses with them that Thorwald's trunk has been found, tied up because the lock was broken. All it contained was Mrs. Thorwald's clothes, clean and well-packed. Taking everything with her, Tom suggests it could be because there is a "family problem" and she isn't planning on coming back. Jeff asks why Thorwald didn't tell his landlord that she wasn't coming back, speculating that he was hiding something. Doyle looks at Lisa's suitcase and its provocative nightgown and asks pointedly:

Tom: Do you tell *your* landlord everything?

Jeff: I told you to be careful, Tom.

Tom: If I'd have been careful piloting that reconnaissance plane during the war, you wouldn't have had the chance to take the pictures that won you a medal and a good job and fame and money.

Tom then takes a long glance at Lisa, as if to add her to Jeff's list of accomplishments and prizes. After Lisa asks if Tom is "through with the case," he confirms that there isn't enough evidence to support a murder theory: "There is no case to be through with, Miss Fremont." Lisa crosses over to Jeff's wheelchair, symbolically signifying her support of her fiancée. Realizing that she is siding with Jeff and their socializing isn't going as planned, Tom delivers a curt "exit line": "Oh Jeff, if you need any more help, consult the yellow pages in your telephone directory." His final bit of news is that the trunk was delivered to Mrs. Anna Thorwald. Its delivery was recently confirmed in Meritsville - Lars' wife signed the delivery note for the trunk.

After coldly disagreeing with them, Doyle leaves, with ironic parting words: "Don't stay up too late." Jeff and Lisa are dejected, and turn once again toward their neighbors' activities:

- The drunken party guests at the composer's place sing "Mona Lisa."
- 'Miss Torso' exercises her legs while lying on her bed.
- 'Miss Lonelyhearts' brings home a male guest. When the guest aggressively kisses her, she lowers her blinds for privacy. After he forces her down on the couch and sexually assaults her, she angrily slaps him and dismisses him from her apartment, and then goes back to her couch and collapses, crying. [The words of the song 'Mona Lisa' signify her victimization by male violence.]

After witnessing the despairing 'Miss Lonelyhearts,' both Lisa and Jeff wonder whether they are becoming too involved in the lives of others. They doubt the morality of their own probings and convictions:

Jeff (thoughtfully): You know, much as I hate to give Thomas J. Doyle too much credit, he might have gotten ahold of something when he said that was pretty private stuff going on out there. I wonder if it is ethical to watch a man with binoculars and a long-focus lens. Do you, do you suppose it's ethical even if you prove that he didn't commit a crime?

Lisa: I'm not much on rear-window ethics.

Jeff: Of course, they can do the same thing to me. Watch me like a bug under a glass if they want to.

Lisa: Jeff, you know if someone came in here, they wouldn't believe what they'd see.

Jeff: What?

Lisa: You and me with long faces, plunged into despair because we find out a man *didn't* kill his wife. We're two of the most frightening ghouls I've ever known. You'd think we could be a little bit happier that the poor woman is alive and well. (She leans over the back of his wheelchair to kiss him on the neck.) Whatever happened to that old saying: 'Love thy neighbor'?

Jeff: (Laughs) You know, I think I'll start reviving that tomorrow. I'll begin with 'Miss Torso.'

Lisa: Not if I have to move in to an apartment across the way and do the Dance of the Seven Veils every hour. (She lowers the bamboo blinds on the four windows - in preparation.) The show's over for tonight. (She picks up her overnight kit of lingerie and starts into the next room to change for bed.) Preview of coming attractions. Did Mr. Doyle think I stole this case? [Linking her case to the criminal investigation.]

Jeff: No, Lisa, I don't think he did.

After some moments, Lisa emerges in the doorway, enticing him by gracefully floating into the room wearing an elegant white silk nightgown - her "preview of coming attractions" for an intimate evening:

Lisa: What do you think? (Jeff is speechless.) I will rephrase the question.

Jeff: Thank you.

Lisa: Do you like it?

Jeff: Yes, I like it.

Suddenly, a desperate scream in the courtyard shatters the night air. As everyone moves to their apartment windows (and Lisa opens their middle blind), they see the female dog owner crying out from her fire escape - her dead dog lies on the concrete in front of Thorwald's garden - maliciously killed with its neck broken. The strangled dog's body is drawn up on the pulley. The distraught woman sobs piteously in disbelief, crying out and accusing the other anonymous, uncaring apartment dwellers - who appear in separate, individual closeups: "You don't know the meaning of the word 'neighbor'":

Which one of you did it? Which one of you killed my dog? You don't know the meaning of the word 'neighbor.' Neighbors like each other, speak to each other, care if anybody lives or dies, but none of you do. But I couldn't imagine any of you bein' so low that you'd kill a little helpless, friendly dog - the only thing in this whole neighborhood who liked anybody. Did ya kill him because he *liked* ya? Just because he *liked* ya?

Jeff notices that the only person who doesn't emerge from inside when the dog is discovered is Thorwald, seen smoking a glowing cigarette in his darkened apartment. Lisa suspects that the little dog was killed "because it knew too much."

The next day, Jeff's nurse Stella and Lisa (in a flower-print dress) watch out Jeff's rear window as Thorwald is seen scrubbing the walls of the bathroom above the tub in his apartment. Stella is convinced of a murder and states what everyone else is thinking - that Thorwald murdered his wife and dismembered her body in the bath-tub:

Stella: Musta splattered alot. Well why not, that's what we're all thinkin'. He killed her in there. He has to clean up those stains before he leaves.

Lisa: Oh Stella, your choice of words.

Stella: Nobody ever invented a polite word for a killin' yet.

Viewing a two-week old slide photograph of the garden through a viewer, Jeff anticipates what he will discover: "I think I've solved a murder...I think I know why Thorwald killed that dog." He compares the growth of the flowers in the flower bed, noticing that they were taller earlier than they are now (obviously "there's something in there. Those flowers have been taken out and put back in"). He suspects that something (maybe the knife and saw) was buried there by Thorwald, near where the overcurious dog was found. Stella has her own grotesque theory that ignores the inconclusive burial idea: "My idea is she's scattered all over town, a leg in the East River..." Lisa is disgusted by the thought, but she is brave enough to propose that they wait until it gets a little darker to dig up the flowerbed.

Because Lars has been hurriedly packing in his apartment to leave, Jeff wheels himself around and prints a provocative note in large letters: "WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH HER?" and places it in an envelope addressed: "LARS THORWALD." Lisa volunteers to be the messenger and stealthily delivers the note under Thorwald's door - she just misses being detected. Jeff uses his telephoto lens to observe the operation from his window. After reading the note and not finding anyone at his door or on the fire escape, Thorwald goes into his back bedroom and hastily finishes his packing. Stella is relieved: "Thank heaven that's over."

While Lisa rushes back to the apartment, Stella asks to use Jeff's telephoto camera: "Mind if I use that portable keyhole?" He permits her, under one condition: "Go ahead as long as you tell me what you're looking at." She notices 'Miss Lonelyhearts' laying out red pills (possibly in preparation for a suicide with an overdose of pills and alcohol), and then picking up a book with a large cross on its cover (a Bible?).

When Lisa breathlessly returns (as Jeff proudly looks on at his hero), she eagerly and excitedly asks:

Lisa: Wasn't that close? Well, what was his reaction? I mean when he looked at the note.

Stella: Well, it wasn't the kind of an expression that would get him a quick loan at the bank.

Lisa: Jeff, the handbag!

They watch Lars look in his wife's handbag and then place it in his suitcase. Both women suspect that Lars has his wife's gold wedding band in the handbag. When Lisa asks if Stella would ever go anywhere without her wedding band, she imagines a grisly scenario: "The only way anybody could get that ring would be to chop off my finger." Stella wishes to go down and find out what's buried in the garden, and Lisa morbidly concurs that she has always wanted to find buried remains: "Why not? I've always wanted to meet Mrs. Thorwald." Jeff is slightly squeamish, although Lisa is not: "If you're squeamish, just don't look." He doesn't want them to end up with the dog's fate.

In a bold scheme to distract Lars and get him out of the apartment for fifteen minutes so that the women can dig in the garden, Jeff makes his first real contact with Thorwald. He phones the salesman, identifies himself as the note's author ("Did you get my note?"), and tells him to meet him at the bar at the Albert Hotel "right away...a little business meeting to settle the estate of your late wife." Thorwald promptly leaves, presumably for the nearby hotel. Jeff tells the women that he will be their lookout. He will signal Thorwald's return with a flash in the window from his camera's flashbulb. In the courtyard, both women climb the steps and garden wall, similar to the path taken by the cat at the opening of the film, and Stella begins to dig with a shovel where the dog used to sniff about. Jeff telephones Tom Doyle and leaves an urgent message with his babysitter. As she digs, Stella gestures that they haven't found anything.

In a suspenseful scene, Lisa makes a bold but potentially reckless decision to enter and search Lars' apartment while he is gone. Her goal is to find the incriminating evidence - the wedding ring - that will prove Jeff's theory. [Lisa actually enters Jeff's fantasy world when all other enticements and threats to get to his heart fail.] In her full-skirted, flowery dress, she climbs up to his apartment via the exterior fire escape and enters through an open window. Jeff pantomimes a protest from his window, but to no avail. In Thorwald's bedroom, she turns the purse upside down, showing him that it's empty - as Jeff views what she's doing through his telephoto lens. Stella returns to Jeff's apartment, telling him Lisa's instructions: "Ring Thorwald's phone the second you see him come back."

Preoccupied with 'Miss Lonelyhearts' who is conducting a suicide attempt on the ground floor due to her failure to find a suitable companion, Stella convinces Jeff to call the police to alert them, and he is distracted from his look-out duties. Lisa starts looking around the apartment for the jewelry. While he dials the police at the 6th Precinct, the suicidal woman pauses for a moment to listen to the composer's music in an adjacent apartment. The large hulking Thorwald unexpectedly returns just as Lisa seems to have found some evidence. She proudly holds up some of Mrs. Thorwald's jewelry in the living room. As she enters the kitchen in his apartment, she hears Thorwald in the hallway and hides as he enters the front door. Jeff helplessly and impotently looks on as Lisa is trapped, gasping and covering his mouth with feminine gestures. Panicked, he frantically tells the police on the phone about a man molesting a woman in Thorwald's apartment (while totally forgetting about 'Miss Lonelyhearts'): "A man is assaulting a woman at 125 West 9th Street, Second Floor at the rear. Make it fast." [The two dramas happening only a floor apart increase the unbearable tension - a depressed 'Miss Lonelyhearts' below, and a trapped Lisa in the wife-murderer's apartment above.]

In the bedroom, Thorwald notices that the handbag has been moved. Lisa is spotted and confronted by Lars - she backs away from him into the living room. She is grabbed by the arm and thrown down, forced to her knees. Thorwald demands the jewelry back and then struggles with her and violently shakes her. Jeff anxiously and helplessly watches in misery as her screams for help can be heard: "Jeff! Jeff!" As she fends him off and they wrestle with each other, Lars turns out the lights. When the police arrive in the apartment's corridor just in time to prevent any serious injury, they question both Lisa and Thorwald.

In a significant scene as she explains her breaking and entering crime, Lisa positions herself with her back to the window between the real criminal and the authorities. To signal that she has found the ring, she points to Thorwald's wife's wedding ring *on her own finger* that she waves behind her back. Stella watches with binoculars as Jeff views the scene with his telephoto lens.

[Pointing to the wedding ring on her finger, she courageously reveals that she has discovered the crucial evidence - it is also an expression of her symbolic wish and proposal to be married to Jeff. By wearing the ring, she fulfills her own fantasy. And by daringly placing herself in serious danger and causing him masochistic excitement at the same time, she inspires Jeff toward love, commitment, concern, and marriage in multiple ways, as he watches her through his long telephoto lens.]

While Lisa gestures, Lars notices her signals and the wedding ring, and triangulates the view, spotting the mortal threat. He looks up and discovers that Jeff, his tormentor, is watching from the apartment window across the courtyard, looking directly into his telephoto lens. It is the first time he has noticed the voyeuristic spy in the apartment complex - it is a chilling moment in the film as he sees the threatening spectator and knows where he lives.

When Lisa is led away by police, Stella leaves with their available cash to bail her out of jail, presumably with charges of first offense burglary. Just then, Tom Doyle calls, not wanting to be bothered by another "mad-killer" tale. Jeff whispers the latest developments: Lisa's arrest after entering Thorwald's apartment and finding the evidence - Mrs. Thorwald's wedding ring; and Thorwald's killing of a dog that was digging around in the garden where something was buried. Jeff also describes his explanations and theories surrounding Thorwald's murder of his wife:

All those trips at night with that metal suitcase. He wasn't taking out his possessions, because his possessions were still up in the apartment...in sections, and I'll tell you something else. All the telephone calls he made were long-distance. All right, now if he called his wife long-distance on the day she left, after she arrived in Meritsville, why did she write a card to him saying that she'd arrived in Meritsville? Why did she do that?

Doyle promises to "run it down," and get Lisa out of jail without the need of bail money. He also assures Jeff about Thorwald: "If that ring checks out, we'll give him an escort." In the exciting finale when Jeff is left alone in his apartment, he notices that Lars' apartment is dark. When his phone rings again, he doesn't wait to hear who the caller is. He blurts out:

Tom, I think Thorwald's left. I don't...Hello...

The phone clicks off and disconnects. Jeff slowly realizes his error - it was not the detective. He sits helplessly, listening to noises, glancing around warily, wondering if he will potentially be the next victim - a victim of male aggression like Mrs. Thorwald. While he hears footsteps outside his apartment, Jeff wheels himself around to grab his flash equipment and a long box of flashbulbs to protect himself. Then, he positions himself in front of his rear window so that he is darkly silhouetted by it. Eventually, the dark figure of Thorwald slowly opens the door and enters - he guiltily and pitifully asks:

Thorwald: What do you want from me? Your friend, the girl, could have turned me in. Why didn't she? What is it you want? A lot of money? I don't have any money. Say something. Say something. Tell me what you want! Can you get me that ring back?

Jeff: No!

Thorwald: Tell her to bring it back.

Jeff: I can't. The police have it by now.

Jeff has inserted a flashbulb into his camera's flash mechanism. To blind Thorwald momentarily as he menacingly moves forward to attack, on each of the three steps he takes down to reach his victim, Jeff keeps loading new flashbulbs and firing the flash to keep the killer at a distance. Jeff fights him off by flashing or firing his profession's main instrument - his camera and its exploding flash mechanism [orgasmically or erotically?] - once, twice, three times, and then a fourth time. Each whitish-blue flash is followed by a red after-glow filling the entire frame, from Thorwald's dazed perspective.

Seeing Doyle and Lisa entering Thorwald's apartment across the way, Jeff screams out: "Lisa. Doyle." Thorwald struggles with Jeff, trying to strangle him, and then dumps him out of the wheelchair and through the open window. Jeff hangs and dangles from the window ledge three floors above the courtyard as Thorwald tries to push him to his death. Onlookers from the apartments around the courtyard hear the suspenseful fight - now they are the spectators looking over at Jeff's window. Detectives grab Lars from behind at the last minute, but Jeff lets go and falls backward to the ground below. His fall to the courtyard is partially broken by detectives. Reunited, Lisa cradles Jeff's head in her lap as he tells her: "I'm proud of you."

Jeff sarcastically asks Doyle: "You got enough for a search warrant now?" The police yell down that Thorwald has confessed that he distributed his wife's body parts in the East River: "Thorwald's ready to take us on a tour of the East River." With morbid curiosity, Stella whispers a question to Doyle and learns that because the dog got "too inquisitive," Thorwald dug up Mrs. Thorwald's body parts from the flower bed and moved them to a hat box in his apartment. Asked if she wants to take a look, Stella replies: "No thanks, I don't want any part of it." [A gruesome double-entendre about one of Mrs. Thorwald's body parts - her head? - possibly in the hat box, that causes her to do a double-take]

In the epilogue or final scene, the temperature now reads 72 degrees and the heat wave has broken. The camera makes a wide pan one last time around the courtyard [a wide pan both commences and closes the film in a neatly symmetrical pattern of actions] to resolve the lives of the occupants of the complex in the framed windows:

- 'Miss Lonelyhearts' (now no-longer-lonely) visits the composer in his studio, where he plays his new phonograph hit record release for her (the song that was being composed during the entire film). She tells him: "I can't tell you what this music has meant to me." His beautiful music saved her life and prevented her suicide attempt: "Lisa, with your daffodil April face, Lisa, full of starry-eyed laughing grace; Hold me and whisper the sweet words I'm yearning for; Drown me in kisses, Caresses I'm burning for."
- Painters with paint rollers are busy repainting the Thorwald apartment.
- The childless couple who sleep on the fire escape have acquired a new puppy dog to replace their murdered dog. They lower it in their basket.
- 'Miss Torso' opens her door for Stanley, a chubby, spectacled, Army-uniformed soldier boyfriend (or husband?) and true love, returning home and hungry for what's in the refrigerator.
- The sculptress naps in her lawn chair after finishing her "Hunger" sculpture.
- The newlyweds quarrel for the first time - because the bridegroom quit his job. The bride is disaffected and furious, vowing she wouldn't have gotten married if she had known.

Jeff snoozes [in the same position as in the film's opening] with his back toward his rear window, facing inward and presumably having given up his indulgent spying on others. There is a smile on his face. His fate following the cataclysmic discovery of the murder is that he is doomed to repetition - more helpless convalescence and more time sitting at his window with two broken legs in casts (doubly castrated!). But now the camera finds the recklessly-brave, protective hero Lisa at the side of her flawed fiancée. Her legs are on the sofa next to him - he is not alone this time.

The shot pans up her legs, revealing significantly that Lisa is masculinely-dressed in blue jeans/pants and shirt. [She is not in her typical glamorous, high-fashion outfit - rather, she is the one 'wearing the trousers.'] After noticing that he is asleep and not watching her, she casts off her male image by putting down her adventure tale reading material - *Beyond the High Himalayas*, by William O. Douglas. She assertively substitutes her own preferred reading material - *Harper's Bazaar* (the "Beauty Issue"). On the soundtrack is the musician's song: "Lisa." The window shades roll down before the superimposed Paramount Studios logo - the audience members were the ultimate voyeurs "spying" on the entire film, before fading to black.

[Note: One thing to note: there were NO end credits in the original film. The DVD restoration appended end credits, as well as the PG-rating that was applied to the film decades later. (There were no film ratings in 1954.)]

