

Bruce's mother, the other reporters, and especially Pettibone, the delightful emissary from the governor. Perhaps most important, note how the scenes "hook into" each other. An event at the end of one scene is seen as a cause leading to an effect, that is, the event that begins the next scene. For example, at the end of the first scene, Walter offers to take Bruce and Hildy to lunch; scene 2 starts with the three of them arriving at the restaurant. This exemplifies the famous "linearity" of classical narrative: almost every scene ends with a "dangling cause," the effect of which is shown at the beginning of the next scene. In *His Girl Friday*, this linear pattern helps keep the plot action moving rapidly forward, "setting up" each new scene quickly at the end of the previous one.

The cause-and-effect logic of the film illustrates yet another principle of classical narrative structure: closure. No event is uncaused. (Even when Pettibone arrives, he is no *deus ex machina*, for we know that the governor is under pressure to decide about the case.) And, more important, both lines of action are clearly resolved at the end. Williams is saved and the politicians are disgraced. Bruce, having gone home with mother, leaves Walter and Hildy preparing for a second honeymoon no less hectic than their first.

So much for causality. What of narrative time? Classical Hollywood cinema typically subordinates time to the narrative's cause-effect relations, and one common way is to set a deadline for the action. Thus a temporal goal is wedded to a causal one, and the time becomes charged with cause-effect significance. The deadline is, of course, a convention of the newspaper genre, already adding a built-in time (and suspense) factor. But in *His Girl Friday* each of the two plots has its own deadlines as well. The mayor and sheriff face an obvious deadline: Earl Williams must be hanged before next Tuesday's election and before the governor can reprieve him. In his political strategizing Walter Burns faces the other side of the same deadline: he wants Williams reprieved. What we might not expect is that the romance plot has deadlines as well. Bruce and Hildy are set to leave on a train bound for Albany (and for marriage) at four o'clock that very day. Walter's machinations keep forcing the couple to postpone their departure. Add to this the fact that when Bruce comes to confront Hildy and Walter, he exits with the defiant ultimatum: "I'm leaving on the nine o'clock train!" (Hildy misses that train as well.) The temporal structure of the film, then, depends on the cause-effect sequence. If Earl Williams were to be hanged next month, or if the election were two years off, or if Bruce and Hildy were planning a marriage at some distant future date, the sense of dramatic pressure would be entirely absent. The numerous and overlapping deadlines under which all of the characters labor have the effect of squeezing together all the lines of action and sustaining the breathless pace of the film.

Another aspect of *His Girl Friday's* patterning of time reinforces this pace. Though the plot presents events in straightforward chronological order, it takes remarkable liberties with story duration. Of course, since the action consumes about nine hours (from around 12:30 P.M. to around 9:30 P.M.), we expect that certain portions of time between scenes will be eliminated. And so they have been. What is unusual is that the time within scenes has been accelerated. At the start of the very first scene, for example, the clock in the *Post* office reads 12:36; after 12 minutes of screen time have passed, the clock in the *Post* office reads 12:57. It's important to note that there have been no editing ellipses in the scene; the story duration has simply been compressed. If you clock scene 13, you will find even more remarkable acceleration; people leave on long trips and return in less than 10 minutes. Again, the editing is continuous: it is story time that "goes faster" than screen time. Add to this temporal compression the frenetically rushed dialogue

and the occasionally accelerated rhythmic editing (for example, the reporters' cries just before Williams's capture), and we have a film that often proceeds at breakneck pace.

Space, like time, is here subordinate to narrative cause and effect. Hawks's camera moves unobtrusively to reframe the characters symmetrically in the shot. (Watch any scene silent to observe the subtle "balancing act" that goes on during the dialogue scenes. An example is shown in Figs. 6.87 to 6.89). Straight-on camera angles predominate, varied by an occasional high-angle shot down on the prison courtyard or on Williams's cell. Lighting is generally high key, except for the morbid Gothic silhouettes of the gallows and of Earl Williams's cell bars. (Why, we might ask in passing, does the prison receive this visual emphasis in the camera angle and the lighting?) The restriction of the action to very few locales might seem a handicap, but the patterns of character placement are remarkably varied and functional: Walter's persuading Hildy to write the story is interesting from this standpoint, as the two pace in a complete circuit around the desk and Walter assumes dynamic and comic postures. And spatial continuity in the editing anticipates each dramatic point by judiciously cutting to a closer shot or smoothly matching on action so that we watch the movements and not the cuts. Virtually every scene, especially the restaurant episode and the final scene, offers many fine examples of classical continuity editing. In all, space is used to delineate the flow of the cause-effect sequence.

We might highlight for special attention one specific item of both sound and mise-en-scene. It is "realistic" that newspapermen in 1939 should use telephones, but *His Girl Friday* makes the phone integral to the narrative. Walter's duplicity demands phones: at the restaurant he pretends to be summoned away to a call; he makes and breaks promises to Hildy via phones; he directs Duffy and other minions by phone. More generally, the pressroom is equipped with a veritable flotilla of phones, enabling the reporters to contact their editors. And, of course, Bruce keeps calling Hildy from the various police stations in which he continually finds himself. The telephones thus constitute a communications network that permits the narrative to be relayed from point to point.

But Hawks also visually and sonically orchestrates the characters' use of the phones. There are many variations. One person may be talking on the phone, or several may be talking *in turn* on different phones, or several may be talking *at once* on different phones, or a phone conversation may be juxtaposed with a conversation elsewhere in the room, and so on. In scene 11, there is a "polyphonic" effect of reporters coming in to phone their editors, each conversation overlapping with the preceding one. Later, in scene 13, while Hildy frantically phones hospitals, Walter screams into another phone. And when Bruce returns for Hildy, a helter-skelter din arises that eventually sorts itself into three soundlines: Bruce begging Hildy to listen, Hildy obsessively typing her story, and Walter yelling into the phone for Duffy to clear page one ("No, no, leave the rooster story—that's human interest!"). Like much in *His Girl Friday*, the telephones warrant close study for the complex and various ways in which they are integrated into the narrative, and for their contribution to the rapid tempo of the film.

■ STAGECOACH

1939. Walter Wanger Productions (released through United Artists). Directed by John Ford. Script by Dudley Nichols, from the short story "Stage to Lordsburg," by Ernest Haycox. Photographed by Bert Glennon. Edited by Dorothy Spencer and Walter Rey-

Low angle shot

non-verbal dialogue

Anticipation of what is to come

in a plot line

complexity of editing

nolds. Music by Richard Hageman, W. Franke Harling, John Leipold, Leo Shuken, Louis Gruenberg. With John Wayne, Claire Trevor, Thomas Mitchell, Andy Devine, George Bancroft, Donald Meek, Louise Platt, John Carradine, Berton Churchill.

Film theorist André Bazin has written of John Ford's *Stagecoach*: "*Stagecoach* (1939) is the ideal example of the maturity of a style brought to classic perfection. . . . *Stagecoach* is like a wheel, so perfectly made that it remains in equilibrium on its axis in any position." This effect results from the film's concentration on the creation of a tight narrative unity, with all of its elements serving that goal.

As in *His Girl Friday*, the plot takes place over a short time—two days. Ford's narrative takes the word "stagecoach" (a coach traveling in stages, stopping along the way) literally and makes this the basis of its narrative divisions. Thus the film's action is the progression of a stagecoach from its starting point to its destination, with the major scenes occurring at the places where the coach stops for meals and rest. Instead of a detailed segmentation of the film, a broader breakdown of the large-scale parts of the journey lets us bring out important aspects of the form's development:

#### First day

1. Cavalry receives word of Indian uprising.
2. In Tonto, the passengers board the stagecoach.
3. Conversations during the first part of the journey.
4. First stage stop: noon dinner and word that there will be no escort.
5. Conversations during the second part of the journey.
6. Second stage stop: night. Lucy's baby is born; Ringo proposes to Dallas.

#### Second day

7. Morning: departure from the second stage stop.
8. Conversations during the third part of the journey.
9. Third stage stop: passengers discover burned ferry, float coach across river, are attacked and chased by Indians, and are rescued by the cavalry.
10. Arrival at Lordsburg; Ringo has his shoot-out with the Plummer brothers.
11. Ringo and Dallas depart for Ringo's ranch.

The perfect balance of one part against another is apparent in this outline. At the very beginning and end, short scenes take place among the buttes of Monument Valley. Initially we see the cavalry riding and bringing the news that Geronimo is on the warpath; at the end, a single shot shows Ringo and Dallas riding through the valley toward their new life together. The film's second part takes place in the town of Tonto, where the passengers board the coach. The journey ends in sequence 10, which reverses the second part; here the passengers disembark in Lordsburg, their destination. Here also the various goals these characters had set up for themselves are resolved.

Between these two points of departure and arrival, there are three sequences of travel along the road (parts 3, 5, and 8), each culminating in the arrival at one of the three stages, or stops, along the way. During the first stop, at Dry Fork, the passengers eat their noon meal. At the second, Apache Wells, they spend the night. The departure the next morning parallels the previous day's departure from the town; the pattern of parts 5-6 repeats that of parts 3-4.

As before, the departure scene leads to a new traveling phase, part 8. But after two repetitions of the travel-stage-stop pattern, the narrative introduces a major variation. When the coach arrives at the outpost for the third and final stage, East Ferry, the characters find it burnt by Indians. The coach crosses the river and

goes on toward Lordsburg, but our expectation of a major scene at this point is not disappointed. In the formal position of the third stage stop, the Indian attack occurs. After the chase and rescue, an ellipsis moves the narrative directly to Lordsburg, eliminating the last part of the journey.

The initial departure from Tonto (Segment 2) establishes the goals of most of the characters. Lucy Mallory is traveling to join her husband, who is in the cavalry. Mr. Peacock, a whiskey salesman, is on his way home to join his wife in Kansas City. The two leaders of the group are the driver, Buck, who also is going home to his family in Lordsburg, and the marshal, Curly, who goes along as guard to try to capture the Ringo Kid.

Two "undesirables"—Doc Boone, the local drunk, and Dallas, a prostitute—leave town on the same stagecoach, driven out by the "respectable" elements of the town. Doc and Dallas have no definite goal, except to find a place where they will be allowed to stay. The gambler, Hatfield, also joins the group with no long-term goal of his own; he seeks to protect Lucy Mallory on her journey.

The narrative marks two characters off by having them board the coach later. Having stolen the payroll money deposited in his bank, Gatewood hails the coach on the street and gets in. Gatewood's goal is to escape undetected. A short while after the coach leaves Tonto, it meets Ringo, who wants to get to Lordsburg to avenge himself on the Plummer brothers. He joins the group, under arrest by Curly.

Most of the significant causal developments in the plot come in the scenes at the two stage stops. In the first (Segment 4), the seating pattern at the table defines the social relationships. Within the group, Ringo and Dallas are both shunned as outcasts and hence thrown together. Mr. Peacock defines himself as the weakling of the group by being the only one to vote to return to Tonto when they discover that no cavalry escort will be available beyond that stop.

The second stage stop (Segment 6) is the most important scene during the journey for its development of character relationships. Doc Boone and Dallas, the two undesirables, earn the admiration of the others by helping deliver Lucy's baby. At this point Ringo proposes marriage to Dallas.

Between the major sequences in the towns, the stages, and the Indian attack come three sequences of traveling through Monument Valley (parts 3, 5, and 8), each consisting of a number of similar short scenes. Each scene begins with a long shot or extreme long shot of the coach; most of these are accompanied by the distinctive "stagecoach" musical motif. Several times, especially early in each sequence, this long shot is followed by a medium shot of the driver's seat, with Curly and Buck talking. These shots give snatches of exposition. For example, we learn that Curly is sympathetic to Ringo's revenge motives and that he is suspicious of Gatewood.

Each short scene also contains one or more shots inside the coach, with the passengers making conversation or exchanging glances. These interchanges tend to reestablish character traits and relations rather than move the action forward. Gatewood complains constantly; Boone filches drinks from Peacock's sample bag; Hatfield does courteous little favors for Lucy's comfort. Several motifs enter into these characterizations. Boone's liquor contrasts with the canteen the women drink from, and the two valises belonging to Gatewood and Peacock also set up a contrast. The development of the characters' attitudes toward one another is also apparent. Before the birth of Lucy's baby, the other characters ignore Dallas; in later scenes they are relatively kind to her.

These numerous short scenes, strung together within the travel sequences, function to give a sense of the coach's progression. Dissolves link most of them, indicating the passage of time and space. Unlike *His Girl Friday*, *Stagecoach* has



Fig. 10.1



Fig. 10.2

almost no scenes that end with dangling causes that "hook" over into the beginning of the next scene. Causes are introduced, but these tend to disappear for long stretches of the action. Thus early in the film Curly mentions that he sympathizes with Ringo's desire for revenge. This sympathy emerges only in the final scene, in which Curly lets Ringo go have his shoot-out with the Plummers. Because most or all of the nine characters are present in almost every scene of the journey, *Stagecoach* has little need for dangling causes; there are few transitions from one set of characters in one locale to another set in another locale. The coach's journey itself provides the forward development of the narrative.

Much of the richness of *Stagecoach*'s narrative comes from the mixing of numerous characters with separate, sometimes contradictory goals. The rapid resolutions of the characters' goals on the arrival at Lordsburg gives a strong sense of closure. Lucy learns that her husband, reported to have been wounded by Indians, is safe; Peacock survives his wound; Gatefield is arrested. Thus most of the strongly positive and negative characters are taken care of.

Other characters have had to prove their worth in the course of the action. Hatfield is a notorious gambler but proves himself to be a "gentleman" by protecting Lucy and dying in the battle with the Indians. Doc Boone has sobered up in order to deliver Lucy's baby; he also stands up to the Plummers in the tavern before the shoot-out. Indeed, at the end of the film the marshal offers Boone a drink. He replies, "Just one," suggesting that even he has been reformed somewhat by his experiences on the trip.

The last section of the narrative focuses primarily on the fates of Dallas and Ringo. Ringo had entered the action last of all the passengers; now his goal of revenge determines the last portion of the plot, after most of the other characters have gone their ways. Dallas, who had no definite goal of her own, has gained one in her love for Ringo. His victory over the Plummers and the marshal's decision not to send him back to jail lead to the final resolution. Both Dallas and Ringo go free to start their new life together. The final long shot of their wagon moving along the road through Monument Valley recalls the beginning and the many long shots of the coach.

The style of *Stagecoach* helps create the repetitions and variations of this narrative action. We have indicated the repeated pattern of establishing long shots of the coach, interspersed with closer shots within the coach; these latter shots pick up the eyelines and gestures of the characters' conversations. We have already analyzed one outstanding use of offscreen sound in *Stagecoach*, in Chapter 8 (p. 255); you might examine other uses of sound in the film, along with their functions.

One aspect of the film's style is particularly outstanding: its use of deep space and deep focus. As we shall see in more detail in Chapter 11, the style of filming in Hollywood during the 1930s was generally a "shallow," or "soft-focus" style. A few American films in the late 1930s began to experiment with deep focus, and *Stagecoach* was one of them. A number of shots in the second stage-stop sequence use deep focus along the corridor outside Lucy's room, as when Ringo watches Dallas go out into the yard (Fig. 10.1) or outside when he follows her (Fig. 10.2). Welles claimed to have watched *Stagecoach* many times before making *Citizen Kane*, the film usually credited with having introduced deep-focus photography; the similarities of lighting, mise-en-scene, and camera manipulations are apparent from these stills. Ford's cinematographer used wide-angle lenses to keep several planes in focus and to exaggerate perspective. The deep-focus shots make use of strong backlighting, which picks out Dallas and Ringo in the dark hallway and yard. The lighting is very different from the flat lighting used in most other scenes. This pattern of patches of light in darkness returns again in the Lordsburg sequence, when the plans the couple has made at the stage stop are finally made possible.

On the whole, Ford's editing style remains within the Hollywood continuity system. But it is worth noting that *Stagecoach*'s editing is not always as "perfectly classical" as Bazin maintains. For example, the Indian attack violates screen direction. At times the coach and Indians move across the screen from left to right. At others they move right to left. Sometimes Ford uses a heads-on or tails-on shot to cross the line, in the accepted manner, but at other times he does not. At one point, Ringo starts to leap down onto the horses' backs to retrieve a lost rein. His leap begins in medium long shot, from right to left (Fig. 10.3). In the next shot he is moving left to right (Fig. 10.4).

These deviations show that violations of continuity rules do not always confuse the audience. The narrative context tells us that there is only one coach and one band of Indians chasing it in a straight line across a flat desert. As long as the filmmaker has sufficiently established the space and the moving elements, changes in screen direction should not be perplexing. It is usually only when we are uncertain about who is present and where the figures are in relation to one another that the violation of screen direction becomes confusing.

In spite of such lapses, *Stagecoach* remains an outstanding example of that classical unity of form and style that Bazin identified with 1930s Hollywood. Our discussions of *North by Northwest* and *Hannah and Her Sisters* will show that the same tendency has continued up to the present.



Fig. 10.3



Fig. 10.4

391  
 a pattern of light  
 in darkness  
 returns

■ NORTH BY NORTHWEST

1959. MGM. Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Script by Ernest Lehman. Photographed by Robert Burks. Edited by George Tomasini. Music composed by Bernard Herrmann. With Cary Grant, Eva Marie Saint, James Mason, Leo G. Carroll, Jesse Royce Landis.

Hitchcock long insisted that he made thrillers, not mystery films. For him, creating a puzzle was less important than generating suspense and surprise. While there are important mystery elements in films like *Notorious* (1946), *Stage Fright* (1950), and *Psycho* (1960), *North by Northwest* stands as almost a pure example of Hitchcock's belief that the mystery element can serve as merely a pretext for intriguing the audience. The film's tight causal unity enables Hitchcock to create an engrossing plot that obeys the norms of classical filmmaking. This plot is presented through a narration that continually emphasizes suspense and surprise.

Like most spy films, *North by Northwest* has a complex plot, involving two major lines of action. In one line, a gang of spies mistakes advertising-agency executive Roger Thornhill for an American agent, George Kaplan. Although the spies fail to kill him, he becomes the chief suspect in a murder which the gang commits. He must flee the police while trying to track down the real George Kaplan. Unfortunately, Kaplan does not exist; he is only a decoy invented by the United States Intelligence Agency (USIA). Thornhill's pursuit of "Kaplan" leads to the second line of action: his meeting and falling in love with Eve Kendall, who is really the mistress of Philip Van Damm, the spies' leader. The spy-chase line and the romance line further connect when Thornhill learns that Eve is actually a double agent, secretly working for the USIA. He must then rescue her from Van Damm, who has discovered her identity and has resolved to kill her. In the course of all this, Thornhill also discloses the spies' clandestine operation: they are smuggling government secrets out of the country in pieces of sculpture.

From even so bare an outline it should be evident that the film's plot presents many conventional patterns to the viewer. There is the search pattern, seen when Thornhill sets out to find Kaplan. There is also a journey pattern: Thornhill and his pursuers travel from New York to Chicago and then to Rapid City, South Dakota, with side excursions as well. In addition, the last two-thirds of the plot is organized around the romance between Thornhill and Eve. Moreover, each pattern develops markedly in the course of the film. In the course of his search, Thornhill must often assume the identity of the man he is trailing. The journey pattern gets varied by all the vehicles Thornhill uses—cabs, train, pickup truck, police car, bus, ambulance, and airplane.

Most subtly, the romance line of action is constantly modified by Thornhill's changing awareness of the situation. When he believes that Eve wants to help him, he starts to fall in love with her. But then he learns that she sent him to the murderous appointment at Prairie Stop, and he becomes cold and suspicious. When he discovers her at the auction with Van Damm, his anger and bitterness impel him to humiliate her and make Van Damm doubt her loyalty. Only after the USIA chief, the "Professor," tells him that she is really an agent does Thornhill realize that he has misjudged and endangered her. Each step in his growing awareness alters his romantic relation to Eve.

This intricate plot is made unified and comprehensible by other familiar strategies. It has a strict time scheme, comprising four days and nights (followed by a brief epilogue on a later night). The first day and a half take place in New York; the second night on the train to Chicago; the third day in Chicago and at Prairie Stop; and the fourth day at Mount Rushmore. The timetable is neatly



Fig. 10.5



Fig. 10.6

established early on when Van Damm, having abducted Roger as "Kaplan," announces, "In two days you're due at the Ambassador East in Chicago, and then at the Sheraton Johnson Hotel in Rapid City, South Dakota." This itinerary prepares the spectator for the shifts in action that will occur in the rest of the film. Apart from the time scheme, the film also unifies itself through the characterization of Thornhill. He is initially presented as a resourceful liar when he steals a cab from another pedestrian. Later, he will have to lie in many circumstances to evade capture. Similarly, Roger is established as a heavy drinker, and his ability to hold his liquor will enable him to survive Van Damm's attempt to make him kill himself when driving while drunk.

A great many motifs are repeated and help make the film cohere. Roger is constantly in danger from heights: his car hangs over a cliff, he must sneak out on the ledge of a hospital, he must clamber up Van Damm's modernistic cliff-top house, and he and Eve wind up dangling from the faces on Mount Rushmore. Thornhill's constant changing of vehicles also constitutes a motif which Hitchcock varies. A more subtle example is the motif which conveys Thornhill's growing suspicion of Eve. On the train, when they kiss, his hands close tenderly around her hair (Fig. 10.5). But in her hotel room, when she tries to embrace him after his narrow escape from death, his hands freeze in place, as if he fears touching her (Fig. 10.6).

But narrative unity by itself cannot explain the film's strong emotional appeal. In Chapter 3's discussion of narration, we used *North by Northwest* as an example of a "hierarchy of knowledge" (pp. 65-67). We suggested that as the film progresses, sometimes we are restricted only to what Roger knows, whereas at other times we know significantly more than he does. At still other moments, our range of knowledge, while greater than Roger's, is not as great as that of other characters. Now we are in a position to see how this constantly changing process helps create suspense and surprise across a whole film.

The most straightforward way in which the film's narration controls our knowledge is through the numerous optical point-of-view (POV) shots Hitchcock employs. This device yields a degree of subjective depth—we see what a character sees more or less as she or he sees it—but more importantly here, the optical POV shot restricts us only to what that character learns at that moment. Hitchcock gives almost every major character a shot of this sort. The very first optical POV we see in the film is taken from the position of the two spies who are watching Roger apparently respond to the paging of George Kaplan (Figs. 10.7 and 10.8). Later, we view events through the eyes of Eve, of Van Damm, of his henchman Leonard, and even of a clerk at a ticket counter.



Fig. 10.7



Fig. 10.8

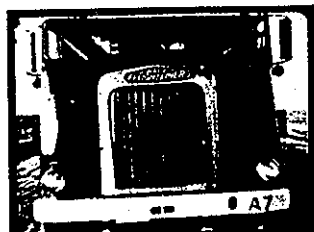


Fig. 10.9



Fig. 10.10

Nevertheless, by far the greatest number of POV shots are attached to Thornhill. Through his eyes we see his approach to the Townsend mansion, the mail he finds in the library, his drunken drive along the cliff, and the airplane that is "crop dusting where there ain't no crops." Some of the most extreme uses of optical POV, such as an advancing truck or a trooper's fist coming toward the camera, give us Roger's experience directly (Figs. 10.9 and 10.10).

Thornhill's optical POV shots function within a narration that is often restricted not only to what he sees but to what he knows. The plane attack at Prairie Stop, for example, is confined wholly to Roger's range of knowledge. Hitchcock could have cut away from Roger waiting by the road in order to show us the villains plotting in their plane, but he does not. Similarly, when Roger is searching George Kaplan's room and gets a phone call from the two henchmen, Hitchcock could have used crosscutting to show the villains phoning from the lobby. Instead, we learn that they are in the hotel no sooner than Roger does. And when Thornhill and his mother hurry out of the room, Hitchcock does not use crosscutting to show the villains in pursuit. This makes it more startling when Roger and his mother get on the elevator and discover the two men there already. In scenes like these, confining us to Thornhill's range of knowledge sharpens the effect of surprise.

Sometimes the effect of surprise comes from the film's restricting us to Roger's range of knowledge and then giving us information that he does not at the moment have. On page 65 we suggested that this sort of surprise occurs when the plot shifts us from Roger's escape from the United Nations murder to the scene at the USIA office, where the staff discuss the case. At this point we learn that there is no George Kaplan—something that Roger will not discover for many more scenes to come. A similar effect occurs during the train trip from New York to Chicago. During several scenes, Eve Kendall helps Thornhill evade the police. Finally, they are alone and relatively safe in her compartment. At this point the narration shifts the range of knowledge. A message is delivered to another compartment. Hands unfold a note: "What do I do with him in the morning?" The camera then moves back to show us Leonard and Van Damm reading the message. Now we know that Eve is not merely a sympathetic stranger but someone working for the spy ring. Again, Roger will learn this much later. In such cases, the move to a more unrestricted range of information lets the narration put us a notch higher than Thornhill in the hierarchy of knowledge.

We have already quoted Hitchcock's remarks to the effect that in general he prefers to evoke suspense rather than surprise (see pp. 65-66). Suspense is created by giving the spectator more information than the character has. In the scenes we have just mentioned, once the effect of surprise has been achieved, the narration

might you think  
what he saw  
what he did  
at the time

can use our superior knowledge to build suspense across several sequences. After the audience knows that there is no George Kaplan, every attempt by Thornhill to find him will generate suspense about whether he will discover the truth. Once we learn that Eve is working for Van Damm, her message to Roger on behalf of "Kaplan" will make us uncertain as to whether Roger will fall into the trap.

In these examples, suspense arises across a series of scenes. Hitchcock also uses unrestricted narration to build up suspense within a single scene. His handling of the UN murder differs markedly from his treatment of the scene showing Roger and his mother in Kaplan's hotel room. In the hotel scene, Hitchcock refused to employ crosscutting to show the spies' pursuit. At the UN, however, he crosscuts between Roger, who is searching for Townsend, and Valerian, one of the thugs following him. Just before the murder, a rightward tracking shot establishes Valerian's position in the doorway (something of which Roger is wholly unaware). Here crosscutting and camera movement widen our frame of knowledge and create suspense as to the scene's outcome.

The sequence in Chicago's Union Station is handled very similarly. Here crosscutting moves us from Roger shaving in the men's room to Eve talking on the phone. Then another lateral tracking shot reveals that she is talking to Leonard, who is giving her orders from another phone booth. We now are certain that the message she will give Roger will endanger him, and the suspense is increased accordingly. (Note, however, that the narration does not reveal the conversation itself. As often happens, Hitchcock conceals certain information for the sake of further surprises.)

Thornhill's knowledge expands as the lines of action develop. On the third day, he discovers that Eve is Van Damm's mistress, that she is a double agent, and that Kaplan doesn't exist. He agrees to help the Professor in a scheme to clear Eve of any suspicion in Van Damm's eyes. When the scheme (a faked shooting in the Mount Rushmore restaurant) succeeds, Roger believes that Eve will leave Van Damm. Once more, however, he has been duped (as we have). The Professor insists that she must go off to Europe that night on Van Damm's private flight. Roger resists, but he is knocked out and held captive in a hospital. His escape leads to the final major sequence of the film. Here the narrative resolves all its lines of action, and the narration continues to expand and contract our knowledge for the sake of suspense and surprise.

The ending comprises almost three hundred shots and runs for several minutes, but we can conveniently divide the sequence into three subsegments.

In the first subsegment, Roger arrives at Van Damm's house and reconnoiters. He clambers up to the window and learns from a conversation between Leonard and Van Damm that the piece of sculpture they bought at the auction contains microfilm. More important, he watches Leonard inform Van Damm that Eve is an American agent. This action is conveyed largely through optical POV shots as Roger watches in dismay (Figs. 10.11 and 10.12) (see also Figs. 3.1-3.3, p. 67). At two moments, as Leonard and Van Damm face one another, the narration gives us optical POV shots from each man's standpoint (Figs. 10.13 and 10.14), but these are enclosed, so to speak, within Roger's ongoing witnessing of the situation. For the first time in the film, Roger has more knowledge of the situation than any other character. He knows how the smuggling has been done, and he discovers that the villains intend to murder Eve.

The second phase of the sequence can be said to begin when Roger enters Eve's bedroom. She has gone back downstairs and is sitting on a couch. Again, Hitchcock emphasizes the restriction to Thornhill's knowledge by means of optical

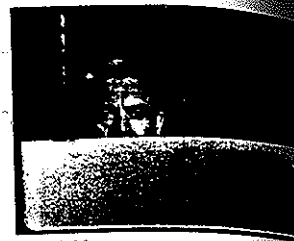


Fig. 10.11



Fig. 10.12



Fig. 10.13



Fig. 10.14