

Hitchcock's 'Murder' returns — in 3-D

DIAL M FOR MURDER — Directed by Alfred Hitchcock. Starring Ray Milland, Grace Kelly and Bob Cummings. Music by Dimitri Tiomkin. In 3-D at the Coolidge Corner Moviehouse, Brookline. No rating.

By Michael Blowen
Globe Correspondent

At the age of 6, I saw "Fort Ticonderoga" in 3-D. Tomahawks and flaming arrows sailed from the screen. I hid behind my seat for most of the movie.

3-D lasted from late 1952 until the end of 1953. It was a time when Hollywood, feeling the growing competition from television, searched for something different to lure viewers out of their homes. It was a gimmick.

The prerequisite cardboard glasses were uncomfortable and unattractive; the projection equipment required was prohibitively expensive and the 3-D movies sacrificed drama for technique. After the initial thrill wore off, people stayed home.

The only film artistically to surmount the inherent artificiality of 3-D was Alfred Hitchcock's "Dial M for Murder." The current engagement of this dignified murder mystery marks the first 3-D showing

of the film in the Boston area since its original release in 1954.

Hitchcock underplays the stereoscopic effects. "M FOR MURDER", Page 76

Hitchcock's 3-D winner returns

★ "M FOR MURDER"

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He resists the temptation to bombard the audience with outrageous gimmicks. Nothing ever leaps uncontrollably from the screen. Even the graphic violence of the murder is played within the confines of the traditional two-dimensional frame. Hitchcock never compromises the traditional movie frame with needless objects being thrown directly into the audience. What he achieves is a subtle depth without assaulting the viewer with ephemeral shots. Thematically, the film is in the tradition of "Strangers on a Train." Ray Milland plays a retired tennis player who married Grace Kelly for her money. He discovers a love letter suggesting that his wife is in love with a mystery writer played by Bob Cummings. Milland, whose elegant lifestyle is rooted in his wife's fortune, decides to guarantee his financial independence by murdering his beautiful wife. He would benefit from both the inheritance and her life insurance policy.

Milland is refined, detached, logical. His icy demeanor, forged by English public schools and aristocratic tennis society, personifies grace under pressure. Even when the jig is up, Milland coolly offers his captors a glass of port.

"Dial M for Murder," although lacking the shock value of "Psycho" or the sardonic wit of "North by Northwest," remains an engaging

parlor game with superb performances by Milland and Kelly. 3-D just adds another dimension to this thoroughly enjoyable mystery.