

A black and white close-up portrait of actor Anthony Perkins. He is looking directly at the camera with a slight, enigmatic smile. He has dark, wavy hair and is wearing a dark, textured jacket over a collared shirt.

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**Anthony Perkins,**

# **the actor behind the door**

A 52' documentary by **Eric Ellena** and **Christophe Champclaux**

Produced by **French Connection Films**

**PROVISIONAL DELIVERY : OCTOBER 2020**



While most of the stars of his generation have fallen into oblivion, his face and name remain familiar to a younger 21st century audience, fond of Giallo and slashers. Like the British Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing with their cult characters of Dracula and Frankenstein, the American Anthony Perkins has long remained in the shadow of his most famous character, Norman Bates – the serial killer in Alfred Hitchcock's masterpiece, ***Psycho***.

Officially presented as the most exciting new star since James Dean on the poster of *Friendly Persuasion*, Anthony Perkins has attracted the attention of such prestigious filmmakers as George Cukor, William Wyler, Stanley Kramer, Anthony

Mann, Robert Mulligan, Jules Dassin, René Clément, Claude Chabrol, John Huston, Ken Russell, Sidney Lumet and Orson Welles. And the list of his co-stars does not pale in comparison, with names such as Gary Cooper, Brigitte Bardot, Audrey Hepburn, Henry Fonda, Sophia Loren, Gregory Peck, Jane Fonda, Marlene Jobert, Paul Newman and Roger Moore. His filmography ended up being rather impressive for an actor who was so abusively reduced to his only role for Alfred Hitchcock. We also discover he was an amazing crooner – his greatest success, ***Moonlight Swim***, will even be taken up by Elvis Presley. He even directed ***Psycho III***, proof of his reconciliation with his favorite bogeyman.





## Speakers

### Friends

- Stephen Paley, Photographer, producer
- Patrick Loiseau, songwriter

### Contributors

- Tom Holland, screenwriter, *Psycho II*
- Donna Anderson, actress, *On the Beach*
- Gerard Kikoïne, réalisateur, *Edge of Sanity*
- Lee Garlington, actrice, *Psycho II*, *Psycho III*

### Specialists

- Allan Hunter, programmer for the Edinburgh Festival
- Charles Winecoff, biographer
- François Guérif, Robert Bloch's editor (*Psycho*)



# You know the icon, discover the actor...

This documentary takes us on a tour to discover the actor behind the myth of Norman Bates, to recall Anthony Perkins' theatrical past on the Broadway stages, and to show the extent of his range as an actor in genres as diverse as the western, romantic comedy or science fiction. We will talk about his talent as a crooner – one of his songs was even taken up by Elvis Presley – as well as the songs he recorded in French.

Archival interviews given by the actor will be supplemented by a series of unpublished interviews that we will conduct with his family and friends, as well as with directors and actors with whom he has collaborated. Rare documents, posters and photos, film extracts and trailers will support the speakers' statements.

## The breakdown

**Anthony Perkins, the Actor Behind the Door** will be divided into three thematic parts. In the first, we will discover the naive young boy, the actor coming of age under the guidance of the best directors of Hollywood's late golden age. Orson Welles' **The Trial** will have a special place in this documentary – a canonical adaptation of Kafka's work and the most prestigious film of the actor's career, shot in the disused Orsay train station.

The second part will be devoted to Anthony Perkins' European career, more specifically French. He shot his first French film in 1957: **This Angry Age**, directed by René Clément. Yet another Frenchman directed him in 1989 in **Edge of Sanity**: Gérard Kikoïne. André Cayatte, Edouard Molinaro and Claude Chabrol will also call upon his talents. The success of **Une ravissante idiote** (The Ravishing Idiot) with Brigitte Bardot shows that Perkins had the makings of a Cary Grant.

The third part will be devoted to the giant shadow that Norman Bates cast over Anthony Perkins' life. His French career can partly be explained by a desire to escape being typecast. In 1979, starring in Walt Disney's sci-fi film, **The Black Hole** – a little seen gem at the time that has since become a cult classic – gently brings Anthony Perkins back to more troubled characters. At the beginning of the 1980s, the triumph of John



Carpenter, Tobe Hooper and Wes Craven's bogeymen could only lead to the return of their forbearer: Norman Bates. Anthony Perkins, now married and a father, also feels ready to face the character. Having become a theater director since 1970, he asked Universal to direct **Psycho II**, a wish that was granted to him for **Psycho III**, the most exciting of the three official sequels to Alfred Hitchcock's masterpiece.

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