

## STAR QUALITY JANET LEIGH SHEDS INSIGHT ON DEADLY SHOWER SCENE IN "PSYCHO," TALKS ABOUT HUGHES, HITCHCOCK AND WELLS

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She has been a movie star for 50 years and has known everybody who was anybody, but don't expect Janet Leigh to dish any dirt.

Before Saturday's screening of the classic film "Psycho" at the 20th Cleveland International Film Festival, Leigh talked about working with three of Hollywood's most notoriously difficult legends - Howard Hughes, Alfred Hitchcock and Orson Welles. Leigh had nary a bad word to say about them or anyone else, not even ex-husband Tony Curtis.

Her sunshiny attitude never flagged before the capacity crowd, not even while telling how Hughes virtually kidnapped her across state lines during a double date she had with one of his cronies. She said she was put off by Hughes' "manipulations," but at least the trip gave her a chance to see the Grand Canyon.

When moderator Dr. Louis Giannetti characterized Hughes as a "scuzzball," Leigh graciously corrected him, saying, "Let's just say an extreme oddball."

But don't think Leigh was a pushover.

When delays on selecting a leading man and a director for the film "Two Tickets to Broadway" became intolerable, she said she marched into Hughes' office and demanded action. She also threw a phone at him, leaving the millionaire movie mogul cowering in the corner. Two weeks later, the film was ready to shoot.

Leigh starred in more than 50 films, including the classics "Touch of Evil" and "The Manchurian Candidate," but she will always be remembered for her Oscar-nominated role as Marion Crane, the woman stabbed by Norman Bates in the infamous shower scene in "Psycho."

She charmed the crowd with her stories of the making of "Psycho" and strongly defended Hitchcock, the brilliant director who was often criticized by actors as overbearing and controlling. Some actresses accused Hitchcock of terrorizing or psychologically torturing his leading ladies. But Leigh had nothing but praise for him. She affectionately characterized him as "an imp," more mischievous than evil.

"Mr. Hitchcock was meticulous," she said. "Everything was done before shooting," so that there was not a wasted frame in the film.

This meant the actors' movements were dictated by where Hitchcock wanted the camera to go rather than where the actors' "motivation" took them.

Many actors found this inhibiting. But Leigh found his demands a challenge.

"He was leading us exactly where he wanted us to go," she said. "'You're an actress, find the motivation to get up when I want,' he would tell us. I felt it was really paying a compliment to the actors' talents, not putting them down.'

She revealed Hitchcock's clever technique for getting around strict censors. He would write scenes in his movies that would never get by the censors so he could negotiate to use other scenes that were important to him.

"He would tell them 'if you're going to take out this scene, you've got to give me this one,' Leigh recalled.

This technique is still employed by controversial film and television directors, such as Oliver Stone and Stephen Bochco.

Leigh delighted in pointing out that unlike today's graphic violence, many of the things people think they saw in "Psycho" never really took place except in the viewer's imagination. There are no shots of the knife penetrating skin, for example.

When Giannetti asked her what it was like to be covered with Hershey's syrup, which stood in for blood, Leigh chuckled and explained there was never any blood on Marion, just a shot of the blood going down the drain.

Then, "Gotcha!" she shouted, delighted in catching the film expert seeing too much in the scene.

Others thought they saw far more in the shower scene as well - more of Leigh, that is.

Half the censors that reviewed the movie the first time thought they saw Leigh's breast in the shower scene. Hitchcock agreed to remove the nonexistent offending shot and resubmitted the identical scene to the censors. The film was eventually passed with the scene exactly as Hitchcock intended.

While the audience does not see Leigh's breast, she put to rest a long-standing rumor that it's a body double and not her in the shower.

The memorable scene took seven days to shoot. Leigh and costumer Rita Riggs spent several days trying to figure out what she could wear in the shower.

They looked for ideas in "girlie" magazines, - but they had no luck. Most of the outfits included balloons or feathers that were too impractical for a shower scene.

They decided to use a moleskin costume that adhered to the body. The adhesive backing unfortunately was quite uncomfortable and had a tendency to become unglued.

Somewhere past the 20th take of a particularly difficult shot which had Leigh in an uncomfortable pose, she felt her outfit begin to come loose.

It was either ruin the take and start again or have the crew positioned above her see more than they should.

"So, they had a good look that day," she recalled with a laugh.

While Leigh, now in here late 60s, looks glamorous and maintains her movie-star figure, don't expect to see her on the screen anytime soon. She finds more satisfaction in her new career as a writer, she said before her talk.

- Caption: PHOTO by ANDREW CIFRANIC / PLAIN DEALER PHOTOGRAPHER: Film star Janet Leigh talked with fans and autographed copies of her book, "Psycho," about the making of the cult classic at Borders Books and Music in Beachwood Friday night. On Saturday, as part of the 20th Cleveland International Film Festival, she spoke before a screening of the film.
- Memo: Caton is the Plain Dealer's Deputy News Editor and Benson is a freelance writer from Cleveland.

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