



NORTH BY NORTHWEST (1959)

Hitchcock often explored “wrong man” plots where innocent everymen accused of heinous crimes are racing to clear their names. The best of these is *North by Northwest*, a kinetic, set piece-laden precursor to the Bond series, with a hilarious, perfectly paced script by Ernest Lehman. The big scene: Adman Roger Thornhill (**Cary Grant**) being trailed by a crop-dusting airplane in an open field is an iconic action scene—and so is Thornhill and Eve Kendall’s (Eva Marie Saint) climactic foot chase down the crevices of Mount Rushmore.

Funny note: Jessie Royce Landis played Cary Grant’s mother in the movie, even though she was just eight years older than him. She also appeared with Grant in 1955’s *To Catch a Thief*. (TCM, Spectrum TV, ROW8, Amazon Prime, Apple TV, Redbox or Vudu on your Roku device)

REAR WINDOW (1954)

In one of Hitchcock’s most influential fan favorites, **Jimmy Stewart** plays an injured photographer, who may or may not have witnessed a murder from his apartment window. **Grace Kelly** played many notable roles before an early retirement; this performance as fashionable socialite turned adventuress Lisa Carol Fremont is her most iconic. Thelma Ritter plays the scene-stealing visiting nurse.

The innovation: Hitchcock shot Stewart’s L.B. Jefferies spying on his neighbors in his signature POV style throughout the film. It’s a sometimes charming, sometimes chilling and uncomfortable look at voyeurism that essentially requires the audience to participate. (Amazon Prime, Vudu or Apple TV or Redbox)



NOTORIOUS (1946)

Cary Grant and **Ingrid Bergman** are as radiant as movie stars can be in Hitchcock’s finest love story, an espionage picture about American spies infiltrating a ring of Nazi sympathizers in post-war South America. *Notorious* is more subtle than some of Hitchcock’s later work, but frankly it’s as great a film as he ever made (maybe even his best). Ben Hecht’s script presents a love triangle that’s just as compelling as the one in *Casablanca*, and far more sinister. Full of warm and gorgeous close-ups, innovative but never intrusive camera work, *Notorious* is pure cinema.

The big scene: Hitchcock always had an appreciation for pushing the envelope—and the censors. An early scene gleefully skirts around the old censorship codes that banned on-screen kisses of more than three seconds, by having Grant and Bergman swap short smooches for nearly three minutes. Another remarkable crane shot takes the camera from a high ceiling directly into the palm of Bergman’s clenched hand (there’s a key in that hand). (Tubi, Criterion Collection Blu-Ray, iTunes, Vudu, Google Play and Amazon Instant Video)



SHADOW OF A DOUBT (1943)

The idea of pure evil hiding out in a small American town was unnervingly novel in 1943—in Hitchcock’s favorite of his own films, cowritten by Thornton Wilder. *Shadow of a Doubt* is still a deeply creepy film to this day, starring fresh-faced **Teresa Wright** as a young girl who slowly discovers her dear Uncle Charlie’s (**Joseph Cotten**) sinister past (he’s a serial killer). It’s the most compelling hero-villain dynamic in all of Hitchcock’s work.

The innovation: Once again, Hitchcock freaks out the audience by getting a well-liked star to play against type as a twisted villain. Cotten is mesmerizing. Another innovation is the idyllic small-town American setting. This backdrop wasn’t exploited for horror until the slasher craze decades later, beginning with *Halloween*. (Peacock, Amazon Prime, Vudu, Apple TV or Redbox)

