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Alfred Hitchcock's **THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS** (1935), from the screenplay by and adaptation of Charles Bennett and Alma Reville, based on the John Buchan novel, with Robert Donat, Madeleine Carroll, Lucie Mannheim, Godfrey Tearle, Peggy Ashcroft, John Laurie, and Wylie Watson as Mr. Memory. This was so popular and so fashionable a film in its own time that there has been a tendency to take it for granted ever since. Still, if Donat were the first quintessentially Hitchcockian hero, smugly sensual and morally complacent, Carroll was the first of the quintessentially blond-bitch heroines. Critics and audiences of 1935 were regaled by the spectacle of Hitch going Capra one better, not only by sending a man and a woman on a bickering cross-country odyssey in the manner of Gable and Colbert in *It Happened One Night*, but also capping the jest in having Donat and Carroll handcuffed to each other. A tantalizing mystery remains: Why does Mr. Memory, the vaudeville artist with the trick memory, ultimately the key to the whole riddle of the spy ring's modus operandi, give the show away to Donat and the police? Is it his conditioned reflex as a performer or simply mental fatigue induced by his overloaded circuits? Hitch's music-hall coup at the end may have been influenced by the suicidally laughing clown ending of Fritz Lang's 1928 *Suspicion*.

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-Andrewarris