

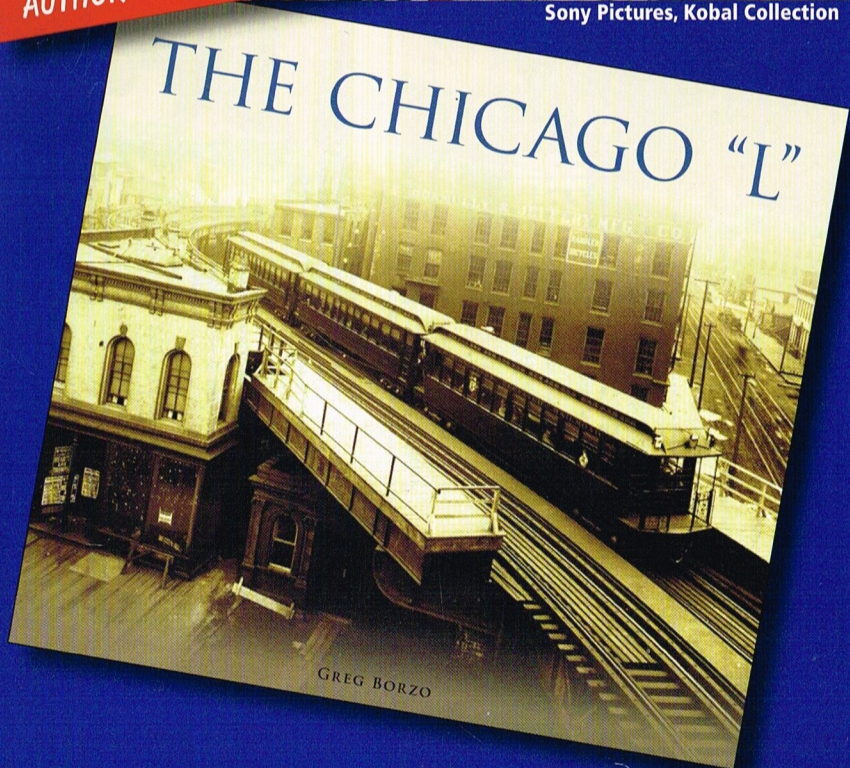
THE VERY BEST
CHICAGO "L" MOVIES

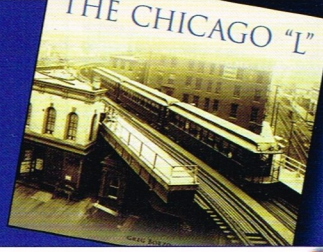


FROM **GREG BORZO**,
AUTHOR OF

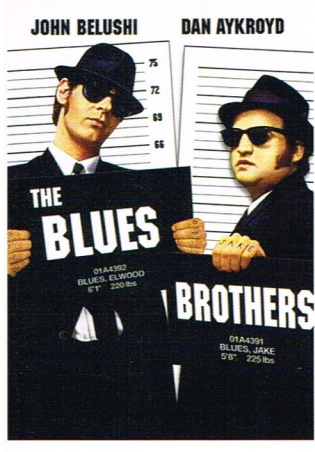
Sony Pictures, Kobal Collection

THE CHICAGO "L"





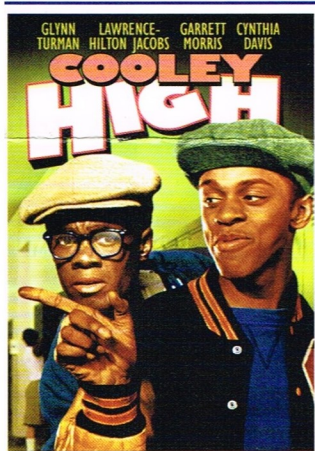
TOP TEN "L" MOVIES



The Blues Brothers #1
Comedy, 1980
[4] [4] [4] [4] [4] (Overall: 4)
On a mission from God, Jake (John Belushi) and Elwood (Dan Aykroyd) Blues attempt to pull their old band together in this classic cult film.
"L" Scenes: The "L" seems to constantly rumble by right outside the brothers' apartment window. Meanwhile, tracks and stations appear throughout as Windy City backdrops. The action builds up to a thrilling car chase and the famous police-car pileup, which occurs under the "L" tracks at Lake and LaSalle streets.



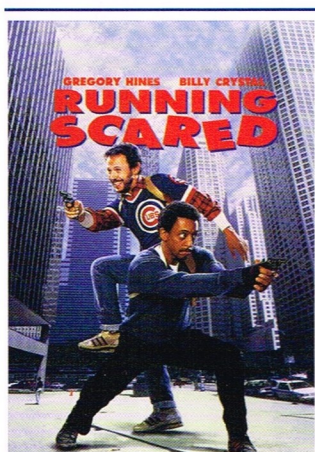
While You Were Sleeping #2
Romantic comedy, 1995
[4] [4] [4] [4] [4] (Overall: 4)
A fetching but lonely "L" ticket agent (Sandra Bullock) falls in love with a regular passenger (Peter Gallagher). The story has a couple of twists that keep you engaged.
"L" Scenes: This fun movie contains several great feel-good "L" scenes, most of which were shot at the Randolph/Wabash Station, a station that is destined to be torn down. These scenes hearken back to the days when "L" stations were staffed by ticket agents and riders paid with tokens.



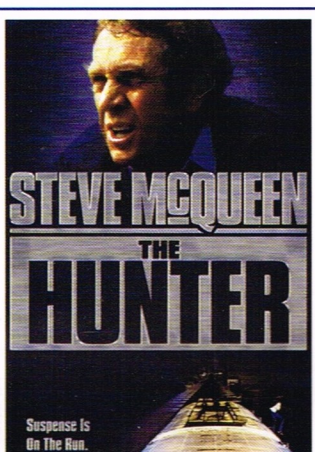
Cooley High #3
Dramatic comedy, 1975
[4] [4] [4] [4] [4] (Overall: 4)
A highly acclaimed film about two black high-school students (Glynn Turman and Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs) coming of age.
"L" Scenes: The "L" is a constant part of daily life for the students living in this North Side neighborhood. Not only does the "L" frequently thunder by; the characters in the movie actually ride it, run along side it, meet friends on it, and fight underneath it. The "L" plays a gritty, realistic role and contributes to the dark side of the story.



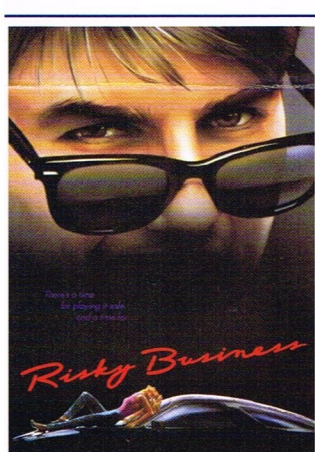
Spider-Man 2 #4
Action fantasy, 2004
[4] [4] [4] [4] [4] (Overall: 4)
Spider-Man (Tobey Maguire) juggles his love life with his crime-fighting duties...as he struggles to pay the rent. On top of that, his superpowers are waning!
"L" Scenes: Spidey and good-scientist-gone-bad Doctor Octopus duke it out on top of—as well as inside, clinging to the outside, and in front of—a speeding "L" train. Even though the story is supposedly set in New York, the surroundings make it clear that this great sequence was shot on Chicago's Loop "L."



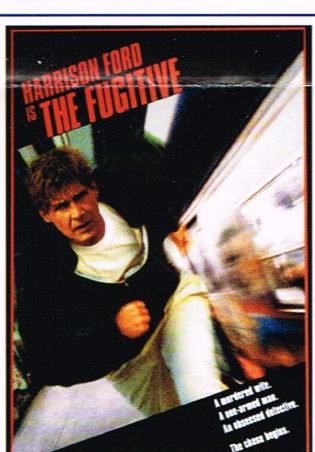
Running Scared #5
Action comedy, 1986
[4] [4] [4] [4] [4] (Overall: 3)
Two wisecracking cops (Gregory Hines and Billy Crystal) try to track down a drug dealer as their last hurrah before retiring to Key West. Their close rapport and constant banter are amusing.
"L" Scenes: In an exciting scene that must have been difficult to film, the two cops chase the drug dealer on the "L" tracks—in cars. The bad guys drive a limo and the good guys drive a cab. Their ride along several "L" lines and the inevitable crash on the Loop tracks are awesome.



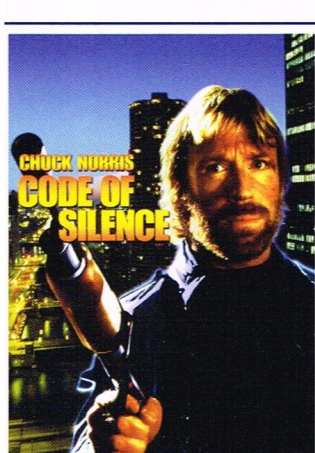
The Hunter #6
Action drama, 1980
[4] [4] [4] [4] [4] (Overall: 3)
An aging bounty hunter (Steve McQueen) just won't give up. The movie is a bit dated, but McQueen carries the story in this, his last film.
"L" Scenes: The hunter catches a bail jumper on the "L" and they shoot it out amid passengers. He ends up on the roof of a train and has to hang on for the ride of his life. The crazy path of the train, including a run through the subway, is cobbled together from several different routes. Nevertheless, the scenes of the "L" and city are cool.



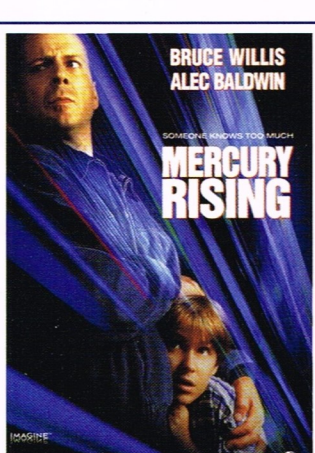
Risky Business #7
Comedy, 1983
[4] [4] [4] [4] [4] (Overall: 4)
A suburban teenager (Tom Cruise) makes the most of the fact that his parents have left town on vacation. Funny, well-paced and hip, this teen flick has aged well.
"L" Scenes: This movie contains one of the most famous "L" scenes: Cruise and his prostitute girlfriend (Rebecca DeMornay) have a moving experience on the "L." There is plenty of rock and roll in this film, but this memorable scene is performed to a great New Age Tangerine Dream tune, "Love on a Real Train."



The Fugitive #8
Action drama, 1993
[4] [4] [4] [4] [4] (Overall: 4)
A doctor's (Harrison Ford) wife is murdered, and he goes on the lam while trying to prove his innocence in this exciting film. The doctor's nemesis, a U.S. marshal (Tommy Lee Jones), chases him around Chicago.
"L" Scenes: In a well-known scene, the "L" is responsible for giving away the doctor's location (near the Merchandise Mart Station) to the police at a crucial point in the story. Moral of the story: don't lie on or near the "L"!



Code of Silence #9
Action, 1985
[4] [4] [4] [4] [4] (Overall: 3)
An honest cop (Chuck Norris) is ostracized for breaking the police force's code of silence. As a result, he has to battle warring gangs on his own.
"L" Scenes: One strength of this movie is the stunts, and true to his tough image, Norris did his own. The best one shows him fighting a thug on top of the "L" and diving into the river after him. This occurs as the train crosses the Wells Street Bridge, one of the most scenic spots along the entire "L."



Mercury Rising #10
Action drama, 1998
[4] [4] [4] [4] [4] (Overall: 3)
A renegade FBI agent (Bruce Willis) tries to protect an autistic boy from government forces run amuck.
"L" Scenes: The "L" is intertwined in this story from an early scene where the autistic boy is memorizing the "L" stops to chase and fight scenes on board and alongside trains. There are several near misses on speeding trains. The final scene is ridiculously implausible. Perhaps it should have been crafted around an "L" car rather than a helicopter.

TOP TEN "L" MOVIES: RUNNERS UP



About Last Night • Romantic comedy, 1986

#1

👍👍👍👍 (Overall: 3)

A one-night stand turns serious in this funny movie showcasing Chicago as a singles playground in the 1980s. Great performances from Jim Belushi and Demi Moore.

"L" Scenes: Two guys (whose friendship is threatened by the budding romance with which one of them is struggling) frequently talk things over on the "L." Their frankness turns a few heads. Today the same kind of talk occurs on the "L" over cell phones so usually you only get to hear one end of such conversations.



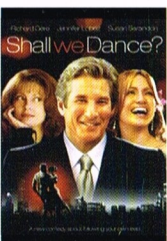
The Sting • Crime comedy, 1973

#2

👍👍👍👍 (Overall: 3)

Con artists (Paul Newman and Robert Redford) work great together in this film staged during Prohibition as they attempt to swindle a big-spending crook. There's plenty of panache and swagger in this Oscar winner.

"L" Scenes: The "L" tracks are used effectively to stage cons and chases, murder and mayhem. Alas, only one actual "L" train appears in this movie, and then only from a distance. In many scenes, however, just the rumble of the "L" is enough to establish that this is Chicago.



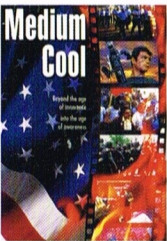
Shall We Dance? • Romantic comedy, 2004

#3

👍👍👍 (Overall: 2)

A bored attorney (Richard Gere) takes up ballroom dancing after spotting a beautiful woman (Jennifer Lopez) who he expects to be his teacher. The lessons solve his ennui.

"L" Scenes: The attorney first spots his flame in the Germania Club from the "L." Never mind that the "L" doesn't pass by this building (near North and Clark). What matters is that the "L" provides the characters a great vantage point from which to watch the city go by—and a place for reflection and reverie.



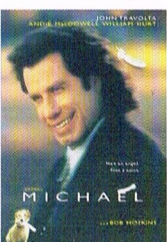
Medium Cool • Docu-drama, 1969

#4

👍👍👍 (Overall: 4)

After getting fired due to his concerns about collusion between his network and the government, a disgruntled TV reporter gets tangled up with the 1968 Democratic Convention—and a woman.

"L" Scenes: This is a political commentary about detachment during the turbulent 60s, but one thing that helps the characters connect with their city is the "L." It offers a chance to escape. One boy, in particular, enjoys the independence that the "L" affords him.



Michael • Romantic comedy, 1996

#5

👍👍👍 (Overall: 3)

Chicago looks heavenly as Archangel Michael (John Travolta) carries out an earthly mission. After landing in Iowa, he works his way to the Chicago, doing battle, wowing women, and quoting John and Paul (the Beatles, not the Apostles).

"L" Scenes: There aren't a lot of "L" scenes here, but riding the "L" provides a newspaper reporter (William Hurt) time to reflect. Meanwhile, ads on "L" platforms offer life-changing guidance. The "L" eventually leads the reporter to the love of his life.



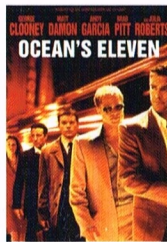
Just Visiting • Comedy, 2001

#6

👍👍👍 (Overall: 3)

Witchcraft transports a 12th Century knight (Jean Reno) from France to modern day Chicago. The knight wants to return home, but mischief and mayhem delay his departure as he struggles with modern conveniences and customs.

"L" Scenes: Near the end of the film the knight uses the "L" to evade the cops in a hilarious scene at the Library Station. This is one of the best "L" scenes ever, although *Just Visiting* is relatively unknown since it had a short box-office run.



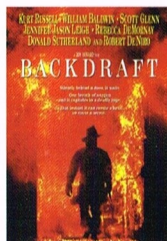
Ocean's Eleven • Crime thriller, 2001

#7

👍👍👍 (Overall: 3)

Danny Ocean (George Clooney) rounds up a gang of criminal associates to steal \$150 million from three major Las Vegas casinos.

"L" Scenes: The only "L" sighting involves one of the gang (Matt Damon) demonstrating his dexterity as a pickpocket on a crowded Loop train. He exits at Library Station, a popular venue for shooting movies since it opened in 1997, with its Parisian-style shed that matches the library's look.



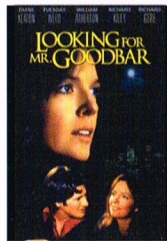
Backdraft • Action drama, 1991

#8

👍👍👍 (Overall: 3)

This is a fast-paced movie with great incendiary special effects but a weak, farfetched plot. Nevertheless, the fires (as well as strong performances by Robert DeNiro and Donald Sutherland) make the film worth seeing.

"L" Scenes: The "L" scenes are brief but contribute to the story by adding a touch of middleclass, urban grit. The hero lives beside the "L," so you hear it growl by a couple times. Also, incriminating evidence is handed off under the dark, dangerous tracks.



Looking for Mr. Goodbar • Drama, 1977

#9

👍👍 (Overall: 2)

A gentle teacher (Diane Keaton) by day cruises the bars by night, seeking sex, alcohol and drugs. Dreary by today's standards, this film was important in the 70s because it sparked debate about women's liberation.

"L" Scenes: The opening scenes use the "L" to establish the setting as Chicago, but a later "L" scene underscores the bizarre nature of this film: Teach, who was raised Catholic, goes to board a train but just can't get on when she sees a nun on board.

"L" SCENES RATING SCALE

- 1 "L" car = Dud (poorly incorporated)
- 2 "L" car = Weak (brief role/cameo)
- 3 "L" car = Good (memorable presence)
- 4 "L" car = Great (meaningful presence)
- 5 "L" car = Tops (very significant role)

