

## Surveillance Feature Films

compiled by Dietmar Kammerer, Berlin

Sources of plot descriptions and details: [allmovie.com](http://allmovie.com); [imdb.com](http://imdb.com)

### 1984 (Nineteen Eighty-Four)

UK 1956

dir: Michael Anderson.

George Orwell's novel of a totalitarian future society in which a man whose daily work is rewriting history tries to rebel by falling in love.

keywords: literary adaptation; dystopic future

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/1984-104070>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0048918/>

### 1984 (Nineteen Eighty-Four)

UK 1984

dir: Michael Radford

Second adaptation of George Orwell's novel.

keywords: literary adaptation; dystopic future

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/1984-91>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0087803/>

### 23 [23 – Nichts ist wie es scheint]

Germany 1998

dir: Hans-Christian Schmid

The movie's plot is based on the true story of a group of young computer hackers from Hannover, Germany. In the late 1980s the orphaned Karl Koch invests his heritage in a flat and a home computer. At first he dials up to bulletin boards to discuss conspiracy theories inspired by his favorite novel, R.A. Wilson's "Illuminatus", but soon he and his friend David start breaking into government and military computers. Pepe, one of Karl's rather criminal acquaintances senses that there is money in computer cracking - he travels to east Berlin and tries to contact the KGB.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0126765/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/23-168222>

keywords: conspiracy; internet; true story

### The Anderson Tapes

USA 1971

dir: Sidney Lumet

This breathlessly paced high-tech thriller stars Sean Connery as Anderson, a career criminal who's just been released from his latest prison term. Seeking a quick financial turnover, Anderson uses mob funding to finance an ambitious robbery. With a gang of expert thieves, Anderson sets about to rob every wealthy tenant of a fancy East Side

apartment building. What he doesn't know is that every move he makes is being monitored and taped by several law-enforcement agencies, who hope that Anderson will lead them to the Mob kingpins.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-anderson-tapes-2225>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0066767/>

keywords: video surveillance; burglary; police

### **Antitrust**

USA 2001

dir: Peter Howitt

This movie is the fictional story of computer programming genius Milo Hoffman after graduating from Stanford and getting out into the competitive world of computer software. In his contemplation of where to begin his career, he is contacted by Gary Winston whose character is loosely based on Bill Gates. Winston is the CEO of a company called NURV, and they are on the brink of completing the global communication's system, Synapse. They need Hoffman to help them meet their launch date, so after much thought and with the full support of his girlfriend Alice, he accepts the job. Tragedy soon after strikes and Milo becomes suspicious of the company he has been wrapped up in. He learns that trusting anyone could be a mistake, and that nothing is as it seems.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0218817/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/antitrust-231024>

keywords: video surveillance; internet

### **Blow Out**

USA 1981

dir: Brian De Palma

A soundman accidentally records the evidence that proves a car "accident" was murder, and consequently finds himself in danger.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0082085/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/blow-out-6214>

keywords: audio surveillance; conspiracy

related films: Blow Up; The Conversation

### **Blowup (Blow-Up)**

UK 1966

dir: Michelangelo Antonioni

A successful mod photographer in London whose world is bounded by fashion, pop music, marijuana, and easy sex, feels his life is boring and despairing. But in the course of a single day he accidentally captures on film the commission of a murder. The fact that he has photographed a murder does not occur to him until he studies and then blows up his negatives, uncovering details, blowing up smaller and smaller elements, and finally putting the puzzle together.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/blow-up-60942>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0060176/>

keywords: photography; murder

related films: Blow Out

## **Blue Thunder**

USA 1983

dir: John Badham

Ex-Vietnam chopper pilot Roy Scheider is now in charge of Blue Thunder, a high-tech copter designed to quell possible terrorism during the 1984 LA Olympics. His onetime comrade-in-arms Malcolm McDowell, now his bitter enemy, will stop at nothing to neutralize Blue Thunder and expedite an armed takeover of the United States.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0085255/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/blue-thunder-6295>

keywords: video surveillance; police

## **Body Double**

USA 1984

dir: Brian De Palma

In *Body Double*, director Brian DePalma pays homage to the Alfred Hitchcock movies *Vertigo* and *Rear Window*. Jake is a struggling actor keeps losing jobs because of his claustrophobia. To make matters worse, his girlfriend has walked out on him, so he has no place to sleep. His pal offers him the use of his apartment for the evening. The apartment happens to be equipped with a huge picture window and telescope, enabling him to spy on his beautiful neighbor Gloria (Deborah Shelton) while she undresses. He also bears witness to her brutal murder. And then he meets a porn star (Melanie Griffith), who has just taken a job posing as the late Gloria.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/body-double-6485>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0086984/>

keywords: voyeurism; murder

## **The Bourne Identity, The Bourne Supremacy, The Bourne Ultimatum**

USA 2002, 2004, 2007 [film series]

dir: Doug Liman (2002); Paul Greengrass (2004, 2007)

Matt Damon stars as Jason Bourne, a barely alive amnesiac with a pair of bullet wounds in his back, pulled from the Mediterranean by Italian fishermen. Bourne's only clue to his own identity is a bank account number etched on a capsule implanted in his body. He quickly finds the Zurich bank where money, a gun, and a few identification documents await, but after he's pursued by security goons at the American consulate, Bourne realizes he can trust no one and offers a German gypsy named Marie (Franka Potente) ten thousand dollars for a ride to Paris. Encountering more professional killers bent on his destruction, Bourne discovers that he possesses a surprising degree of skill in combat, martial arts, and linguistics -- handy talents that clearly indicate his past includes work as a spy and assassin, but for whom? With Marie's reluctant help, Bourne edges closer to the truth, something CIA officials want concealed at all costs.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-bourne-identity-262376>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0258463/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-bourne-supremacy-288851>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0372183/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-bourne-ultimatum-331166>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0440963/>

keywords: conspiracy; state surveillance; high-tech surveillance; spy

### **Brazil**

UK 1985

dir: Terry Gilliam

Jonathan Pryce stars as Sam Lowry, a civil servant who chooses to blind himself to the decaying, drone-like world around him. It's a world marred by oppressive automatization and towering bureaucracy, and populated by tyrannical guards who strongarm law-breakers.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/brazil-6977>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0088846/>

keywords: dystopic future; video surveillance; police state

related films: 1984 (Nineteen Eighty-Four)

### **Caché**

France 2005

dir: Michael Haneke

Paranoia grips a bourgeois European family when a series of menacing videotapes begin turning up on their doorstep

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/cach-327221>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0387898/>

keywords: paranoia; video surveillance

related films: Lost Highway

### **Code 46**

UK 2003

dir: Michael Winterbottom

In the not-so-distant future, a married man investigates a counterfeiter and ends up the perpetrator of an ethical crime. Set against the backdrop of a technologically advanced Shanghai, where people are only allowed to travel between countries with official passports called "papelles," the film charts the efforts of William (Tim Robbins) to get to the bottom of a contraband-papelle operation within the walls of a high-tech company that manufactures them.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/code-46-291140>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0345061/>

keywords: dystopic future

### **The Conversation**

USA 1974

dir: Francis Ford Coppola

Sound surveillance expert Harry Caul (Gene Hackman) is hired to track a young couple (Cindy Williams and Frederic Forrest), taping their conversation as they walk through San Francisco's crowded Union Square. Knowing full well how technology can invade privacy, Harry obsessively keeps to himself, separating business from his personal life.

Harry's work starts to trouble him, however, as he comes to believe that the conversation he pieced together reveals a plot by the mysterious corporate "Director" who hired him to murder the couple.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-conversation-10898>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0071360/>

keywords: acoustic surveillance; conspiracy

related films: *Enemy of the State*

### **La mort en direct [aka Deathwatch]**

France/Germany 1980

dir: Bertrand Tavernier

Harvey Keitel plays a man of the future who has had a camera implanted in his brain. The mechanism, which is endowed with special X-ray properties, is activated by the user's eyes. Keitel is assigned by ruthless TV producer Harry Dean Stanton to secretly probe the subconscious of a dying woman, played by Romy Schneider. Stanton is only interested in the grim spectacle of what goes on inside the brain of someone who knows she's doomed. Keitel, on the other hand, becomes increasingly compassionate--and disgusted by the tawdriness of his assignment--as he stares into Schneider's tortured psyche.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/la-mort-en-direct-12931>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0081182/>

keywords: Reality TV; voyeurism

### **Demolition Man**

USA 1993

dir: Marco Brambilla

A cop is brought out of suspended animation in prison to pursue an old ultra-violent enemy who is loose in a nonviolent future society.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/demolition-man-119000>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0106697/>

keywords: future scenario; biometric surveillance

### **Disturbia**

USA 2007

dir: D.J. Caruso

After his father's death, Kale Brecht becomes sullen, withdrawn, and troubled - so much so that he finds himself under a court-ordered sentence of house arrest after a run in with the law. His mother, Julie, works night and day to support herself and her son, only to be met with indifference and lethargy. The walls of his house begin to close in on Kale. He becomes a voyeur as his interests turn outside the windows of his suburban home towards those of his neighbors, one of which Kale begins to suspect is a serial killer.

References Hitchcock's *Rear Window*.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/disturbia-349476>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0486822/>

keywords: voyeurism

### **Eagle Eye**

USA 2008

dir: D.J. Caruso

Jerry and Rachel are two strangers thrown together by a mysterious phone call from a woman they have never met. Threatening their lives and family, she pushes Jerry and Rachel into a series of increasingly dangerous situations, using the technology of everyday life to track and control their every move.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/eagle-eye-406951>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1059786/>

keywords: high-tech thriller; conspiracy; video surveillance

### **Echelon Conspiracy**

USA 2009

dir: Greg Marcks

A young American engineer comes into possession of a cell phone that bestows unlimited wealth upon him, never realizing the danger posed to him by the device until security agents close in and start shooting to kill. Now, as a frantic chase across the continents gets under way, the stability of the entire world hangs in the balance.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/echelon-conspiracy-477483>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1124039/>

keywords: high-tech thriller; conspiracy; video surveillance

### **Ed TV**

USA 1999

dir: Ron Howard

The turning point in the life of Ed Pekurny (Matthew McConaughey) comes thanks to the misfortunes of the NorthWest Broadcasting Company. After two years on the air, their flagship cable channel, True TV, has slid into obscurity. Program director Cynthia Topping brainstorms a last ditch effort to save the channel: broadcast one ordinary person's life 24 hours a day, unedited (while he sleeps, the day's highlights will be shown). When the network agrees to the idea, Topping must find the subject of her program. After endless auditions, she lucks upon Ed, a goofy but good-looking video store clerk.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0131369/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/edtv-177457>

keywords: reality tv; video surveillance

related films: The Truman Show

### **The End of Violence**

USA 1997

dir: Wim Wenders

Mike Max is a Hollywood producer who became powerful and rich thanks to brutal and bloody action films. His ignored wife Paige is close to leaving him. Suddenly Mike is kidnapped by two bandits, but escapes and hides out with his Mexican gardener's family for a while. At the same time, surveillance expert Ray Bering is looking for what happens in the city, but it is not clear what he wants.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-end-of-violence-155002>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0119062/>

keywords: video surveillance; crime

### **Enemy of the State**

USA 1998

dir: Tony Scott

Robert Clayton Dean, played by Will Smith, is a devoted father, husband, and attorney shopping for a sexy gift for his wife. What he doesn't know is that he was given a videotape from a friend regarding the recent murder of a U.S. senator led by corrupt National Security Agency official Thomas Reynolds. Now Reynolds is after Dean to cover his tracks or, as the audience soon finds out, frame Dean for Rachel's murder. Since Dean isn't up on his high-tech gadgetry, he needs the aid of ex-intelligence operative Brill (Gene Hackman). Between the explosions and chases is the subtext of George Orwell's 1984 mantra "beware of big brother," as Dean realizes that in the modern world, there is no such thing as total privacy.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/enemy-of-the-state-174123>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120660/>

keywords: thriller: high-tech surveillance;

related films: The Conversation

### **Equilibrium**

USA 2002

dir: Kurt Wimmer

A man who dares to feel finds his life in danger in this cautionary science fiction drama. In the future, after a Third World War has decimated much of the Earth's population, a new nation known as Libria rises up under the unquestioned leadership of Dupont (Angus MacFadyen). Believing human emotions and their expression were to blame for the failings of past societies, The Father has decreed that all citizens must take a daily dose of Prozia II, a drug which levels out the emotional landscape, and that all forms of creative expression are against the law; violating either regulation can be punished by death. John Preston (Christian Bale) is a Grammaton, an elite law enforcement officer who tracks down and punishes "sense offenders." One day, Preston accidentally fails to take his Prozia II, and for the first time begins experiencing emotions himself. Preston becomes aware of an underground of rebels who refuse to take their medication and have embraced art and literature, and he finds himself becoming infatuated with one of their number

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/equilibrium-259842>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0238380/>

keywords: dystopic future

### **The Experiment [Das Experiment]**

Germany 2001

dir: Oliver Hirschbiegel

A man taking part in a scientific study finds the fine line between play-acting and reality has been blurred beyond recognition in this taut drama. Tarek Fahd (Moritz Bleibtreu) is

a journalist who is temporarily making ends meet by driving a taxi when he sees an advertisement offering 4,000 marks to people willing to submit to a psychological experiment. Intrigued, Tarek offers to take part in the study and persuades one of his former editors to help him work up a story about his experiences. Recording the events using a special high-tech video camera hidden in his glasses, Tarek arrives for the two-week experiment to discover half of the volunteers will pose as prison guards and the other half will be their prisoners. Before long the behavior of the subjects suggests more than just make-believe; "inmate" Tarek, in particular, is unwilling to take abuse from the "guards" and makes no secret of his contempt, while Berus (Justus VonDohnanyi) begins playing a dangerous game of cat-and-mouse with Tarek. Tarek, meanwhile, begins escaping reality by fantasizing about Dora (Maren Eggert), a woman with whom he had a brief fling before taking part in the experiment.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/das-experiment-248904>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0250258/>

keywords: Stanford Prison research; true story

### **The Final Cut**

USA 2004

dir: Omar Naim

Set in the near future, the story concerns a device implanted in the body, that is capable of recording a person's entire life. Once it is extracted from the body after death, the footage can be played back on a screen in the form of "rememories." Robin Williams plays Alan Hakman, an editor who cuts together the footage to make pleasant movies for funerals. Tormented by his job and his own memories, Alan also has a troubled romantic relationship with bookseller Delilah (Mira Sorvino). While looking through footage for his next project, Alan discovers a man whom he believes is from his own past. Meanwhile, former editor Fletcher (James Caviezel) wants the footage for his own purposes.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-final-cut-290206>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0364343/>

keywords: high-tech surveillance; sci-fi; murder

### **Firewall**

USA 2006

dir: Richard Loncraine

Jack Stanfield (Harrison Ford) is an upper-echelon technology executive at Landrock Pacific Bank, a leading financial institution based in Seattle. Stanfield oversees security for Landrock, and has made sure that their online banking services are the best-protected in the world, and that the bank's data is safe from hackers and other intruders. However, Stanfield finds out the hard way that his system does indeed have a flaw when he's visited by Bill Cox (Paul Bettany), a cold and calculating man who has spent months learning everything there is know about Stanfield and his family. Cox's underlings have taken Stanfield's wife, Beth (Virginia Madsen), and their two children hostage, and they inform Jack that they will be released only when he uses his knowledge of the bank's security systems to deposit 100 million dollars in Cox's account in an offshore bank. Stanfield is deeply wary but willing to go along to ensure the safety of his family, but

when he has reason to doubt that Cox and his cohorts will live up to their end of the bargain, he swings into action to exact justice against the criminals.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/firewall-315708>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0408345/>

keywords: bank robbery; computers; internet

### **Fortress**

USA/Australia 1993

dir: Stuart Gordon

Elements of Orwellian science-fiction and old-fashioned prison dramas are combined in this futuristic action film, as an unjustly imprisoned couple attempts to escape from a high-tech jail known as The Fortress. The Fortress is the tool of a repressive government, an imposing, computerized hell, featuring lasers for cell bars, robot guards, computerized brainwashing, and the like. Still, some things never change, including the presence of an evil warden, who harasses the pretty wife while her husband frantically searches for a way out.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/fortress-121377>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0106950/>

keywords: prison; dystopic future

### **Freeze Frame**

UK/Ireland 2004

dir: John Simpson

»Off-Camera is Off-Guard«. Sean Veil (Lee Evans) was accused of the gruesome murder of a woman and her two children on the basis of circumstantial evidence, and when the case gained nationwide media attention, he found himself portrayed as a violent psychopath in the press, even though he was cleared of all charges. The constant scrutiny and bitter accusations had a profound effect on Veil, and now, deeply paranoid, he lives in a tiny basement apartment, where he obsessively videotapes his every move in order to have an alibi against future accusations, and even straps a camera to his chest whenever he ventures outside. When noted forensic pathologist Saul Seger (Ian McNeice) publishes a book about the murders, Veil finds himself back in the public eye, and vindictive police detective Emeric (Sean McGinley) decides to take a final stab at hanging the charges on Veil and making them stick. Veil becomes certain that someone is determined to put him away, a belief that gets stronger when parts of his video archive suddenly go missing.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/freeze-frame-305816>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0363095/>

keywords: paranoia; video surveillance; murder; conspiracy

### **Gattaca**

USA 1997

dir: Andrew Niccol

Science fiction drama, set in a future when one's life is determined by genetic engineering rather than education or experience. The wealthy can choose the genetic makeup of

their descendants. People are designed to fit into whatever role is decided before birth. But what happens when someone desires another way of life?

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0119177/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/gattaca-158677>

keywords: sci-fi; DNA testing; biometrics; tech noir; thriller

### **Gigante**

Spain/Argentina 2009

dir: Adrian Biniez

A supermarket security guard forms a powerful fixation on the pretty cleaning woman who scrubs the aisles during the graveyard shift in this deeply personal tale of obsession and voyeurism from first-time feature filmmaker Adrian Biniez. When the sun goes down, Jara (Horacio Camandule) clocks in to monitor the security cameras at a suburban Montevideo supermarket. The job can be pretty dull at times, so in order to keep himself occupied, Jara often passes the time watching videos, doing crossword puzzles, and playing music. One night, as Jara glances at the monitors, pretty cleaning woman Julia (Leonor Svarcas) wanders into frame and the portly security guard is immediately transfixed. With each passing day, Jara's fixation on Julia grows stronger, to the point where he eventually begins following her outside of work, as well.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/gigante-480913>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1360866/>

keywords: security camera; workplace surveillance; stalking; voyeurism; romantic comedy

### **Hackers**

USA 1995

dir: Iain Softley

In this high-tech thriller, Dade Murphy (Jonny Lee Miller) has been fascinated with computers all his life; at the age of 11, he was able to break into the computer network of several top Wall Street investment and banking firms, and he nearly caused a major stock market crash in the process. As punishment, Dade was forbidden to use a computer until his 18th birthday, but now that he's of age, he's diving back into his PC head first. Dade meets up with a group of fellow hackers: tough-talking cyber gamer Kate, aka Acid Burn (Angelina Jolie), junior hacker Jesse Bradford, born prankster Cereal Killer (Matthew Lillard), Nikon (Lawrence Mason), named for his photographic memory, and telephone expert Phantom Phreak (Renoly Santiago). Dade and his pals aren't out to destroy systems or do cybercrime for profit; they simply want to know more about the systems they encounter, and they like raising some good-natured havoc.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0113243/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/hackers-135760>

keywords: internet; computer paranoia; high-tech thriller

### **Halloween: Ressurrection**

USA 2002

dir: Rick Rosenthal

A sextet of college students is assembling for the production of an online reality show in which they'll spend the night locked up in a serial killer's childhood home being filmed by dozens of cameras and broadcast over the Internet.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/halloween-resurrection-263137>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0220506/>

keywords: reality tv; serial killer; slasher movie

### **Hi, Mom!**

USA 1970

dir: Brian De Palma

Seeking a place in New York life one way or another, Vietnam vet John Rubin (Robert De Niro) moves into a Greenwich Village dive, with hopes of becoming a director for porn king Joe Banner (Allen Garfield). Rubin sells Banner on his idea to make "Peep Art" by filming the racy action in the building windows across from his apartment. He plans to seduce talky window denizen Judy (Jennifer Salt) to get the film he wants; but when that plan fails, John trades his camera for a TV and joins a radical theater troupe for their performance piece, "Be Black Baby." Inspired by the radicals, John decides to make his own violent political statement -- or does he just want to be on TV?

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0065836/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/hi-mom-22305>

keywords: voyeurism; reality tv

### **La Zona**

Mexico/Spain 2007

dir: Rodrigo Plá

Alejandro (Daniel Tovar) lives with his father Daniel (Daniel Giménez Cacho) and his mother Mariana Maribel Verdú) in an isolated community known as La Zona. La Zona is home to the most privileged citizens in Mexico, but with all of the gates and closed circuit cameras it feels more like a million dollar prison than a typical neighborhood. Eventually, a group of disadvantaged teenagers manage to break into La Zona. As the members of the community scramble to protect their families at any cost, one of the teenaged burglars, a frightened boy named Miguel (Alan Chávez), seeks cover in the basement of Alejandro's home as his friends scatter.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/la-zona-416252>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1039652/>

keywords: gated community; video surveillance; murder; social problems

### **The Lives of Others [Das Leben der Anderen]**

Germany 2006

dir: Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck

It's 1984, and Capt. Gerd Wiesler (Ulrich Mühe) is an agent of the Stasi, the East German Secret Police. Wiesler carefully and dispassionately investigates people who might be deemed some sort of threat to the state.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-lives-of-others-350173>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0405094/>

keywords: state surveillance; totalitarian state; audio surveillance; wiretapping

## **Look**

USA 2007

dir: Adam Rifkin

At times, it seems video surveillance is omnipresent in America, and Adam Rifkin (Underdog) spends the better part of two hours asserting just that in his fiction feature Look. This motion picture gains a historical footnote as the first U.S. mainstream movie to depict events solely through the "eyes" of surveillance video cameras. The preponderance of action unfurls in San Fernando Valley offices, stores, and shopping malls, where we witness security-camera footage of character interactions and events that would likely never occur if the perpetrators knew they were being "watched."

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/look-408888>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0810951/>

keywords: video surveillance; reality tv

## **Lost Highway**

USA 1997

dir: David Lynch

Fred (Bill Pullman) is an avant-garde jazz saxophonist who shares a luxurious but fashionably barren house with his wife Renee (Patricia Arquette). Fred suspects that Renee may be unfaithful to him, but realizes he has bigger things to worry about when a series of videotapes appear at his door that prove someone is watching his home from the outside and inside. When Renee is found murdered, Fred finds himself behind bars, but one morning Fred is no longer in his cell.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/lost-highway-154436>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0116922/>

keywords: paranoia; video surveillance

## **Metropolis**

Germany 1927

dir: Fritz Lang

In the somewhat distant future, the city of Metropolis, with its huge towers and vast wealth, is a playground to a ruling class living in luxury and decadence. They, and the city, are sustained by a much larger population of workers who labor as virtual slaves in the machine halls, moving from their miserable, tenement-like homes to their grim, back-breaking ten-hour shifts and back again.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/metropolis-32362>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0017136/>

keywords: dystopic future; workplace surveillance

## **Minority Report**

USA 2002

dir: Steven Spielberg

Based on a short story by the late Philip K. Dick, this science fiction-thriller reflects the writer's familiar preoccupation with themes of concealed identity and mind control. Tom

Cruise stars as John Anderton, a Washington, D.C. detective in the year 2054. Anderton works for "Precrime," a special unit of the police department that arrests murderers before they have committed the actual crime. Precrime bases its work on the visions of three psychics or "precogs" whose prophecies of future events are never in error. When Anderton discovers that he has been identified as the future killer of a man he's never met, he is forced to become a fugitive from his own colleagues as he tries to uncover the mystery of the victim-to-be's identity.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/minority-report-262610>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0181689/>

keywords: high-tech surveillance; literary adaptation; sci-fi

### **Modern Times**

USA 1936

dir: Charles Chaplin

This episodic satire of the Machine Age is considered Charles Chaplin's last "silent" film, although Chaplin uses sound, vocal, and musical effects throughout. Chaplin stars as an assembly-line worker driven insane by the monotony of his job. After a long spell in an asylum, he searches for work, only to be mistakenly arrested as a Red agitator. Released after foiling a prison break, Chaplin makes the acquaintance of orphaned gamine (Paulette Goddard) and becomes her friend and protector. He takes on several new jobs for her benefit, but every job ends with a quick dismissal and yet another jail term.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0027977/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/modern-times-33029>

keywords: workplace surveillance; satire

### **My Little Eye**

USA 2002

dir: Marc Evans

Picking up where the multitudes of late '90s/early 2000s reality-based television shows left off is the unexpectedly shocking horror film *My Little Eye*, from director Marc Evans. Five twentysomethings are assembled to live together for a period of six months in a house specially outfitted with a bevy of webcams in order to collect a one million prize. The one major caveat being if anyone abandons the house prior to the end of the six-month period, no one will win anything. At some point, it becomes apparent that outside forces are somehow manipulating certain events within the house, and the household is sent into chaos as one of the participants is found dead. Another participant receives an ominous note, and shortly thereafter, the remaining participants begin to realize the true intensity of their mortal peril.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0280969/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/my-little-eye-269540>

keywords: serial killer; reality tv; murder; paranoia

### **Net, The**

USA 1995

dir: Irwin Winkler

Irwin Winkler's paranoid thriller focuses on a high-tech nightmare, as a computer programmer finds herself on the run from an unknown enemy dedicated to ruining her life by digital means. Sandra Bullock stars as Angela Bennett, a programmer who unwittingly comes into possession of software that allows access to secret government information. At first, she thinks little of it, heading off to Mexico on vacation. However, thanks to a series of odd events that culminates with the death of a close friend, Angela starts to suspect she may be in danger. This fear is confirmed when she returns to America to find that her identity has been erased, with police computers showing her as a wanted criminal. She soon realizes that a group of evil conspirators are after the program, and she sets out to clear her name and keep the program from falling into the wrong hands. The central concept later inspired a cable TV series.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-net-134901>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0113957/>

keywords: dataveillance, internet

related films: The Net 2.0

### **The Net 2.0**

USA 2006

dir: Charles Winkler

An in-name-only sequel to 1995's blockbuster thriller *The Net*, *The Net 2.0* begins with a new character - a stunning computer tech named Hope Cassidy - who travels to Istanbul, where she plans to take a new job. Yet Hope soon finds herself pursued by dozens of unsavory characters and underhanded types, who threaten to "erase" her identity by wielding the power of the internet's dark side.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0449077/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-net-20-339499>

keywords: dataveillance, internet

related films: The Net

### **One Hour Photo**

USA 2002

dir: Mark Romanek

Semour "Sy" Parrish (Williams) runs the photo processing department at a large discount store; Sy is dedicated to his job, and takes great pride in his work. Sy's favorite customers are Nina and Will Yorkin (Connie Nielsen and Michael Vartan), an attractive and cheerful young couple with a nine-year-old boy, Jake (Dylan Smith). Sy dotes on the Yorkins and their son whenever they drop off film to be processed -- something they've been doing quite often ever since Jake was born -- and Nina and Will are indulgent of Sy's attentions, regarding him as a harmless eccentric. What the Yorkins don't know is Sy is a desperately lonely man with no real life of his own, and he's been obsessively making copies of their photos, for years, imagining himself to be "Uncle Sy," a member of the family. Sy's tenuous hold on reality begins to collapse when he develops a roll of film brought in by a new customer that suggests Will has been unfaithful to Nina.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0265459/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/one-hour-photo-260306>

keyword: stalker; voyeurism; photography

### **Osterman Weekend, The**

USA 1983

dir: Sam Peckinpah

John Tanner (Rutger Hauer) is the host of a television news show who once a year spends a long weekend with three of his best friends from college, Bernard Osterman (Craig T. Nelson), Joseph Cardone (Chris Sarandon), and Richard Tremayne (Dennis Hopper). Tanner is approached by Lawrence Fassett (John Hurt), a CIA agent who has evidence proving that his three pals are actually agents working with the Soviet Union. With Tanner's reluctant approval, his house is wired with video surveillance equipment so that the CIA can monitor what Osterman, Cardone, and Tremayne say and do over their weekend together in hopes of putting the traitors behind bars. However, Tanner soon realizes that Fassett's agenda is not all that it appears to be.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0086058/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-osterman-weekend-36701>

keywords: video surveillance; conspiracy; spy

### **Panic Room**

USA 2002

dir: David Fincher

Meg, a single mother of an diabetic preteen daughter, is going through an unhappy divorce that forces her and Sarah to move into a new home. They choose a deluxe New York brownstone that coincidentally boasts an unusual feature: a "panic room," a vault-like hidden space capable of literally sealing itself off from the rest of the building. With its thick steel door on springs, separate ventilation and communications systems, and video monitors linked to cameras mounted throughout the home, the room is an impregnable fortress. It quickly comes in handy when the Altmans' new residence is invaded by a trio of thieves. Meg and Sarah are able to secure themselves in the panic room before the robbers can get to them, but it turns out that Sarah's medication is still on the outside, the phone's not yet connected, and the loot the gang's seeking is inside the panic room with them.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0258000/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/panic-room-259522>

keywords: video surveillance; burglary

### **Parallax View, The**

USA 1974

dir: Alan J. Pakula

While the Watergate scandal filled the headlines, Alan J. Pakula's 1974 thriller took its inspiration from the conspiracy theories surrounding the Kennedy assassination. Journalist Joe Frady (Warren Beatty) misses witnessing the assassination of a senator at Seattle's Space Needle, but his newswoman former girlfriend Lee Carter (Paula Prentiss) was there. Even after a government commission concludes that it was a freak lone assassin, Lee tells Joe that she fears for her life since other witnesses keep dying. After she too turns up dead, Joe investigates, travelling to the small town where another witness has mysteriously expired. Stumbling on a corporate identity for the killers, Joe de-

cides to dig deeper by infiltrating the Parallax Corporation as one of their hired assassins.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0071970/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-parallax-view-37236>

keywords: conspiracy; thriller

### **Peeping Tom**

UK 1960

dir: Michael Powell

Michael Powell's controversial meditation on violence and voyeurism effectively destroyed his career when it was first released, but later generations have come to regard it as a masterpiece. Karl Heinz Boehm stars as Mark, the son of a psychologist who kept a video journal of the boy's upbringing for research purposes. The constant intrusions profoundly affected the boy, who grew up to be a photographer himself; but his principal subject matter consists of women whom he murders before the camera. He then runs the films of his victims in their final throes so that he can study their reactions to death--a perverse extension of his father's experiments, which tormented Mark to analyze his reactions to raw fear.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0054167/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/peeping-tom-37610>

keywords: voyeurism; photography; serial murder; classic

### **President's Analyst, The**

USA 1967

Theodore J. Flicker

The President's Analyst is James Coburn, whose position makes him privy to any number of delicate government secrets. Thus Coburn becomes a most desirable prize for several secret-agent organizations. When Coburn becomes expendable, he finds a pair of strong allies in the form of likeable political assassin Godfrey Cambridge and gay Soviet spy Severn Darden. The main plot involves an insidious, evil telephone company wanting to plant electronic devices inside peoples' brains.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0062153/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-presidents-analyst-39071>

keywords: cold war; spy; satire

### **Rear Window**

USA 1954

dir: Alfred Hitchcock

Laid up with a broken leg, photojournalist L.B. Jefferies (James Stewart) is confined to his tiny, sweltering courtyard apartment. To pass the time between visits from his nurse (Thelma Ritter) and his fashion model girlfriend Lisa (Grace Kelly), the binocular-wielding Jeffries stares through the rear window of his apartment at the goings-on in the other apartments around his courtyard. As he watches his neighbors, he assigns them such roles and character names as "Miss Torso" (Georgine Darcy), a professional dancer with a healthy social life or "Miss Lonelyhearts" (Judith Evelyn), a middle-aged woman who entertains nonexistent gentlemen callers. Of particular interest is seemingly mild-

mannered travelling salesman Lars Thorwald (Raymond Burr), who is saddled with a nagging, invalid wife. One afternoon, Thorwald pulls down his window shade, and his wife's incessant bray comes to a sudden halt. Out of boredom, Jeffries casually concocts a scenario in which Thorwald has murdered his wife and disposed of the body in gruesome fashion. Trouble is, Jeffries' musings just might happen to be the truth.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0047396/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/rear-window-40584>

keywords: photography; voyeurism; murder

### **Red Road**

UK 2006

dir: Andrea Arnold

A woman paid to watch others begins stalking one of the men she's been trailing in this thriller from Scotland. Jackie (Kate Dickie) is a woman who has buried herself in her work with a security company since the death of her husband and child. Jackie's work involves monitoring a crime-ridden corner of North Glasgow with a bank of closed circuit television cameras; after her shift is over, she either goes home or has an occasional assignation with a friend from work who isn't happy with his wife. While watching the comings and goings in a run down apartment block, Jackie spies Clyde (Tony Curran), a handsome former jailbird. Jackie becomes fascinated with Clyde, and after carefully following his routines through her cameras she meets him face to face at a local bar, and soon lures him into a relationship. However, in time Clyde discovers neither love nor lust is the motivating factor behind Jackie's actions.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0471030/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/red-road-348252>

keywords: social realism; video surveillance; stalking

### **A Scanner Darkly**

USA 2006

dir: Richard Linklater

The war on drugs has been lost, and when a reluctant undercover cop is ordered to spy on those he is closest to, the toll that the mission takes on his sanity is too great to comprehend in director Richard Linklater's rotoscoped take on Philip K. Dick's classic novel. With stratospheric concern over national security prompting paranoid government officials to begin spying on citizens, trust is a luxury and everyone is a suspected criminal until proven otherwise.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/a-scanner-darkly-306381>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0405296/>

keywords: literary adaptation; dystopic future; police state

### **The Secret Cinema**

USA 1967

dir: Paul Bartel

Almost 30 years before Peter Weir brought us *The Truman Show*, cinematic cult figure Paul Bartel was the 30-year-old auteur of this half-hour film, a somewhat sleazy bit of surrealism on a similar subject. Amy Vane plays a woman whose every move is re-

corded on film. She didn't ask for this scrutiny: the woman is the victim of a voyeuristic director, who contrives to hide cameras wherever she goes and show the results in a theater.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-secret-cinema-43447>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0156056/>

keywords: Reality TV; voyeurism

### **Sliver**

USA 1993

dir: Phillip Noyce

Phillip Noyce directed Joe Eszterhas's adaptation of Ira Levin's novel about voyeurism, starring Sharon Stone as Carly Norris, a book editor on the rebound from an emotionless seven-year marriage. Carly decides that a change of location will help her in the healing process, so she moves into a sleek Manhattan high-rise. In her new apartment, she meets a collection of curious neighbors --Vida (Polly Walker), who snorts cocaine along with ingesting all the dark secrets of the building and its tenants; Jack Landsford (Tom Berenger), a successful writer who also wants to also be successful with Carly; and Zeke Hawkins (William Baldwin), Carly's new landlord. Carly is attracted to Zeke, but she sees that he is hiding something from her. Unbeknownst to Carly, Zeke, an obsessive voyeur, watches his tenants from a bank of television screens at his headquarters. But when Carly discovers Zeke's voyeurism, she herself becomes obsessed with the daily lives of her neighbors.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0108162/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/sliver-45200>

keywords: voyeurism; video surveillance; murder

### **Snake Eyes**

USA 1998

dir: Brian De Palma

A boisterous and corrupt Atlantic City police detective, Rick Santoro (Nicolas Cage) attends a heavyweight championship boxing match. Also there is his best friend, U.S. Navy Commander Kevin Dunne (Gary Sinise), who is part of a group at ringside that includes Defense Secretary Charles Kirkland. With the fight in progress, a woman named Julia Costello (Carla Gugino) sits beside Santoro to speak, furtively, to the Secretary of Defense. Suddenly there are gunshots, wounding her and mortally injuring Kirkland. There is chaos in the arena as the fight is stopped and fans stampede toward the exits. During his investigation, Santoro realizes gradually that the assassination was planned by a conspiracy which includes his friend Kevin. Kirkland, a politician, was killed because he intended to cancel a missile project of which Kevin approved strongly and which was contracted to a corporate executive who was also part of the conspiracy. (Source: Wikipedia)

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120832/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/snake-eyes-163130>

keywords: video surveillance; murder; conspiracy

### **Sneakers**

USA 1992

dir: Phil Alden Robinson

In this tech-thriller, a group of five renegade computer hackers, led by Martin Bishop (Robert Redford), are hired by the government to steal a black box, containing a code-breaking machine, from the mathematician who invented the device. The government is able to persuade Martin to take the job by convincing him that they will drop a decades-old federal warrant for his involvement in computer fraud. Martin agrees and he takes his team on the mission, eventually taking the box. Shortly after the hackers have stolen the device, the mathematician turns up dead. Before long, the quintet realize that they've gotten themselves into more than they'd originally bargained for.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0105435/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/sneakers-45342>

keywords: hugh tech-thriller; internet; conspiracy; murder

### **Surveillance**

USA 2008

dir: Jennifer Chambers Lynch

An FBI agent on the trail of a serial killer attempts to capture the madman with a little assistance from his would-be victims in director Jennifer Chambers Lynch's supernatural police thriller. FBI agents Elizabeth Anderson (Julia Ormond) and Sam Hallaway (Bill Pullman) are on the trail of some killers when they arrive in a small desert town to investigate a vicious mass shooting on the highway. The witnesses are an overzealous cop, an unreliable junkie, and an eight-year-old girl. For some reason agents Anderson and Hallaway can't comprehend, the pieces of the puzzle just don't seem to fit together. Later, when the minute details concealed by each witness finally start coming into focus, the two agents discover that sometimes the truth comes at a very substantial cost.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0409345/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/surveillance-390364>

keywords: thriller; serial murder; video surveillance

### **Surveillance 24/7**

UK 2007

dir:

Paul Oremland

A one night stand with a handsome stranger plunges a respected teacher into a dizzying plot of intrigue and espionage in this inventive paranoid thriller set in London and shot from the perspective of surveillance cameras placed throughout the city. The morning after meeting a man in a bar and taking him back home for a passionate night of love-making, Adam is horrified to learn that his anonymous lover has been brutally murdered. Suddenly Adam is caught in the grip of a scandal that leads all the way to the Royal Family.

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/surveillance-393013>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt1010052/>

keywords: thriller, video surveillance, conspiracy

### **The 1000 Eyes of Dr. Mabuse [Die 1000 Augen des Dr. Mabuse]**

Germany 1960

dir: Fritz Lang

The film begins with a series of unsolved murders in a Berlin hotel. The modus operandi of the murderer is the same as that of long-dead megalomaniac Dr. Mabuse. Police suspect that the killer is a man who believes that he is the reincarnation of Mabuse. Could the culprit be secretive insurance salesman Werner Peters, or blind seer Wolfgang Preiss? The title refers to the hotel's sophisticated TV surveillance system--dozens of roving cameras and TV monitors, inspired (claimed Lang) by a sophisticated bugging method used by the Nazis during World War II.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0054371/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-1000-eyes-of-dr-mabuse-49631>

keywords: video surveillance; thriller

### **THX 1138**

USA 1971

dir: George Lucas

In a 1984-esque white-washed future underground dystopia where sexuality is banned, all humans sport shaved heads and the same shapeless outfits as they go about their work in a mandated state of sedation, listening to exhortations to "Buy and Be Happy." Black-clad robot cops chant a mantra to their victims that "everything will be all right" and automated confessional booths emit soothing therapeutic bromides. But unbeknownst to THX 1138 (Robert Duvall), his roommate LUH 3417 (Maggie McOmie) has been reducing their meds, resulting in their mutual discovery of love and THX's subsequent imprisonment for drug evasion and sexual misconduct. Determined to find the pregnant LUH, THX breaks out of prison with the help of his cellmate SEN 5241 (Donald Pleasence) and an escaped TV hologram (Don Pedro Colley).

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0066434/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/thx-1138-48303>

keywords: dystopic future

### **Timecode**

USA 2000

dir: Mike Figgis

Director Mike Figgis helmed this ground-breaking experimental feature, filmed with four synchronized digital video cameras in four separate locations. The story, outlined in advance but otherwise improvised, was enacted in a single continuous take, like a stage play, with the unedited images from all four locations presented on the screen at once. Figgis and his crew chose the best single run-through, and the result is the film's final release version. The story focuses on four main characters around the casting sessions for a film.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0220100/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/timecode-198542>

keywords: video surveillance; reality tv

### **The Truman Show**

USA 1998

dir: Peter Weir

Truman Burbank (Jim Carrey) is unaware that his entire life is a hugely popular 24-hour-a-day TV series. In this real-time documentary, every moment of Truman's existence is captured by concealed cameras and telecast to a giant global audience.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0120382/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/the-truman-show-161628>

keywords: video surveillance; reality tv

related films: Ed TV

### **Vacancy**

USA 2007

dir: Nimród Antal

Their car broken down and their prospects for finding a tow-truck driver at such a late hour slim to none, David (Luke Wilson) and Amy Fox (Kate Beckinsale) decide to make the best of their situation by resting out the night at a nearby motel. Left with few choices of entertainment for the evening, the pair soon settles down to enjoy one of the low-budget slasher films sitting atop their motel room VCR. Upon realizing that all of the films seem to have been shot in the very same room they currently occupy, David and Amy suddenly become the stars of a particularly sadistic fright flick. As hidden cameras track their every move, the hapless couple attempt to turn the tables on their would-be killer before they meet the same grim fate as the poor souls being butchered on television.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0452702/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/vacancy-351981>

keywords: video surveillance; serial murder

### **Die Welt ohne Maske [The World Without a Mask]**

Germany 1934

dir: Harry Piel

In this comical thriller, an engineer invents a TV that can see through walls. The trouble begins when crooks find out about the useful creation and try to steal it from the inventors.

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0025968/>

<http://www.allmovie.com/work/die-welt-ohne-maske-117736>

keywords: video surveillance; television; classic