Fig. 1. Surveillance tracking in *Enemy of the State* (dir. Tony Scott, 1998). Video frame enlargement.

Collapsing the Interior/ Exterior Distinction:
Surveillance, Spectacle, and Suspense in Popular Cinema

by John S. Turner, II

Since the end of the Second World War issues surrounding the exponential growth of surveillance have assumed a salient role in critical, cultural, and communication studies. These same issues have appeared with regularity as the substance of or as represented in numerous popular films. Much of this growth and its representation is attributable to the rise of powerful new surveillance technologies and practices, previously unavailable, which now portend the reconfiguration of political, economic, social, and cultural relations. In the areas of government administration, policing and security, the capitalist work site, and the consumer marketplace, electronic surveillance techniques and strategies influence the entire social order. Our computerized, information-saturated society has created a new geography of power relations that have become increasingly dependent on surveillance in order to sustain or move these power bases forward. Indeed all forms of surveillance, but particularly massive or magnified surveillance practices, or panopticism, are employed throughout Western bureaucratic and capitalist institutions to enhance predictability, risk assessment, security, identification, efficiency, and control. These proliferating technologies of mass surveillance include sophisticated census tools and practices, radars, lasers, sensors, satellites, polygraphs, sonograms, night vision, genetic tests, global positioning systems, space-based telescopes, biometric identification devices,

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home arrest systems, and numerous other monitoring devices "jacked-in" to real time communications. Perhaps most emblematic of these apparatuses and practices is the ever-present surveillance camera.

A growing number of Americans have been voicing concerns over widespread invasions of their personal lives for several decades now, but these anxieties have been met with few guarantees and precious little legislation. Frequently, such intrusions occur without the permission of and contrary to the desires of those under surveillance. In contemporary society personal information about others is purchased and exchanged in a far-reaching information economy in which data collected in one context can be used and reused in entirely different, unanticipated and even hostile ways without the knowledge or even consent of the individuals involved. Yet this collapse of what have heretofore been the distinctions of the public and the private, the interior and the exterior, has been treated with curiously uncritical reception in popular culture in general and in popular cinema in particular. Indeed, as will be argued here, many of the films that address the practice of surveillance or use surveillance technologies in their narratives do so as an opportunity to celebrate the spectacle elements invested in surveillance or to integrate the use of surveillance as a narratival device to promote suspense and, subsequently, violence.

Surveillance as a narratival and structural device in popular cinema is indeed ubiquitous. The very medium of cinema itself can be understood as hyper-surveillant. The uninterrupted scopic drive of the motion picture camera as a recording instrument collapses all public/private distinctions, peering into the interior lives and spaces of its subjects. In this respect film functions like a microscope magnifying everything. Spectators become subservient to a gaze that controls (most reception theory identifies the viewer as the giver of the gaze, and the screen as the bearer of the viewer's look). The representation of the "exteriority" of the world is interiorized on the screen. Such a reading of cinema suggests a system of technology that has expanded to dominate the regulation of the external world but which also contracts and increasingly penetrates the interior world.

Spectacle

The critical currency of the term spectacle emerged from Henri Lefebvre's *Critique of Everyday Life* and Guy Debord's *Society of the Spectacle*.[1] While its original designation served as a critique of the politics of everyday life and an analysis of capitalism, spectacle has evolved as an umbrella term suggesting "a single seamless global system of relations," the "mystification of the functioning of power," a "new opiate-of-the-masses," or the "figuration of a radical shift in the way power functions noncoercively within twentieth-century modernity."[2] Jean Baudrillard seems to collapse the term into a synonym for late capitalism, the rise of media and communication technology, and a contemporary account of the culture or consciousness industry.[3] For Baudrillard, the spectacle coincides with the moment when sign-value takes precedence over use-value. T. J. Clark identifies the society of the spectacle as "a massive internal extension of the capitalist market—the invasion and restructuring of whole areas of free time, private life, leisure and personal expression…. It indicates a new phase of commodity production—the making-into-commodities of whole areas of social practice."[4]

As will be argued here, spectacle and surveillance become increasingly merged in popular culture, particularly evident in popular cinema. Debord argues that the modern world introduced new ways of seeing and exhibited a fascination with reshaping our world. He invokes a world that is "at once here and elsewhere… its logic is at one with men's (sic) estrangement from one another" The spectacle tends to reduce the world and its inhabitants, as Debord puts it, into "mere representations," encouraging us to see them as something less than they are: less real, less sustainable, less human.[5] In the cinema, for example, we witness a medium that sets us at a distance from our world; it allows us to view through a technological window while at the same time attempting to make us feel comfortable with this distanced view of the world. Such an argument treats the spectacle as a fundamental reorganization of the observer as a precondition for the development of a consumer society. In this respect the spectacle is "a new kind of power of recuperation and absorption, a capacity to neutralize and assimilate acts of resistance by converting them into objects or images of consumption."[6] By converting the technologies and practices of

surveillance into highly seductive cinematic images, images that border on the fetishization of such technologies and practices, popular cinema effectively frames an uncritical celebration of panopticism.

In those films that incorporate surveillance functions into their narrative, we are treated to an image of distance, speed, ubiquity, and simultaneity—all qualities of the spectacle as well. Debord identifies the spectacle with information and propaganda, with "advertisement or direct consumption of entertainments" which are passively accepted—"that which appears is good, that which is good appears." The spectacle is dominated by "*the categories of seeing*" (italics in the original) and is "based on the incessant deployment of… precise technical rationality." For Debord the spectacle is "the uninterrupted conversation which the present order maintains about itself… it is the self-portrait of power… satisfied through mediation… through the intermediary power of instantaneous communication." Through this logic spectacle and surveillance are collapsed onto one another as an effective disciplinary apparatus—a set of techniques for the management of bodies, the management of attention, and for assuring the ordering of human multiplicities.[7]

Suspense

Many of the advanced surveillance technologies and practices outlined at the beginning of this essay are the stuff of contemporary cinema. Some films, *Blowup* (Michelangelo Antonioni, 1966), *Blow Out* (Brian DePalma, 1981), *The Conversation* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974), *Peeping Tom* (Michael Powell, 1960), *The End of Violence* (Wim Wenders, 1996), *Sneakers* (Phil Alden Robinson, 1992), and *Enemy of the State* (Tony Scott, 1998) use questions of surveillance as the narrative substance of their very being. These films query the collapse of the public/private (interior/exterior) distinction and point toward the pervasive, seemingly omnipotent, and often voyeuristic power of surveillance. Interestingly, when films use different surveillance technologies as part of the narrative substance of the film's diagesis, this usually serves as a prelude to violence. In this manner, a surveilling episode is more often than not framed as a "suspense mechanism" which provides tension. Wuss characterizes this tensional build-up as:

1. The probable occurrence of a relevant (often menacing) event in the undefined course of events.
2. The possibility of the protagonists being able to be active in bringing the course of events under control by certain forms of conduct (i.e., preventing the negative outcome of the events).
3. There is a difference between the information viewers have about the uncertain situation and the kind of information to which the protagonists are privy.[8]

This last point is at the soul of suspense theory—that is the idea of anticipation, which is calculating, expecting, and evaluative of a coming event. When a surveillance technology is shown on screen to expose or place under gaze some character or event, it can generally be assumed that the surveillance sequence prepares the viewer for some subsequent violence or potential for violence.

Simple examples of surveillance references pointing to subsequent, potentially violent information—what Wulff calls cataphora[9]—can even be seen in such universally popular touchstone films as *The Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939) or *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (Steven Spielberg, 1977). When the Wicked Witch of the West consults her crystal ball (perhaps a bit of mythic omniscience) to locate the whereabouts of Dorothy and her entourage, she uses the information to dispatch the winged monkey army to terrorize Dorothy's companions and to return her for the Witch's purposes. And in *Close Encounters*, when the air traffic controllers pick up a blip on their radar screen and are then hailed by the pilot of a passenger jet aircraft who sees unidentified flying objects, the airport's surveillance technology has served a suspense function while at the same time predicting a potential form of violence. (This particular sequence from *Close Encounters* was cleverly framed and edited as a television trailer advertising the film before its release and clearly arrested the attention of perspective filmgoers by activating the sense of suspense).

The experience of suspense involves calculating, expecting, and evaluating a coming event. Suspense serves as an act of anticipation, offering a degree of probability about future situations in the plot. Such anticipation offers information to the viewer as a starting point for future developments in a narrative. Wulff posits this as a necessary scenario for what is forthcoming "from what the text has informed the viewers and what viewers know outside of the

text—about life, physics, and psychology in general."[10] The depiction of surveillance imagery in a film text can be read as pre-information or as "kernels" that propel the narrative forward. In "Max Headroom: Twenty Minutes into the Future" (1987), the opening sequence builds tension by cross-cutting between the grainy video images shot by Edison Carter, whose video camera functions like a prosthetic of his arm, and the studio staff at Network 23, who comment on Carter's progress as he breaks into a Watergate-like maze to access information. The studio staffers raise the tensional level as they attempt to interpret the video images which are breaking up as they are projected back to the studio and to follow his advance via some kind of homing device on a grid-like computer schematic of the building's maze. This same homing device/surveillance machine (a kind of generic cinematic mechanism since James Bond) is frequently employed to heighten anticipation in numerous films, but most particularly in science fiction thrillers that incorporate an impending monster attack (see, for example, *Aliens* [James Cameron, 1986]; *The Abyss* [James Cameron, 1989]; *Ghostbusters* [1984, Ivan Reitman] or television series such as "Star Trek," "Lost in Space," and "Sea Quest"). Less sensational, but equally cataphoric in shaping the viewer's scope of expectation, is the use of a homing device in Raoul Walsh's *White Heat* (1949). Here, psychopathic mobster Cody Jarrett is tracked by authorities to an oil refinery where the film concludes in a magnificently violent conflagration. As such, the surveillance data recorded by the apparatus prepares viewers for possible future events while developing a field of anticipation and, subsequently, potential violence.

Seymour Chatman, in tracing the narrative relationships of sequence, contingency, and causality, makes the claim that "our minds inveterately seek structure."[11] In narrative cinema, we seek coherence in the visual field. "In classical narratives," Chatman tells us, "events occur in distributions: they are linked to each other as cause to effect."[12] In causality and contingency, events interconnect to form narrative. This interconnection forms conventions that support the macrostructures of Classic Hollywood narrative. Audiences come to recognize and interpret conventions by "naturalizing" them. "To naturalize a narrative convention means not only to understand it, but to 'forget' its conventional character, to absorb it into the reading-out process, to incorporate it into one's interpretive net."[13] The appearance of surveillance imagery in narrative cinema

Fig. 2. Rooftop surveillance in *Enemy of the State* (dir. Tony Scott, 1998). Video frame enlargement.

has become a naturalized code that is neither arbitrary nor incoherent but comprehensible. When surveillance codes are employed, these codes bring within the viewer's ken a reduction of strangeness and offer a framework of appropriate expectations. Examples abound: the filmstock shift to grainy, low resolution video (as in *Enemy of the State*); the fast-forward whir in an attempt to improve aural quality (as in *The Conversation*, 1974); the progressions of photographic clarity developed in the darkroom (as in *Blow-Up*); or the progressive zooms of geostationary satellites (exemplified in *Patriot Games* [Phillip Noyce, 1992]).

All of these examples demonstrate a strong correlation between the use of surveillance technologies in contemporary films as both a calculated device for the technique of suspense and as a harbinger of violent activity, thus tying together a certain relationship between surveillance and violence in contemporary representation systems. In the noisy and scientifically outrageous *Armageddon* (Michael Bay, 1998) and its multiplex rival *Deep Impact* (Mimi Leder, 1998), telescopes and massive electronic screens forewarn humanity and the theater viewers alike of Earth's inevitable collision course with giant asteroids. (Abel Gance's *La Fin du Monde* (1930) dealt with a similar theme—a comet hurtling toward Earth and instigating near-universal chaos and panic). The use of screens within screens sports a rich celluloid trail, especially well represented in the science fiction genre. Buster Crabbe's Buck Rogers serials made consistent use of screens as suspense tropes for forthcoming conflicts in space or with more terrestrially bound gangsters (see, for example, *Destination Saturn* [Ford Beebe, 1939]). This same conceit would become an indexical staple of sci fi and probably received a degree of indelibility in TV's "Star Trek" and its spin-offs. Garrett Stewart reviews this screenal usage in science fiction cinema as a photographic retailing to the public of the advanced mechanics of visualization, a
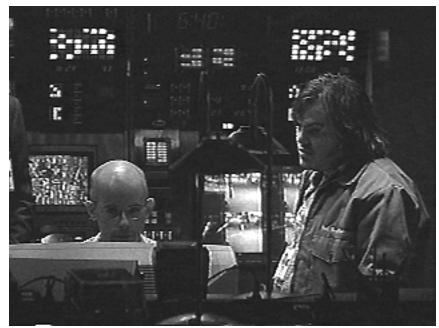
Fig. 3. Screens within screens in *Enemy of the State* (dir. Tony Scott, 1998).
Video frame enlargement.

synecdoche for futuristic apparition: "viewing screens and viewing machines…
banks of monitors, outsized video intercoms, x-ray display panels, hologram
tubes, back-lit photoscopes, aerial scanners, telescopic mirrors, illuminated
computer consoles, overhead projectors, slide screens, radar scopes, whole curved
walls of transmitted imagery, the retinal registers of unseen electronic eyes."[14]
Such visual empowerment offers our gaze a contaminated spectacle, an illumi-
nation of that which we could not otherwise visually access. The act of look-
ing on at remarkable phenomena—the grotesque, the forbidden, the outra-
geous, the unarrived future—all become lethal wonders—visuality run amok.

Many of the "screens within screens" function as futuristic viewing devices
which are configured as projected refinements of visual technology. J. P. Telotte
identifies the Soviet Constructivist film *Aelita* (Yakov Protazanov, 1924) as one
of the earliest motion pictures to engage images of distant visual communication.
In its convoluted narrative, Aelita, Queen of Mars, attempts to seduce King
Tuskub's chief engineer, Gor, in order to gain access to his device for viewing

distant worlds. Using this apparatus to watch the secrets of life on earth, she then plots to gain sole control of Mars. This "mak[ing] visible the relations governing the world" reinforces the thoroughly modernist view that the world, and indeed the universe, is essentially knowable and, as such, can be brought under our technologically enhanced powers.[15] Yet in this instance, Aelita, as spectator, is so distant from Earth that the world upon which she gazes can only be a spectacle; there remains technological separation and human distance.

In Germany, ten years before the perfection of the first television apparatus, Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1926) employed a television screen. From the heartless overlord's distant perch, Federsen monitors Metropolis and its people: reading a teletype, noting mysterious numbers that appear on an electronic board, and viewing the managers of the Central Dynamo plant on a television screen. Such a screen allows Federsen to spy on the proles laboring in the catacombs below. Stewart suggests that such applications of the screen already dramatize its co-ercive technological destiny, an "optical science sold out to surveillance and enforcement."[16] And Telotte echoes much the same when claiming that Federsen's ruthlessly rational attempt to cope with the rebellious workers "in the depths" is "through a kind of telepresence" crafted in the shape of a robot.[17] *Metropolis's* brand of modernism—its cultural tension between the rational and irrational, between the pragmatic and the romantic—served as a precursor for Germany's social instability and the ascension of National Socialism, with its promises of order, control, and social engineering.

Representations of the inset screen as a large surveillance map have also fig-ured significantly in numerous cinematic efforts. An example that stands out as a device for both spectacle and suspense appears as "the Big Board"in Stanley Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove* (1964). To ratchet the tension (and black humor), a gigantic screen/map serves as the backdrop of a presidential boardroom where the fate of the world is cynically played out among a group of nuclear good-time boys. As the U. S. president holds a Bob Newhart-like hot line phone conversation with his Soviet counterpart, animated images of B-52 bombers follow a trajectory across "the Big Board," rapidly approaching their ground zero targets. This mammoth image of a control room monitor reappears with the same effect in *War Games* (John Badham, 1983). In this installment the

Fig. 4. "Big Boards" in *War Games* (dir. John Badham, 1983) on left, and in *Dr. Strangelove* (dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1964). Video frame enlargements.

strategy of incorporating an electronic global map is part of the Strategic Air Command's military C3I (command, control, communication, and intelligence). The plot line of *War Games* involves a computer hacking teenage hero who illicitly challenges an Air Force supercomputer to a round of "Thermonuclear War." Behaving like Hal in *2001, A Space Odyssey* (Stanley Kubrick, 1968), the computer removes human beings "from the loop" and locks onto an autonomous program to launch an all out nuclear attack against the Soviet Union. The *War Games's* "big board" becomes the empowered eye that offers us a spectacle of tensional build-up—blinking targets, flashing launches, dotted trajectories—a screen with the ability to scan the globe and command its functions. Such visual technology, it might be argued, has become the technological equivalent of totalitarian excess.

Surveillance Cameras

Surveillance cameras (spycams) have their own signature and style—mostly ordinary images with a time/date stamp and grainy, low-resolution surfaces. Over the past decade, the ubiquity of surveillance cameras in public settings has been characteristic of a civic drive to ensure order and control as much as a desire to reduce lawlessness. Indeed, "the camera quotient is increasing in the midst of a dramatic decline in crime."[18] Throughout the nineties Americans witnessed the technological monitoring of parks and beaches, public schools and school buses, subway platforms and cars, bus stops, intersections, tollbooths, and interstates. An infestation of stationary cameras stare at us as we browse

through Borders and Barnes and Noble, at Blockbuster, SuperAmerica, and every ATM machine worldwide (themselves already interconnected financial surveillance apparatuses). This is the "omnivideo" of excessive transparency. These cameras peer from skyscrapers "with lenses that can count the buttons on a blouse three miles away."[19] And such cameras watch, as in Paul Simon's lyric "She said the man in the gabardine suit/ Was a spy/ I said, 'Be careful/ His bow tie is really a camera'"("America," from *Bookends*, 1968), to those of Sting and the Police in "Every Move You Make" (from *Synchronicity*, 1983):

> Every breath you take [breath analyzer]
> Every move you make [motion detector]
> Every bond you break [polygraph]
> Every step you take [electronic monitoring]
> Every single day [continuous monitoring]
> Every word you say [bugs, wiretaps, mikes]
> Every night you stay [light amplifier, night vision binoculars]
> Every vow you break [voice stress analysis]
> Every smile you fake [brain wave analysis]
> Every claim you stake [computer matching]
> I'll be watching you [video surveillance][20]

Surveillance cameras have become as ubiquitous as streetlights in major cities —random and periodic silent monitors in New York, Washington, D. C., Baltimore, or Los Angeles. These are hardly the only "spy cities" for it is now estimated that over 60 American urban centers use closed-circuit television in public places.[21] Remote-controlled video cameras are generally installed to scan known "trouble spots" or crime scenes. This snoop technology has been widely disseminated in the United Kingdom as well, where over 300,000 cameras transmit round-the-clock images to hundreds of constabularies, ostensibly saving on patrol costs. Rapidly following the British example are Japan, Thailand, and Singapore, where closed circuit television supervises innumerable public areas. Back in the USA, the city of Baltimore scans 106 downtown intersections with automated police cameras which can mail you automated speeding or failure to yield tickets.[22] In Los Angeles, arguably the camera capital of the world, some shopping malls have erected central surveillance towers much like Jeremy Bentham's original penitentiary design so celebrated in Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. And just north of Citadel-LA (Soja, 1996), in Redwood City, the streets are lined with parabolic microphones.[23]

Surveillance cameras are clandestinely positioned behind one-way glass, and, as Winston Wheeler Dixon points out,

> Every multiplex theater now includes as part of its construction a bank of video monitors in the manager's office that assists the supervisory staff in its surveillance of the theater's patrons. The same is true of department stores, shopping malls, gas stations, art galleries, post offices, supermarkets, public parks, and other areas of shared space. Yet even within the cinema theater itself—inside the 'black box' of the cinematographic apparatus, this surveillance does not cease, even when the lights are dim. In the darkness, infrared surveillance cameras continually scan the auditorium; heat-sensing devices remain alert to changes in temperature that might be caused by a patron's smoking of a cigarette; motion-sensing devices prevent a viewer from coming too close to the screen; ushers patrol the aisles. Short generic 'trailers' admonish members of the audience to 'be considerate of others around you, and do not talk during the movie.' In short, every aspect of the reception experience in the cinema is monitored, seen by the unseen, a space of fabulation that masquerades as semiprivate, when it is, in fact, part of the public sphere.[24]

Housing Authorities now install bulletproof versions of surveillance cameras in high crime housing projects. Department stores hide swivel rotation models in black ceiling globes or embedded in the eyes of store mannequins (known as "Anne-droids") which also have microphones stuffed in their noses. In this example, the female mannequin is a deceptive decoy empowered with a surveillant gaze that "returns the look" against common theft. As seen in this light, Anne Freidberg points out how the dialectical role of the shopper is both that of "observer and the observed, the transported and confined, the dioramic and the panoptic subject."[25] In some local jails cameras are added to the helmets of guards. Following the Rodney King brutalization, perpetually running cameras have become a staple on the dashboards of police cruisers in an apparent attempt to shield against liability. (Presumably these "official" images now take precedence over the random tapes produced by citizens' camcorders). In one eight-block radius of New York City there are 300 surveillance cameras in plain sight (and this doesn't include the covert installations under the joystick command of a distant operator capable of zooming or spinning the camera's eye 360 degrees). This brand of monitoring has become so mainstream that a security trade association is planning to incorporate surveillance into MBA curriculums.

Fig. 5. The ultimate surveillance camera, in *Enemy of the State* (dir. Tony Scott, 1998). Video frame enlargement.

It is now legal in all but three states for employers to place hidden cameras in locker rooms and even bathrooms (á la Chaplin in *Modern Times* [1936]). And that practice is only an augmentation to timing employee phone calls, monitoring their Internet use, reading employees' email, keystroke counts, and daily tabulations of trips to the restroom. Managers justify these actions as essential for the efficient conduct of business and to ensure staff accountability. On the homefront, the "kindercam" is a new video monitoring system linked to high-speed telephone lines and a central Internet provider that allows parents a live access view of their children in day care at any time. And improvements to the "nannycam," made famous after national news footage exposed a babysitter repeatedly slapping a crying infant, include radio transmitters disguised in clock radios, telephones, and toasters. The consensus is that cameras and other surveilling devices can serve as a crime deterrent, curbing spontaneous crimes like vandalism, workplace theft, child abuse, or shoplifting and thereby making many people feel safer.

If the specter of cameras peering down from every lamppost, rooftop, street sign, or grandfather clock in the living room conjures up some Orwellian nightmare or Stalinist dystopia as they scan for infractions against public order, more draconian still are the new AGEMA systems and camera drones. The AGEMA System is an imaging device that can peer into houses from the street (or from helicopters above) by discriminating heat ratios. We can see examples of this same technology demonstrated in the film *Predator* (John McTiernan, 1987) and again in its sequel (*Predator II* (Stephen Hopkins,1990)) where it is used to locate the killer creature. They have also become the weapon of choice for state drug enforcement officials working in conjunction with the National Guard to locate and identify indoor marijuana cultivators. And pilotless drones are now being developed by the military to provide airborne surveillance. These miniature camera-equipped drones are being engineered as minuscule, quiet, remotely-piloted vehicles the size of a wasp. It is hoped that on the battlefield

they will be used to run reconnaissance with impunity, and in police work they will have the potential to literally fly into rooms and gather evidence. Sociologists Gary Marx and David Lyons refer to our nation as a "surveillance society" in which the markers between private and public life (the interior and exterior) dissolve in a digital haze.[26] With the growing presence of military hardware introduced into civilian applications (such as the state-of-the-art night vision goggles with infrared optics seen in *Silence of the Lambs* (Jonathan Demme, 1991), or face-recognition software as utilized in numerous contemporary policiers), the level of sophistication and cutting-edge technology has indeed promoted the saturation of a surveillance ideology. What was once a dream for East Germany's Stasi is becoming an archival reality here at the end of the millennium in the post-industrialized West. Digital capacity makes the instant retrieval of images captured on surveillance cameras, fingerprints, and DNA records both economic and manageable. "Once it becomes possible to bank all of these images, and to call them up by physical typology, it will be feasible to set up an electronic sentry system giving police [and other dominant interests] access to every citizen's comings and goings."[27] While this statement may wax a bit hyperbolic, the potential for new surveillance vistas grows exponentially, well beyond Huxleyan and Orwellian models. Witness, for example, the spycam microverse of *The Truman Show* (Peter Weir, 1998), where an ordinary life is metaphorically controlled by an omniscient "creator," a TV producer who orders the 500 cameras surrounding his star to zoom in or discreetly track back for ideal framing. (This same relationship had also been explored earlier in Richard Rush's *The Stunt Man* (1980) in which the director, Eli Cross, exercises Christ-like manipulations on his movie set). And surveillance apparatuses are, after all, not restricted to video images only. Numerous additional devices and practices, which can be networked as a massive surveilling web or grid, include the magnetic strips on smart cards, time registrations between tollbooths, the monitoring of cell phones, global positioning satellite systems, workplace urinalysis, corporate tracking "dataveillance," 800 numbers that double as caller-ID systems, computer "cookies," home detention electronic collars, and chips inserted into the spines of magazines.

The rationale for surveillance is probably best defended through the perceived need for security, the desire for risk reduction, and the logic of predictability.

In each of these variables there exists an almost utopian attempt to eliminate uncertainty. Sacrificed, however, is our shrinking terrain of freedom. There is a certain mantra to the hemorrhaging of privacy in late capitalist cultures. Privacy is traded away for security in a society encouraged to be reactionary and paranoid by the sensational imagery of the evening news. Privacy is invaded for pleasure by the sleazy content of the talk show/confessional circuit, the desire to gaze and be gazed upon (see, for example, the Internet's Jenny-cam and the harvest of Web site pics that include hidden toilet cams, gynocams, and the brazen dildocam). And privacy is exploited for profit in the freemarket swapping of massive personal databases and the invasive, reality-based excess of such SPY-TV fare as "Hard Copy," "Cops," "America's Most Wanted," "America's Funniest Home Videos," "Court TV," and the cynically voyeuristic "World's Scariest Car Chases."

The panopticism of such television programming and numerous films transforms the will and practice of the surveillance society into a spectacle. By mixing the activity of invasive monitoring devices with entertainment, Hollywood cinema and television productions gloss over the collective anxieties about being spied upon and reduce it to the seductive emotion of voyeuristic delight. By pinching from police proceedings the low resolution aesthetic of surveillance cameras as a mapping device and mechanism for suspense, films like *Enemy of the State* (Tony Scott, 1998) convey the terror of being stalked by the cutting-edge technology of the National Security Administration while at the same time hyping this same technology as a national panacea for our collective sense of insecurity and vulnerability. *Enemy's* producer, Jerry Bruckheimer, openly admits to borrowing from the recycled video of SPY-TV with its hidden camera footage and stylizing such imagery to affect a more intense, realistic, and nefarious look in his film: "It's exciting and it creates an anxiety, because your eye is so conditioned from having seen it so many times that you think something will happen."[28]

Surveillance and Cinema

In Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation* professional wiretapper Harry Caul (Gene Hackman) is assigned by the nameless director of a large corporation to

the task of recording dialogue of a young couple who weave in and out of the lunch crowd in San Francisco's Union Square. Caul listens in on other people's conversations for a living. He moves from a fetishistic relationship toward his equipment and his tapes toward a voyeuristic drive to solve the mystery of what is going to happen to the young woman whose voice he has been commissioned to tape. As an "objective" sound technician, Harry's initial problem is to direct highly sophisticated sound recording equipment (special directional microphones with telescopic "ears") through walls of noise and obstruction without revealing his presence. He is referred to as the "best" in the business, and his exploits are legendary within the narrative. At another point in the film Harry uses a Moran S15, a telephone listening device that had been demonstrated at the "Surveillance Experts Convention," to tape dialogue between the young couple. It is reiterated repetitively in the film that Harry is a trained expert thoroughly enmeshed in "the apparatus," who records conversations, distinguishing discourses from the non-signifying noise in which they are embedded. But Caul is a lonely, alienated man whose growing sense of ennui begins to assume the focus of the narrative. There is a hint of spectatorial dehumanization here. In a society reduced to spectacle, no one is immune to becoming representation or object, and Harry Caul, who has functioned as a distant observer, now himself becomes the vulnerable target of distant observation. Like the retired, solitary judge in Krzysztof Kieslowski's *Red* (1994), who eavesdrops on neighbors' phone conversations using a special citizen's band radio, Harry is the perfect denizen of a "society of the spectacle"—inhabiting a world by voyeuristically listening to all it has to offer, but thoroughly estranged from it.

Lawrence and Dixon make the point that voyeurism is a significant component in all cinematic/spectator relations; it is basic to both the apparatus and the institution.[29] Voyeurism contains both visual and auditory aspects, though the concept is most frequently linked to vision. It is also often used interchangeably with scopophilia.[30] With *The Conversation* the situation is "audio-voyeurism," to make a distinction between voyeuristic looking and listening. For Harry it is not the gaze but the listening, though he tries to supplement by looking as the mystery unfolds. According to John Ellis, "the concept of voyeurism… is useful to describe the kind of looking the cinema specializes in, that is the specific pleasure and fascination of cinema."[31] Voyeurism describes the activity of

looking at something without being seen looking, a process which, like sur-veillance, also implies the irreducible distance between the looker and the thing seen. The voyeur/surveillant represents in space the fracture which for-ever separates him from the object. In his summation, Ellis characterizes voy-eurism as "curious, inquiring, demanding to know"—the voyeuristic, investi-gatory look that runs parallel to the surveilling gaze.

The Conversation is a kind of Orwellian morality play about electronic eaves-dropping; its milieu is a Kafkaesque world that reveals the disintegrating con-sciousness of its protagonist, Harry Caul. The foregrounded theme of the film is certainly of voyeurism (much like Alfred Hitchcock's *Rear Window* (1954)), amorally enabled through advanced electronic monitoring equipment in the hands of a corporate private eye. Just as in *Blow-Up*, a film *The Conversation* pays obvious homage to, there is a naive faith in the visible and audible; in the piercing of public and private boundaries; the erosion of interior and exterior distinctions. Ultimately, the expert engineer is duped by the very technology he manipulates (so often the case in these films that showcase surveillance technology employed for nefarious purposes). Instead of recording experience, Harry is actually creating it, though he is not in full control of his creation. As perception is mediated through his surveillance technologies, Harry is truly incapable of knowing anything conclusively. Perhaps this is one of the most salient arguments couched in the film text: information gleaned from surveil-lance practices does not necessarily produce "knowledge," and that surveillance technology and its technicians may be more directly involved in creating reality rather than making a record of it.

Gary Marx suggests that cultural analysis, applied to elements of surveillance as they are treated in popular media, can tell us something about the "experi-ence of being watched, or of being a watcher."[32] Such analysis helps strengthen the social basis for understanding the relations between popular culture and the proliferation of information technologies—how culture both shapes and is shaped by available technology. More specifically, for the purposes of this study, an analysis of panoptic technology in film helps demonstrate how the public perceives this growing culture of surveillance. For Marx, "[a]rt, science fiction, comic books, and films have anticipated and even inspired surveillance devices

and applications to new areas."[33] A "Spider-Man" comic, for example, inspired a New Mexico judge to implement the first judicial use of electronic location monitoring equipment (what has become a growing "home arrest" system as an economic alternative to institutional incarceration). A similar "electronic collar" is featured in the French animated sci-fi film *Fantastic Planet* (René Leloux, 1973). Here, a tiny boy in the tradition of the noble savage is captured like an insect by another child from a race of giant super- intellects. As a means of keeping tabs on the new "pet's" whereabouts, the tiny child is fitted with an unremovable collar that responds to a tractor beam which automatically locates him and drags him back to his titanic playmate.

Gary Marx is one of few theorists who offers a serious inquiry of the relationship between surveillance and popular culture. His predilection, however, is distinctly for the surveillance themes in popular music. When "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," we know that "he knows if you've been bad or good… ."[34] In this seasonally panoptic song goodness is rewarded not as a value in its own right, but rather as the result of being watched by an omniscient, all-powerful, all-knowing, god-like entity whose capacity is also consistent with an agency that has access to computer dossiers: "He's making a list, he's checking it twice." This line of analysis through the terrain of popular lyrics also equates certain extrasensory powers to the process of searching for love in song, to watching and observing the object of love, to the surveilling power to discover deception and cheating, or to the nature of voyeurism in song (i.e., linking the male gaze with the professional surveillant). From Little Richard's "Slippin' and Slidin'," in which the song's protagonist is "peepin' and hidin'," to Bobby Vee's "the night has a thousand eyes" which are checking to see "if you aren't true to me," popular song chants its consciousness of the will to surveil and the consequences of such an activity. Other popular songs express the chilling effect of being spied upon, as opposed to the omnipresent and omnipotent lover/watcher. Johnny Rivers's "Secret Agent Man" warns that the "odds are you won't live to see tomorrow… they've given you a number and taken away your name." And the power of the frenetic rhythms of telecommunications echoes in Paul Simon's "The Boy in the Bubble" with "lasers in the jungle" and the "staccato signals of constant information." This song comes to violent close with images of remote bombs in baby carriages. Finally, Mojo Nixon defiantly responds to the

war on drugs, Nancy Reagan's quotable "Just Say No" campaign, and the invasive requirements of job applications with his song "I Ain't Gonna Piss in No Jar."

This seemingly paradoxical relationship between an anxious apprehension of expanded surveillance technology and, at the same time, its seductive grip on our contemporary psyche is further demonstrated in a 1993 science fiction/action film most notable for its surveillance tropes. Stuart Gordon's ultrapanopticonic *Fortress* is the story of a near future couple attempting to escape an America that has become a thoroughly controlled society. Their flight is premised on a one-child rule adopted for population management, likely modeled on the controversies that emerged from China's somewhat failed attempt to curb exponential birth rates in the eighties. Their desire to bring the fetus to term has reduced them to a clandestine effort to smuggle the wife's pregnant body past border guards. At an automobile checkpoint, the identity of all travelers is reviewed by a scanner swept over a tattooed barcode on everyone's forearm (a prime example of stigmatization and the politics of visibility). All women are additionally subjected to what is obviously a "pregnancy test" by having a wand (much like the hand-held metal detectors employed by present day airport security) passed over their stomachs. With a slight twist the surveillance procedure reveals the subterfuge, and the couple is captured and sentenced to a privately run, high-tech, maximum security prison burrowed beneath the desert and, of course, run by a sadistic warden (played by Kurtwood Smith). Compassionless, the warden is revealed as only partially human as he plugs into tubes and wiring that deliver a cocktail of amino acids and virtual stimulation.

Upon arrival each inmate is forced to swallow a small, spherical device that attaches itself to the inner cavity of the intestines. Permanently housed there, this "intestinator" can be controlled by remote signal to either double the inmate over in pain or to literally explode and instantly execute any offending prisoner. The intestinator doubles as well as a homing device that makes tracking any missing inmate a simple operation. Some prison systems in the United States are now using a modified and controversial version of this device in the form of a "stun belt." This innovation is a cross between the debilitating effects of law enforcement's non-lethal stun gun and the home arrest anklet.

Dangerous prisoners are forced to wear the stun belt and are thereby controlled in their movements by guards from a distance who can apply a range of shocks for misbehavior or to encourage cooperation. (Michael Anderson's 1976 *Logan's Run* employs a similar device embedded in the palms of every denizen of a futuristic society that glows red when the individual approaches the age of thirty—their time to die—or helps locate them should they attempt to "run" from their inevitable fate). The futuristic panopticon of *Fortress* is further capable of monitoring prisoners' dreams through the power of the inflexible gaze incorporated in an advanced computer system that has basically replaced the need for any prison guards. The computer, which informs and responds in a soft female voice with a definite penchant for cruelty, is at the fingertips and voice command of Kurtwood Smith who sits before the inevitable console of monitors and impassionately utters commands and directives calculated to erase any autonomous thought or behavior under his regime. Here again we have an example of centralized corporeal control by a technocratic manager. The computer utilizes a series of ceiling mounted mechanical devices equipped with surveillance cameras that appear almost at the instant of any disruption or anarchistic thought. It is this dispersal of disembodied sight to maintain authority over subjects by maintaining authority over the entire optical field that squarely fits *Fortress* within my evaluation of surveillance, suspense, and violence.

Lisa Cartwright and John Tagg have identified how the techniques of photography have been directed at the living body as an object of knowledge perpetually disciplined under the gaze of technical observers.[35] This gaze is registered within some variation of an observatory site such as those identified by Foucault—the clinic, the asylum, the penitentiary, classrooms, and barracks. Both Cartwright and Tagg examine how observations of populations (medical in the case of Cartwright; the criminal and the poor with Tagg) became a function performed through complex technological apparatuses. Like the Panopticon, the observatory offered a reflexive supervision of its own mechanisms. In Foucault's description: "An inspector arriving unexpectedly at the center of the Panopticon will be able to judge at a glance, without anything being concealed from him, how the entire establishment is functioning."[36] Reflexively, the autonomous panoptic apparatus that serves as the nerve center in *Fortress* also monitors the warden, viewing, recording, regulating, and disciplining his

cyborg body just as it regulates and disciplines the bodies of all prisoners. Regulating bodies is also the subject of Andrew M. Niccol's *Gattaca* (1997), a film in which discrimination and bodily surveillance is a science. In this Brave New not-too-distant future children are genetically screened and filtered before birth. These petri dish babies are manufactured for perfection whereas the less fortunate, naturally born (that is the non-genetically enhanced) are designated as "in-valids," an underclass, and condemned to janitorial labor.

Gattaca is a space agency preparing a launch to Titan (one of Saturn's moons). Astronaut Jerome Morrow (Ethan Hawke) is planning to leave Earth on the probe as one of the qualified—a designer person with the appropriate genetic material (the right stuff). The catch, however, is that Jerome's real name is Vincent Freeman, and he has managed to infiltrate the elite space agency by faking his identity—right down to the nucleic acid level. Vincent/Jerome is, in Gattaca's parlance, a "borrowed ladder;" he is an in-valid upstart who is masquerading as one of the anointed. Vincent (Free)man, who has dreamed of space travel his entire life, affects his deception by going to the genetic black market through a "genetic broker" who sets him up with the real Jerome Morrow. The broker assures Vincent, "You could go anywhere with this guy's helix tucked under your arm." Morrow is embittered as the result of an accident that left him paralyzed. He agrees to sell Vincent his name and identity by supplying blood, hair, and urine samples, all of which are inconvertible evidence of Vincent/Jerome's worthiness. This identity transfer ruse is accomplished only through a torturous daily routine in which Vincent must scour himself to remove extraneous skin cells, dye his hair, comb out loose hairs, insert colored contact lenses, install fake fingerprints filled with the real Jerome's blood to evade the personnel detectors, and store some of Jerome's urine in a secret pouch in preparation for random urine tests.

In *Gattaca* the bodily interior is symbolically eviscerated to make transparent that which is endogenous—the sheer transparency of interior states to external conditions. The naturally born ("faith births") suffer the discrimination of "genoism" as this is a world where "your resume is your genes." In this respect the film promotes an omniscient fear of social repression in the name of social engineering. There is a quietly hysterical atmosphere that envelops the orderly,

austere, and minimalist Gattaca. "Big Brother" enforces a carefully regulated human spirit, keeping citizens in place via exacting daily genetic screenings of blood, hair, saliva, and skin. Hand shakes, turning a door knob, or drinking from a glass can leave the necessary traces that the gene police need to identify a masquerading in-valid. FBI agents provide this close genetic scrutiny of all employees at Gattaca by "hoovering" (a double-entendre for cell gathering vacuums and an additional reference to J. Edgar Hoover). The disturbing ramifications of genetic testing as a surveillance mechanism point to a certain fascination with the promises of genetic engineering and a fanatical, almost fascistic, drive for overseeing the perfection in all things. As such, surveilling genetic information becomes just one more tool for human discrimination.

LA Surveillance

Marco Brambilla's mildly humorous *Demolition Man* opens in late nineties Los Angeles with obligatory pyrotechnics barely masking a reference to the Watts and post-Rodney King disturbances. John Spartan (Sylvester Stallone) is a cartoon cop (he bungy jumps out of helicopters to the scenes of crimes) who is framed into a manslaughter charge. He is sentenced by a compassionate court to "sub-zero rehab in a California cryo-penitentiary where he will remain in cryo-stasis as his behavior is altered through synoptic suggestion." Spartan (there's never any subtlety to Stallone's screen monikers) is sprung after only thirty-six years of deep-freeze imprisonment to help track down his late twentieth century psycho nemesis, Simon Phoenix (a blond Wesley Snipes) who has likewise escaped from his own government-imposed hibernation.

It is now 2032 "San Angeles" (get it?), and the city has become a haven of pacificity and docilization. All behavior is surveilled by a central police headquarters equipped with video monitors and apparently ubiquitous microphones which even record and chastise profanity. Reminiscent of "thought crime" and the "thought police" of Orwell's *1984*, this monitoring of verbal utterances, we are told, serves to curb chaos and disharmony. Any violation of verbal parameters receives mild, though corrective, rebuke. In addition to these control technics, access to all public structures is granted only through retinal scans.

Fig. 6. Central police headquarters in
Demolition Man (dir. Marco Brambilla, 1993).
Video frame enlargement.

And all citizens have an organically engineered biochip sewn into their skin by bio-inventor, Dr. Cocteau. The police of San Angeles are smartly attired in fascistic black outfits, carry only stun sticks, and have no training in self-defense. They exist as only so many Keystone Cops queued behind John Spartan's trail of machismo and testosterone.

Backing up thirty-six years, Edward Soja offers an extended reading of present day, polynucleated "CITADEL-LA" in his *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (1996). He cites a museum installation placard claiming that

> The city continues to be organized through two interactive processes, surveillance and adherence, looking out from and in towards the citadel and its panoptic eye of POWER. To be urbanized means to adhere, to be made an adherent, a believer in a collective ideology and culture rooted in the extensions of polis (politics, policy, polity, police) and civitas (civil, civic, civilian, citizen, civilization).[37]

Prescient of *Demolition Man's* concentration of panoptic capacity, the power-filled centrality of the CITADEL is astounding in contemporary Los Angeles. Soja identifies the concentration of "commanding sites of power" tightly arranged within a few block at the heart of the city. These civic center power sites of discipline and control form the institutionalized locale of the CITADEL. They range from the County Health Building, Water and Power Building, County of Los Angeles Hall of Administration, LA's City Board of Education, and City Hall to the County Courthouse and Criminal Courts Building (which feed the country's largest urban prison system), the Parker Center (headquarters of the LAPD and named after, Soja reminds us, the police chief who so insensitively bungled the police response to the Watts riots of 1965 with his racism), the Federal Courthouse, Metropolitan Detention Center, and the Metropolitan Transit Authority. This last civic center, the MTA, serves as the electronic

nerve center for controlling traffic operations along 527 miles of freeways. In a windowless room, an advanced computer system connected to a huge illuminated freeway map provides sophisticated surveillance of millions of freeway drivers every day in what one wag called the Orwellian Ministry of Traffic. Seeing everywhere without being seen, it reminds you again of Bentham's Panopticon and all of the "big boards" so frequently represented in the surveillance film's pantheon.

A further projection of the citadel's powers of surveillance and adherence is invested in its signification as a carceral city. Within various spatial enclosures infused with state-of-the-art monitoring apparatus, Los Angeles houses the largest urban prison population in North America. 18,000 inmates fill four county jails, including Men's Central, the Metropolitan Detention Center (used also as a federal "administrative" facility), the Federal Detention Center (a concrete fortress that Mike Davis, in *City of Quartz*, describes as having a Bastille-like frontage), and Sybil Brand, the nation's largest women's prison.[38]

This spatialization of power suggests that, to some degree, all cities are a collection of surveillance nodes designed to impose and maintain adherence to normalized conduct and discipline over their inhabitants. But Davis goes so far as to argue that urban space has become militarized. He claims that in "fortress" cities like Los Angeles, "on the edge of postmodernity, architecture and the police apparatus are being merged to an unprecedented degree."[39] Social boundaries have been vigorously policed in LA through architectural design, spatial bifurcation from freeways, and an arsenal of electronic surveillance security systems that brutally divide the city into "fortified cells of affluence and 'places of terror.'"[40] He further credits the pop apocalypticism of Hollywood movies and pulp science fiction with their depiction of prison-like inner cities (*Escape from New York* [John Carpenter, 1981], *Running Man* [Paul Michael Glaser, 1987]), high-tech police execution squads (*Bladerunner* [Ridley Scott, 1982]), liasons between the urban skyscraper and the police state (*Die Hard* [John McTiernan, 1988]), and guerrilla warfare in the streets (*Colors* [Dennis Hopper, 1988]). Each of these examples, though hyperbolic, suggests the degree to which architectural privatization and the restructuring of electronic space have placed malls, office centers, cultural complexes, and public activities

under the gaze of policing interests. It is difficult not to read these security offensives and elitist planning practices as anything other than efforts to promote stark divisions of class and race, guaranteeing either gentrified zones or "strategic hamlets" for suspect populations.[41] With this semiotics of bourgeois security comes a "considerable dose of menace—armed guards, locked gates, ubiquitous security cameras—to scare away the homeless and the poor."

The city's obsession with security and rising levels of manipulation and surveillance over its citizenry becomes a domesticated version of the electronic battlefield in Wim Wenders's *The End of Violence* (1997). Also set in Los Angeles, *The End of Violence* is a slow-burning thriller, a mixture of melancholy and anxious tension, about a smarmy Hollywood producer of ultra-violent exploitation films. Mike Max, played by Bill Pullman, is overseeing his new movie entitled *Seeds of Violence*. When we first see him at the edge of his estate pool, he is occupied by a blur of telecommunications technology from which he directs his various enterprises—there's a chaise lounge command center equipped with a computer and bank of cell phones. His life capsizes almost instantly as his wife, Paige, played by Andie MacDowell, calls him from her bedroom overlooking the pool to say that she is leaving him. Even within sight of each other, their current state of alienation is immediately palpable. This initial emphasis on communications technology seems to be the source rather than just the symbol of their current state of alienation. For Wenders, it would appear that as much as these technologies are designed to help us communicate, they really only create greater loneliness, reinforce distance, and ennui. Indeed, as will become apparent, the technology is not only responsible for alienation, but for violence itself.

In a twist that feels reminiscent of magic realism due to its mesmerizing complexity, Max is carjacked by a bungling pair of rednecks who threaten to kill him. At this point we are introduced to a second strand of the story. Ray Bering (Gabriel Byrne) is a depressed former NASA employee who has been fine-tuning a top-secret surveillance installation that utilizes cameras placed all over Los Angeles. The project operates out of the Griffith Observatory (which is probably a Wenders's homage to Nicolas Ray's *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955) and certainly a nod to Fritz Lang's *Dr. Mabuse* films). Since it has been converted into

a surveillance center with grids of monitors, Ray can zoom into locations all over LA. We are further introduced to Ray's FBI controller, an almost blood-less Daniel Benzali, who reminds Ray that the project "could be the end of violence as we know it."

The very idea of surveilants watching—omnisciently, voyeuristically—over the entire LA basin is a chilling prospect in itself. As Ray focuses one of the remote surveillance cameras on some suspicious activity under a freeway bridge, Mike Max and his captors come into view. It is obvious to Ray that the two men intend to kill Max, but from his anonymous vantage point Ray is helpless to intervene. At this point the congruence between these two characters—Max and Ray—becomes slightly clearer. Ray has been reduced to passively con-suming a violent image; while Max, now apparently a victim, is the former pro-ducer of violent images for passive consumption. Thematically, the hinge for *The End of Violence* is the separation between the portrayal of violence and vio-lence itself. There is a conscious and provocative contrast between the violent images that periodically appear on the Big Brother monitors and those which are constructed for cinematic and televisual screens.

Max disappears, the two redneck henchmen turn up dead, and the surveillance tape, true to the code of suspense and delay, breaks up into white noise and fails to offer insight. What was once the pedigree of photographic evidence proves inconclusive. If we assume the responsibility for keeping an eye on the world, will we truly be able to trust the evidence before us? One might ask, especially after the Rodney King episode, if we are about to leave the era of photographic proof? From this point on the film's crisscrossing, murky plot assumes the trappings of a government conspiracy tale. In the age of "The X-Files" and the mantra "trust no one," even our communications gizmology comes into question.

In the pre-credit sequence of *Enemy of the State* (Tony Scott, 1998), a congress-man who opposes a new surveillance bill that would make government snoop-ing easier (clipper-chip?) is murdered while walking his dog in a public park. The perpetrator is an ambitious National Security Agency official, Thomas Brian Reynolds (Jon Voight affecting an uncanny resemblance to Robert

McNamara) and his ex-Marine henchmen. The entire incident is ironically and unintentionally captured on video by a nature photographer who had set up his camcorder in a nearby trashcan to record birds. Zavitz, the nature photographer, realizing that he possesses brutally incriminating evidence, runs into an old friend, hotshot lawyer Robert Clayton Dean (an affable Will Smith), who is out Christmas shopping. The agitated and obviously discombobulated Zavitz drops the "hot" tape into Dean's shopping bag and quickly disappears. The damning evidence subsequently embroils Dean in a briskly paced, paranoid cover-up.

Due to the relatively novel distrust of the authority invested in military and political leaders in the wake of Vietnam and Watergate, conspiracy-paranoia pictures flourished during the seventies. This decade's Zeitgeist of collective fear and anxiety played well in such films as *The Parallax View* (Alan J. Pakula, 1974), *Chinatown* (Roman Polanski, 1974), *Three Days of the Condor* (Sydney Pollack, 1975), and *The Conversation*. This same context, however, is missing in *Enemy of the State*. While *Enemy* is a zippy, paranoid exploration of life in the wired nineties, there is less political urgency here beyond the Hitchcockian, "time-honored motif of a man wrongly accused, sinking deeper and deeper into a world where no one can be trusted."[42] Tony Scott's strategy for rejuvenating a genre that is politically less pertinent and frightening today is to stress the techno aspects of the security state.

Reynolds musters up the NSA's considerable arsenal of spy technics to embarrass, discredit, frame, and finally hunt down Robert Dean. The narrative, what little of it there is in this otherwise fast-paced action-thriller with Scott's nod to garden variety, attention-grabbing pyrotechnics, gives way to itchy, channel-changing edits—all of this privileging footage from spy satellites, surveillance cameras, listening devices, bugs, wiretaps, and database searches. Dean's watch, shoes, and clothing are all tagged with espionage-level stalking devices. He's fired from his firm, asked to leave his home by a suspicious wife who has been presented with incriminating, though doctored, photographs that link him to his former paramour, and his credit and banking cards have been cancelled. Blindsided by the misused power of the state, Dean aligns himself with ex-intelligence operative Brill (Gene Hackman with bristled hair and horn-rimmed nerd glasses), an anti-government uber-geek who apparently works as a

marginalized and decidedly paranoid information broker and high-tech eaves-
dropper.

Brill, in what initially seems a bit of hyperbole, briefs Dean on the government's
capacity to monitor citizens' phone calls. He claims that prodigious computers
housed at Fort Meade use "red flagging" software to pick out buzz terms like
"bomb," "president," and "Allah" in order to spy on our phone conversations.
The film also highlights military satellites able to zoom in on a car's license
plate. Snickering at what he believed to be this particular Hollywood exag-
geration, film critic Roger Ebert arrived at the following conclusion:

> Recently I was able to log onto a Web site (HYPERLINK http://
> www.terraserver.microsoft.com/) and see the roof of my house or yours. If
> Microsoft gives that away for free, I believe the National Security Agency can
> read license plates.[43]

Tony Scott is, for the most part, a director who films technology (jet fighters in
Top Gun, 1986; race cars in *Days of Thunder*, 1990; and nuclear submarines *Crim-
son Tide*, 1995). Arguably, though, *Enemy of the State* is more about the bureau-
crats and demagogues who abuse the powers of the state than it is about any
government conspiracy to control populations by putting them under the thumb
of a Big Brotherish apparatus. But this may be precisely the problem. There
is precious little psychological complexity or moral ambiguity in *Enemy*. By
demonizing these self-aggrandizing, one-dimensional villains, the technical
means they employ to secure absolute power and to cover their tracks becomes
much less the focus of investigation. We don't query the will to dream up, in-
vent, and deploy such powerful surveillance capabilities. Instead, they be-
come the amazing, celebrated devices of America's technological superiority
which, in the hands of a benevolent, altruistic government, serve only to se-
cure our global status and well being. Isn't it grand that we possess this stuff!
We are left with a juvenile glee uncritically touting computer-whiz kids and
state-of-the-art surveillance cowboys who, with today's technology, make any-
thing and everything possible.

Perhaps, as Mark Boal surmises, "the most troubling aspect of our surveillance
society is its transformation into spectacle."[44] The films mentioned in this paper,

the proliferation of cheaply produced reality-based television programming, popular song, and the almost universal acceptance of privacy eroding technologies as a trade-off for security, control, and predictability have all contributed to this sometimes violent carnivalesque atmosphere. Surveillance is treated as an aesthetic whereby telegenic tyranny becomes candid commerce. Like Eli Cross, Mike Max, or Christof (who "cues the sun" in *The Truman Show*), Big Brother has become an executive producer in the infotainment complex (Boal, Dec. 2, p. 3). We have been seduced by the pixilated cool of both watching and being watched. Our desire for Warhol's vision of fifteen minutes of fame has been reduced to comical slap fights on the "Jerry Springer Show" where everything is allowed to hang out in a very public way. The pseudo-therapy of these talk shows relishes a morbid interest in "deviancy" as entertainment and has proved insatiable in its drive to extract confession and surveil the human subject, collapsing all human interiors for public consumption.

From PBS's "An American Family" (in which the Loude family can be observed unraveling into the trauma of divorce) to the twentysomethings who live in front of a camera in MTV's "The Real World," we have entered the era of the "fishbowl life" (Marshall Blonsky) in which interiority seems compelling. The soft technologies of the interior (mind and body) and the hard technologies of the exterior (such as the surveillance apparatuses discussed in this essay) "are thrown together in collision and almost surgically cut each other up."[45] As has been argued here, seeing these technologies and practices over and over in our popular culture, and particularly in cinema, we witness a scorn for the boundaries between the public and the private, between the interior and the exterior. And in so doing popular culture has created the sense that surveillance is normal—"the aesthetic accompaniment to the end of privacy."[46] Films that feature surveillance as a vehicle for spectacle, suspense, and violence demonstrate how we are no longer affected or unsettled by the video gaze or bodily intrusion. They have become ordinary images.

Notes

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 3. Jean Baudrillard, "The Ecstasy of Communication," in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983), 126-34.

4. T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life: Paris in the Art of Manet and His Followers* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), 9.

5. See also J. P. Telotte, *A Distant Technology: Science Fiction Film and the Machine Age* (Hanover, MA: Wesleyan Univ. Press, 1999), 98.

6. Crary, 418.

7. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1977).

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9. Hans J. Wulff, "Suspense and the Influence of Cataphora on Viewers' Expectations," in *Suspense: Conceptualizations, Theoretical Analyses, and Empirical Explorations*.

10. Wulff, 1.

11. Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse: Narrative Structure in Fiction and Film* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1978), 45.

12. Chatman, 46.

13. Chatman, 49.

14. Garrett Stewart, "The 'Videology' of Science Fiction," in *Shadows of the Magic Lamp: Fantasy and Science Fiction in Film*, ed. George Slusser and Eric S. Rabkin (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1985), 161.

15. Telotte, 25.

16. Stewart, 167.

17. Telotte, 56.

18. Mark Boal, "The Surveillance Society: Part One," *Village Voice*, 6 October 1998, 39.

19. Boal, 39.

20. Gary Marx, "Electric Eye in the Sky: Some Reflections on the New Surveillance and Popular Culture," in *Computers, Surveillance, and Privacy,* ed. David Lyon and Elia Zureik (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1996), 200.

21. Boal, 41.

22. David Brin, *The Transparent Society: Will Technology Force Us to Choose Between Privacy and Freedom* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1998), 5.

23. See Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996).

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25. Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Los Angeles: Univ. of California Press, 1993), 115.

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27. Boal, 43.

28. Jerry Bruckheimer as quoted in Mark Boal, "The Surveillance Society: Part Two," *Village Voice*, 8 December 1998, 41.

29. A. Lawrence, "Waking Up With the Television On," *USC Spectator* 7:1 (1986): 1-4; Dixon (1995).

30. See Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16:3 (Autumn 1975): 6-18, and Parveen Adams, "'Father, Can't You See I'm Filming?'" in *Vision in context: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives on Sight*, ed. Teresa Brennan and Martin Jay (New York: Routledge, 1996): 204-16.

31. John Ellis, *Visible Fictions* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 47.

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33. Marx (1966), 194.

34. Marx (1966), 197.

35. Lisa Cartwright, *Screening the Body: Tracing Medicine's Visual Culture* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1995); John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1988).

36. Foucault, 204.

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39. Mike Davis, "Fortress Los Angeles: The Militarization of Urban Space," in *Variations on a Theme Park: The New American City and the End of Public Space*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: Noonday Press, 1992), 155.

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41. Davis (1992), 166.

42. Emmanuel Levy, "Enemy of the State," *Variety,* 16 November. Online at VARIETY.COM-Film Reviews.

43. Roger Ebert, "Enemy of the State," *Chicago Sun-Times*. Online at http://www.suntimes.com/ebert/ebert_reviews/1998.

44. Boal (December 8), 42.

45. Stephen Metcalf, "Autogeddon," in *Virtual Futures: Cyberotics, Technology and Post-Human Pragmatism* (New York: Routledge), 112.

46. Boal (December 8), 42.