# **A Gratuitous Exercise in Cinema Woo, Volume 1**

By Michael Farnum

Like a dream within a dream within a nightmare . . . I hope the following gratuitous exercise in cinema woo (and a minimal bit of TV, too) may provide some interesting insights as we explore some deep rabbit holes into the mostly unseen forces that rule this realm along with the human psyche and mass culture, particularly that of the American collective unconscious. Perhaps in the process we can begin to unravel the infinite labyrinth of fear-mongering and trauma-based mind-control we have been subjected to for eons, as if that’s even possible. If nothing else, I have compiled a thoughtful list of some of the most important truth-dropping films (and some cable TV) and hopefully connected them in a mostly logical, sometimes intuitive fashion for further analysis and consideration.

Aside from the obvious connections we find between and among the following films, many further interesting synchronicities will reveal themselves along the way. I further suggest that watching these films, in the recommended order or not, aside from the mere entertainment value, may offer some interesting insights and possible clues to further understanding the nature of our world and so-called reality, such as it is. And in the end, whatever it’s all about, it’s about using this knowledge to deprogram yourself, disconnect from the System as much as possible, strengthen your spiritual armor, and become the best scholar-warrior-sage manifestation of yourself in this illusory and ethereal human realm as your eternal soul continues to grow towards greater enlightenment, hopefully.

All Knowledge, All the Time . . .

(Note: Spoilers abound.)

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1. ***The Shining (1980):*** All creepy, winding mountain roads (See Going-To-The-Sun Road) of cinematic woo seem to lead back to *The Shining. My father took me to see the Shining when I was 12 years old, so this film holds a special place in my dark little heart*. In my opinion *The Shining* is the penultimate American horror story. *The Shining,* based on the 1977 novel by Stephen King, stars the iconic creepster, Jack Nicholson, and is produced/directed/co-written by the legendary truth-dropping cinema trickster, Stanley Kubrick. There are just as many theories out there attempting to break down and pinpoint the supposed meaning behind *The Shining* as there are about the JFK Assassination or even the meaning of life itself, which is undoubtedly a huge truth drop right there. One theory proposes that a significant portion of the film, based on some very subtle clues regarding continuity errors and some rather wonky object displacements among other things, is in fact the horror story that Jack’s mind is conjuring. Another suggests that Jack’s wife suffers from paranoid schizophrenia and that most if not all of the horror that abounds is a product of her psychotic mind.

Jack Torrance is a former teacher, a frustrated writer, a recovering alcoholic, and an abusive father who is hired as the newest winter caretaker to The Overlook Hotel, a historic, luxurious mountain getaway in the Colorado Rockies that shuts down each winter due to severe weather. In the midst of his job interview, the nonchalant Jack is undaunted by the revelation from his new employer that several years ago a former caretaker went berserk, killed his wife and 2 young daughters with an axe, and put a shotgun or rifle to his own head. Jack’s family will be joining him on his newfound seasonal gig: his submissive, affable wife, Wendy, “a confirmed ghost story and horror movie addict,” and young son, Danny, who is psychically gifted and talks to his imaginary friend, Tony, who lives in Danny’s mouth. The cinematic phenomenon of *The Shining* subtly explores myriad fascinating themes which include: addiction, isolation, the paranormal, the human psyche, psychopathology, sexism, American imperialism, symbology of Native American culture, the destruction of the nuclear family, genocide, and extermination, just to name a few.

Significant associated locations: Ahwahnee Hotel, Yosemite Park. Goose Island, Glacier National Park, Montana. Timberline Lodge, Mt. Hood, Oregon.

Recommended readings: *The Magic Mountain,* Thomas Mann.

*The Wolf at the Door: Stanley Kubrick, History and the Holocaust,* Geoffrey Cocks*.*

Geoffrey Cocks; James Diedrick; Glenn Perusek, eds. (2006). *Depth of Field: Stanley Kubrick, Film, and the Uses of History* (1st ed.). Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press.

Fun facts: Outtakes of the opening panorama shots were later used by Ridley Scott in the ending moments of *Bladerunner*, original cut, 1982.

Kubrick used [Penderecki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krzysztof_Penderecki)'s *The Awakening of Jacob* to accompany Jack Torrance's dream of killing his family and Danny's vision of past carnage in the hotel, a piece of music originally associated with the horrors of the Holocaust*. (Source: Wikipedia.)*

Truth-drop takeaways: Although they may not be what we think, ghosts/demons whether inner or outer manifestations or some combination therein, are probably real. The hidden confessions of Stanley Kubrick, allegedly.

1. ***Room 237 (2012):*** *Room 237* is a fascinating documentary directed by Rodney Ascher which focuses on 9 separate aspects of analysis of *The Shining* from different theorists. These themes include: *the cultural assimilation of Native Americans and American imperialism, a theory regarding Kubrick’s alleged cinematic confession of his involvement with fake moon landings, the mythic story of the Minotaur, the Holocaust and others.*

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*Fun facts:* At the time of the filming of *The Shining,* it was believed that the distance from the Earth to the moon was approximately 237, 000 miles.

In Stephen King’s novel, the notoriously haunted room is 217. Supposedly according to one story, Kubrick changed the number at the request of the hotel owners. But which hotel? The Stanley? The Timberline Lodge? The Ahwahnee?

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1. ***Doctor Sleep (2019***): A long-awaited sequel (by some) finally emerged almost 40 years after *The Shining.* Directed by Mike Flanagan (*Absentia, Oculus) Doctor Sleep* picks up with the life of young Danny Torrance and Wendy (post-Overlook Hotel trauma and the frozen demise of homicidal daddy Jack back at the creepy maze) who now reside safely in Florida. Young Danny is still haunted by the frequent manifestations of menacing ghosts in the bathtub, and presumably elsewhere. With the help of ghost Dick Halloran, Danny’s Shining mentor and the old Overlook cook, Danny learns to capture and contain these malevolent entities in nifty, little “psychic boxes,” something akin to spirit coffins of the mind.

The sequel also features a disturbing sub-plot whereby young, gifted children (who likewise possess “The Shine” or “The Steam”) are lured away from their families by an enchanting, black-hatted temptress. The poor, unsuspecting things are then tortured and literally eaten up by Rose the Hat (Rebecca Ferguson) and her caravan of creepy energy vampires (a cult of psychics known as The True Knot who crave The Steam to elongate their lives). The film flash-forwards to the troubled life of traumatized, grown-up Dan Torrance (Ewan McGregor) , now an aimless drifter and alcoholic who suppresses his shine with booze and other bad stuff. Eventually, sad Dan ends up in New Hampshire. Troubled Dan eventually lands a steady gig and an attic room in a boarding house with the help of a good Samaritan, his newfound AA sponsor. 8 years later, recovering alcoholic Dan back on his feet becomes a hospice orderly helping the dying to gracefully transition (with the aid of Azzie the death cat) and becomes telepathically aware of a young girl that possesses a powerful Shining. Young Abra has become dangerously psychically entangled with Rose Hat and The True Knot.

Recommended readings: *Doctor Sleep* (2013), Stephen King.

Not to be confused with *Doctor Sleep (Close Your Eyes)* (1991) by Nashville author Madison Smartt Bell, also recommended, the story of a cheeky hypnotist, an American expat in London and recovering heroin addict, who becomes entangled in a conspiracy of ruthless mobsters and missing children.

*Night People,* Paul Sinclair.

Fun facts: Danny Lloyd, who played the original Danny Torrance in *The Shining,* appeared in a cameo role in *Doctor Sleep.* Jack Nicholson was invited to make a cameo appearance but declined. (Source: Wikipedia.) In the scene where Dan meets with Dr. John, the office of Dr. John is nearly identical to the office of Overlook manager, Stuart Ullman where Jack was hired as winter caretaker nearly 40 years earlier.

Back at the old Overlook with Abra, Dan encounters a new manifestation of Lloyd the bartender (Henry Thomas) and other things. Dr. Sleep contains many subtle references to Stephen King’s *Dark Tower* universe (Tet Transit, Ka, Lamerk Industries), other King novels and the stories of other horror masters. *Doctor Sleep* opens in 1980, the same year *The Shining* opened in theaters.

Truth drops: Similar to *The Shining,* energy vampires are real.

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1. ***Eyes Wide Shut*** **(1999).** Produced, directed and co-written by Stanley Kubrick, *Eyes Wide Shut* follows the sexually frustrated misadventures of handsome, ambitious N.Y. doctor Dr. Bill Hartford (Tom Cruise) after his enchanting, moody and highly intuitive wife Alice (Nicole Kidman) during a fight reveals her lingering sexual fantasy of cheating with a dashing Naval officer. In the midst of an elite, high-society Christmas party, Dr. Bill helps wealthy patient Victor Ziegler out of a tricky jam, saving a gorgeous red-headed prostitute who OD’d naked in Ziegler’s fancy bathroom upstairs. Later, during an informal reunion with an old college pal, Med School drop-out and creepy pianoplayer Nic Nightingale, Bill is offered the rare opportunity to attend a cryptic Illuminati sex party at a secluded country mansion. *Eyes Wide Shut* deals with the dark social-psychological themes of sexual relations, social status, mind control, the shadow self, the mask of the psyche, soulless materialism, the dream world, enlightenment, Venetian mysticism, and initiation into elite society/occult knowledge/mystery schools, among others.

Notable locations: Greenwich Village, NYC. Mentmore Towers, Buckinghamshire, England.

Recommended reading: *Traumnovelle (Dream Story),* Arthur Schnitzler (1926).

*Esoteric Hollywood,* Jay Dyer

Fun facts: The [Guinness World Records](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guinness_World_Records) recognized *Eyes Wide Shut* as the longest constant movie shoot that ran over 15 months, including an unbroken shoot of 46 weeks.

The original cut featured a [scriptural recitation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shloka) from the [*Bhagavad Gita*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bhagavad_Gita), which composer Jocelyn Pook took from a previous Yogeswaran recording. As a result of various fringe [Hindu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hindu) groups protesting against the [scripture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scripture) being used, Warner Bros. issued a public apology,and hired the singer to record a similar track to replace the chant.

As Kidman was nervous about doing nude scenes, Kubrick said she could bring music to liven up. When Kidman brought a [Chris Isaak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Isaak) CD, Kubrick approved it, and incorporated Isaak's song "[Baby Did a Bad, Bad Thing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baby_Did_a_Bad,_Bad_Thing)" to both an early romantic embrace of Bill and Alice and the film's trailer (Source: Wikipedia.)

Producer/director Stanley Kubrick died just days after showing the “final cut” of the film to Warner Bros. executives, who were reportedly not happy with what they had just seen. (Source: Jay Weidner, Reality Check, YouTube.)

Truth-drop takeaways: Most ended up on the cutting-room floor, post-Stanley Kubrick’s death. The Illuminati is real. Mind control is everywhere.

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1. **8MM (1999)** Nicolas Cage portrays Tom Welles, a private eye contacted by the attorney of a wealthy widow. Mrs. Christian’s husband has recently died and in clearing out his things, in his safe she discovers a strange 8mm movie. The film appears to depict the murder of a young girl and Welles, compelled not to reproduce the film in any way, is hired to investigate the matter. The case leads Welles to the missing girl’s mother in North Carolina and the diary of the girl, Mary Ann, who went to Hollywood to become a star before she went missing. Before long, Welles is led into the seedy underbelly of Hollywood and the world of fetish pornography. There he encounters an adult video store creep called Max California (Joaquin Phoenix), a sleazy talent scout (James Gandolfini), an even sleazier porn director, Dino Velvet (Peter Stormare), and an infamous snuff film star known only as “The Machine.”

Notable locations: North Carolina. Hollywood. New York City.

Film notes: Written by Andrew Kevin Walker, the film may have been inspired in part by the 1979 film, *Hardcore.*

Recommended reading: *The Wicker Man,* 1978, Hardy & Shaffer

*Ritual,* David Pinner,

Truth-drop takeaway: Hollywood is sleazy and it is deeply intertwined in an untold underground network of sleaze.

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1. **Wicker Man (1973)** A prudish Scottish police officer (Edward Woodward) travels to a remote island in search of a missing girl the eccentric cabal of Celtic pagan locals claim never existed.

Film notes:The film was remade in 2006 and starred Nicholas Cage. The re-make was not well received by audiences or critics.

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1. **Conspiracy Theory (1997)** Mel Gibson stars as Jerry Fletcher, a NYC cab driver and confirmed conspiracy theorist. The pesky Fletcher relentlessly but innocently hounds/stalks Justice Department lawyer Alice (Julia Roberts) whom he once saved from a mugger. Alice is preoccupied with the investigation of her father’s murder. Jerry believes he is being followed by CIA agents and is proved right when, after following a shady pair of thugs into a building, they abduct him, inject him with LSD and torture him. Jerry manages to escape but is later recaptured and wakes up handcuffed to a hospital bed. When Alice visits him, he urges her to switch his chart with the criminal in the next bed, or else he will be dead by the morning. Reluctantly, she obliges, and in the morning, the criminal has died of a heart attack . . .

Notable locations: NYC. Greenwich, Connecticut.

Recommended reading: *A Culture of Conspiracy* (2003) Michael Barkun

DeHaven-Smith, L. (2013). *Conspiracy Theory in America.* University of TexasPress.

Goertzel, T. (1994). Belief in Conspiracy Theories. *Political Psychology,* 15(4), 731-742.

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Imhoff, R., & Bruder, M. (2014). Speaking (un-)truth to power: Conspiracy mentality as a generalised political attitude. *European Journal of Personality,* 28, 25–43.

Douglas, K., Sutton, R. & Cichoka, C. (2017). The Psychology of Conspiracy Theories. *Current*

*Directions in Psychological Science,* 26(6), 538-542.

Film notes: The film was a financial success although not critically acclaimed. Critic Roger Ebert critiqued the film as having some good parts but these were “buried beneath deadening layers of thriller cliches and an unconvincing love story . . .” (*Source: Wikipedia. Chicago Sun-Times, 1997)*

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1. **You Were Never Really Here (2018)** Joaquin Phoenix stars as Joe, a tough, sometimes brutal, traumatized veteran and fearless hired gun who dedicates his life to rescuing trafficked girls. Meanwhile, patiently taking care of his dementia-stricken mother, Joe is haunted by suicidal thoughts and traumatic memories of his childhood and his past in the military and FBI. Joe is hired by a senator to rescue his abducted daughter and destroy the human trafficking network by any means possible. While on his mission to rescue the girl, the senator (who also happens to be one of the pervs, presumably) is murdered and a pair of hired guns/rogue cops track them to the rendezvous site. The goons recapture the girl but Joe escapes and while on the run discovers that all of his contacts have been eliminated in a ruthless fashion. Avenging his mother’s murder, Joe discovers where to find the girl. While poignantly disposing of his mother’s body, Joe contemplates suicide again, but is finally resolved to recover the girl, who happens to be the Governor’s favorite.

Notable locations: NYC.

Recommended reading: *You Were Never Really Here* (2013), Jonathan Ames

Film notes: The Scottish writer/director/producer Lynne Ramsay also directed *Ratcatcher, Morvern Callar,* and *We Need To Talk About Kevin.*

*Truth-drops: Child trafficking is real. Its roots are deep and its reach is vast and wide.*

1. **Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Next Generation (1995)** The borderline campy and conspiratorial slasher remake stars Matthew McConaughey and Rene Zellweger. 4 teenagers on prom night exit the dance early and while driving and smoking pot collide with another motorist. While searching for help 3 of the teens encounter the office trailer of Darla, an insurance agent, who calls her tow truck boyfriend, Vilmer, for assistance. Unfortunately, Vilmer turns out to be a psycho, who shows up at the scene of the wreck and begins to create more mayhem as the confused teenagers become separated in the dark wilderness of Texas, soon to encounter the infamous Leatherface and his interesting Chainsaw Family. The film explores themes of conspiracy, terror/trauma, cross-dressing, and female empowerment. Critics have called the remake a cynical reimaging of the original*. (Source: Wikipedia.)*

Notable locations: Texas, near Austin.

Film notes: The film has been noted for its implementation of a [secret society](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secret_society) subplot driving Leatherface's family to terrorize civilians in order to provoke them to a level of [transcendence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transcendence_(religion)); in a retrospective interview, writer/director Kim Henkel confirmed that the basis of the subplot was influenced by theories surrounding the [Illuminati](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illuminati).

Truth-drops: Continuing the public’s morbid fascination with serial killers. Blood sacrifice is real.

1. **Killer Joe (2011**) A Southern Goth crime drama directed by William Friedkin (*French Connection, The Exorcist, To Live and Die in LA*) and starringMatthew McConoughy, *Killer Joe* follows the story of Joe, A West Dallas policeman who moonlights as a contract killer. A young drug dealer, desperate to pay off his own drug debt, hires Joe to kill his mama, who stole his cocaine money, in order to collect the life insurance.

Notable location: Texas

1. **True Detective (HBO): Season One (2014**). *True Detective* stars Matthew McConoughy as Louisiana State Police Homicide Detective Rustin “Rust” Cohle and Woody Harrelson as his partner, Marty Hart. Aloof and philosophical, a clear outsider even within his own department as a recent transfer from Texas, the mercurial Rust, a self-avowed cynic, appears to be adept in occult wisdom and human psychology. Aside from being oddly bookish, Rust is no slouch on the streets, demonstrating adept-level martial arts and street-fighting skills having worked past assignments deep undercover in Vice. Hart portrays the image of a light-hearted, down-to-earth family man but likewise holds his share of dark secrets. At the onset of the series, Rust and Hart are being interviewed, separately, by a pair of police interrogators regarding a murder investigation they worked several years earlier. A recent murder bears odd similarities to a notorious old case of theirs, suggesting the killer may still be at large. The detectives were assigned to investigate the murder of prostitute Dora Lange, whose corpse has been discovered in a bayou woods, laid out in a ritual-style prayer pose, attached with deer antlers and surrounded by a latticework of Cajun bird or soul traps. *True Detective* explores myriad dark themes including existentialism, philosophical pessimism, pagan occultism, child trafficking, police corruption, conspiracy, the dichotomy of religion and rationalism, gender relations, sexual desire, and the duality of good and evil in man.

Notable locations: Louisiana. Jefferson Parish.

Fun facts: Created by Nic Pizzolatto, the writer was inspired by *The Sopranos, The* *Wire,* and *Deadwood.*

Recommended reading: *The King in Yellow* (1895) Robert W Chambers. The works of Thomas Ligotti (*The Conspiracy against the Human Race).*

*Galveston,* Nic Pizzolatto.

Truth drops: *Time is an endless circle, we just keep repeating the same old things, over and over again. There’s too much evil out there. You’re never going to get it all. You can only get yours, if you’re lucky.*

1. **The Element of Crime (1984**) A detective named Fisher has become an ex-pat living in Cairo, Egypt and undergoes hypnosis to recall his last case. The Europe of his dream recall is a dark, decaying dystopia where he was pursuing an elusive killer called the “Lotto Murderer” who strangled and mutilated young girls who sold lottery tickets. He attempts to track the killer utilizing the methods outlined in a book called, *The Element of Crime,* written by Fisher’s disgraced mentor. He is joined in the case by a prostitute named Kim who has had a child with the killer. The controversial method of tracking a killer involves melding with the killer’s mind.

Film notes: Directed by Lars Von Trier, this is the first in his *Europa* trilogy (*Epidemic, Europa).* The film employs the [film noir](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_noir) conventions of monochrome footage, apparently constant night, and the frequent presence of water, such as rain and rivers. The film is shot almost entirely in [sodium light](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sodium_light) resulting in images reminiscent of [sepia tone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sepia_tone), though with a more intense yellow.

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1. **Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me (1992***) If you haven’t seen at least Season One of Twin Peaks, do that first.* A prequel to the television series created by Mark Frost and David Lynch, the film was co-written by Lynch and follows the investigation into the murder of Teresa Banks and the final days of now infamous future victim, Laura Palmer, a gorgeous and popular but troubled high school student in the small town of Twin Peaks, Washington.

[FBI](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Bureau_of_Investigation) Regional Bureau Chief [Gordon Cole](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Twin_Peaks_characters#Gordon_Cole) (Lynch) dispatches agents [Chester Desmond](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Twin_Peaks_characters#Chester_Desmond) (Chris Isaak) and [Sam Stanley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Twin_Peaks_characters#FBI_Special_Agent_Sam_Stanley) (Kiefer Sutherland) to investigate the murder of Banks, a teenage drifter and sex worker in the town of Deer Meadow, Washington. The pair are informed of their new assignment through a woman named Lil, who wears an artificial blue rose on her lapel. Desmond and Stanley view Teresa's body in the morgue. They notice that a ring is missing from her finger and a small piece of paper with the letter "T" printed on it has been inserted under one of her fingernails. The agents arrange for Teresa's body to be taken to Portland. Later, Desmond finds Teresa's missing ring under a trailer. As he reaches out to it, he is disappeared by an unseen force.

At FBI headquarters in [Philadelphia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philadelphia), Cole and Agents [Dale Cooper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dale_Cooper) (Kyle McLachland) and [Albert Rosenfield](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Twin_Peaks_characters#Albert_Rosenfield) (Miguel Ferrer) experience a brief vision of their long-lost colleague Agent [Phillip Jeffries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Twin_Peaks_characters#Phillip_Jeffries) (David Bowie). He tells them about a meeting he witnessed involving several mysterious spirits—[The Man from Another Place](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Man_from_Another_Place), [Killer BOB](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Killer_BOB), Mrs. Chalfont and her grandson. Agent Cooper is sent to Deer Meadow to investigate Desmond's disappearance, but finds no answers.

One year later in Twin Peaks, high school homecoming queen [Laura Palmer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Laura_Palmer) and her best friend [Donna Hayward](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Twin_Peaks_characters#Donna_Hayward) attend school. Laura is addicted to [cocaine](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cocaine) and is cheating on her boyfriend [Bobby Briggs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Twin_Peaks_characters#Bobby_Briggs) with biker [James Hurley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Twin_Peaks_characters#James_Hurley). Laura discovers that pages are missing from her secret diary, and gives the rest of the diary to her [agoraphobic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agoraphobic) friend [Harold Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Twin_Peaks_characters#Harold_Smith).

Film notes: Most of the television cast reprised their roles for the film, though the majority of their scenes were cut and restored in [*Twin Peaks: The Missing Pieces*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twin_Peaks:_The_Missing_Pieces). (*Source: Wikipedia.)*

1. **Trance (2013)** An elite art auctioneer (James McAvoy)becomes an accessory to the theft of a famous painting, Francisco Goya’s 1798 *Witches in the Air.* In the midst of an attack on the auction by a gang of thieves, Simon gets a blow in the head from the gang leader, Franck (Vincent Cassel), and upon waking suffers amnesia. When Franck discovers that the stolen package is empty and he has been duped, the gang ransacks Simon’s car and home and, finding nothing, abduct Simon to locate the painting they are after. Following an unsuccessful torture of Simon as he has no memory of where he hid the painting, Franck decides to compel Simon to hire a hypnotist. Simon’s random choice happens to be the attractive Elizabeth Lamb (Rosario Dawson). After Elizabeth exposes the gang’s plan, she demands a partnership in the caper.

Notable locations:

Film notes: [Rembrandt's](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rembrandt) [*Storm on the Sea of Galilee*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Storm_on_the_Sea_of_Galilee) (1633), is a painting Simon uses to introduce and frame the film, drawing attention to the central self-portrait of Rembrandt, who calmly stares out at the viewer while chaos rages around him.

After filming wrapped up, the film was placed on hold in order for director Danny Boyle (*Trainspotting,* *28 Days Later)* to work on the [opening ceremony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Summer_Olympics_opening_ceremony) of the [2012 Summer Olympics](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2012_Summer_Olympics) in London.



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1. **Vanilla Sky (2001)** Revisiting the familiar scenario of a handsome elite narcissistic Tom Cruise character in the big city, *Vanilla Sky* explores a multitude of psychological and esoteric themes including karma, morality, simulated reality, multiple timelines, lucid dreaming, AI, reincarnation, mortality and death. Cruise plays David Aames, a devil-may-care publishing heir and shameless playboy who instantly falls in love with free-spirited Sofia (Penelope Cruz) only to be humbled by his sudden disfiguration following a car crash at the hands of his disgruntled and suicidal lover (Cameron Diaz). The *Vanilla Sky* theme is borrowed from the Claude Monet painting, *The Seine at Argenteuli.* Vanilla Sky is also the name of an Italian pop-punk band, a Georgian airline, the street name for the designer drug, Bath Salts, and a term in photography referring to the practice of hiding background features of a photograph using exposure*. (Source: Wikipedia.)*

Notable locations: Times Square, The World Trade Center.

Fun facts: Scored by Nancy Wilson (Heart), then wife of Director Cameron Crowe, the eclectic taste of the soundtrack has been said to be one of the reasons the movie has become a cult classic. The soundtrack featured select songs from the likes of Radiohead, Sigur Ros, R.E.M., the Chemical Brothers, Peter Gabriel, U2, Nirvana, Paul McCartney, Bob Dylan, the Rolling Stones and many others. (Source: Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Music\_from\_Vanilla\_Sky )

Truth-drops: Undecided. *Don’t be an ass, it’s bad karma.* Time is not linear.

1. **Open Your Eyes** **(1997).** One cannot see *Vanilla Sky* without watching its inspiration, *Abre los Ojos,* the original Spanish version by Alejandro Amenabar and starring Penelope Cruz in the same role.

Recommended reading: Pedro Calderon’s *Life is a Dream (La vida es Sueno,* 1635).

Fun fact: Amenabar also produced/directed/co-wrote *The Others (2001),* starring Nicole Kidman.

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1. **Agora** **(2009).** Written/directed by Amenabar, Agora tells the story of

Hypatia of Alexandria, mathematician, Hellenistic Neoplatonist philosopher and astronomer in late 4th-century [Roman Egypt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egypt_(Roman_province)), who investigated the flaws of the [geocentric](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geocentric) [Ptolemaic system](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ptolemaic_system) and the [heliocentric](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heliocentrism) model that challenges it. The story uses [historical fiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_fiction) to highlight the [relationship between religion and science](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Relationship_between_religion_and_science) at the time amidst the [decline of Greco-Roman polytheism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decline_of_Greco-Roman_polytheism) and the [Christianization of the Roman Empire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianization_of_the_Roman_Empire). The title of the film takes its name from the [*agora*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agora), a public gathering place in ancient Greece, similar to the Roman [*forum*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Forum_(Roman)).

Towards the end of her life, Hypatia advised [Orestes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orestes_(prefect)), the [Roman prefect of Alexandria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_governors_of_Roman_Egypt), who was in the midst of a political feud with [Cyril](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyril_of_Alexandria), the [bishop of Alexandria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patriarch_of_Alexandria). Rumors spread accusing her of preventing Orestes from reconciling with Cyril and, in March 415 AD, she was murdered by a mob of Christians led by a [lector](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reader_(liturgy)) named Peter.

Hypatia's murder shocked the empire and transformed her into a "[martyr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martyr) for philosophy", leading future Neoplatonists such as [Damascius](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Damascius" \o "Damascius) to become increasingly fervent in their [opposition to Christianity](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Criticism_of_Christianity). (Source: Wikipedia)

Notable locations: The Island of Malta. The Library of Alexandria.

Recommended reading: *Hypatia, New Foes with an Old Face,* Charles Kingsley, 1853.

Majumdar, Deepa (September 2015), *"Review of The Wisdom of Hypatia", The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition,****9****(2): 261–265,*[*doi*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doi_(identifier))*:*[*10.1163/18725473-12341327*](https://doi.org/10.1163%2F18725473-12341327)

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1. **Only Lovers Left Alive** (2013) is a dark, sardonic and witty comedy, written and directed by independent film creator Jim Jarmusch. Adam and Eve are vampires and have been for many centuries. They are deeply in love but strangely live far apart, on separate continents. Once a contemporary of Lord Byron and Mary Shelley and still a famous musician, Adam (Tom Hiddleston) occupies an aging, overcluttered and badly overrun Victorian in a largely abandoned hood in post-industrial Detroit, collects vintage guitars procured via his young human fan/minion, and despises the mindless modern-day humans he calls “zombies.” A mysterious recluse and multi-talented music virtuoso, his latest trippy recordings have somehow gotten out to the local underground club scene are all the rage amongst the local “zombie music kids.” Having acquired much handy scientific knowledge over the years, Adam has built contraptions to power his home and a vintage sports car with technology originally pioneered by [Nikola Tesla](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nikola_Tesla). The supernaturally intuitive Eve (Tilda Swinton) lives half a world away, in a small village in Tangiers, nearby her aging, centuries-old vampire mentor, Christopher Marlowe (John Hurt), the famous Victorian poet (who wrote some of Shakespeare’s best works and faked his death in 1593.)

Now living in the 20th-century, these vampires face a hugely inconvenient

problem: the general contamination of the human blood supply. Adam is compelled

to visit a local blood bank late at night disguised as “Dr. Faust” to procure his

precious O-neg from the greedy “Dr. Watson.” Isolated, disconnected and

disgusted with the absurdities of modern-day life, Adam has become suicidal and

Eve reluctantly makes the trans-continental journey to liven his spirits. Blissfully

reunited, the two spend their nights reflecting on their storied shared history,

making sultry vampire love, cruising the empty streets of Detroit, dancing and

listening to rare vintage music and playing chess. Their idyll is soon shattered by the

arrival of Eve's troublesome younger sister, Ava, the unapologetic and destructive

wastrel from L.A.

Notable locations: Detroit, MI. Tangiers, North Africa.

Recommended reading: *The Nightmare Stacks* (2016), Charles Stross.

*The Diaries of Adam and Eve*, Mark Twain.

*Fun facts: More referenced literature:*

Among the books Eve reads and packs for her trip to Detroit are:

* *Los Pequeños Poemas* by [Ramón de Campoamor y Campoosorio](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ram%C3%B3n_de_Campoamor_y_Campoosorio)
* [*Endgame*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Endgame_(play)) by [Samuel Beckett](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Beckett)
* [*Infinite Jest*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infinite_Jest) by [David Foster Wallace](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Foster_Wallace)
* [*Don Quixote*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Quixote) by [Miguel de Cervantes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miguel_de_Cervantes)
* [*The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Temple_of_the_Golden_Pavilion) by [Yukio Mishima](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yukio_Mishima)
* [*The Bastard of Istanbul*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Bastard_of_Istanbul) by [Elif Şafak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elif_%C5%9Eafak" \o "Elif Şafak)
* [*The Adventures of Captain Hatteras*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Adventures_of_Captain_Hatteras) by [Jules Verne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jules_Verne)
* [*Basquiat*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Michel_Basquiat) edited by Sam Keller and Dieter Buchhart
* [*Orlando Furioso*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orlando_Furioso) by [Ludovico Ariosto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ludovico_Ariosto)
* *Zwischen zwei Revolutionen* by [Ernst Heilborn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ernst_Heilborn)
* [*The Metamorphosis*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Metamorphosis) by [Franz Kafka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Kafka)
* "Man of Paper", from *روايات عبير*by [Carole Mortimer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carole_Mortimer)

and a picture of [Lorenzo Ghiberti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lorenzo_Ghiberti)'s "La Creazione di Adamo e di Eva" from his *Porta del Paradiso.* Referring to the story that [Christopher Marlowe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Marlowe) may have faked his death and then written under the pseudonym of William Shakespeare, Marlow tells Eve that Adam would have been the perfect inspiration for his [*Hamlet*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamlet)*.*

Although Adam frequently mentions that he “has no heroes,” Eve discovers opposite his bed the wall is covered with myriad pictures of famous personalities:

* musicians: [Henry Purcell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Purcell), [Johann Sebastian Bach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Sebastian_Bach), [Franz Schubert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Schubert), [Gustav Mahler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gustav_Mahler), [Charley Patton,](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charley_Patton)  [Billie Holiday](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Billie_Holiday), [Hank Williams](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hank_Williams), [Bo Diddley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bo_Diddley), [Thelonious Monk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thelonious_Monk), [John Coltrane](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Coltrane), [Patti Smith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Patti_Smith) and [Chrissie Hynde](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chrissie_Hynde).
  + among them the Jarmusch associates [Tom Waits](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Waits) ([*Down by Law*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Down_by_Law_(film)), [*Night on Earth*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_on_Earth), [*Mystery Train*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mystery_Train), [*Coffee and Cigarettes*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coffee_and_Cigarettes), and [The Dead Don't Die](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dead_Don%27t_Die_(2019_film))), [Iggy Pop](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iggy_Pop) ([*Dead Man*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dead_Man), *Coffee and Cigarettes*, *The Dead Don't Die*), [Joe Strummer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Strummer) (*Mystery Train*), [RZA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/RZA) ([*Ghost Dog*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_Dog:_The_Way_of_the_Samurai), *Coffee and Cigarettes*, and *The Dead Don't Die*) and [Neil Young](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil_Young) (*Dead Man*)
* writers: [William Blake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Blake) (mentioned in *Dead Man*), Christopher Marlowe, Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley, [Mary Wollstonecraft](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_Wollstonecraft), [John Keats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Keats), [Jane Austen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jane_Austen), [Edgar Allan Poe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edgar_Allan_Poe), [Emily Dickinson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emily_Dickinson), [Charles Baudelaire](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Baudelaire), [Oscar Wilde](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oscar_Wilde), [Franz Kafka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Kafka), [Mark Twain](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mark_Twain), [Samuel Beckett](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samuel_Beckett) and [William S. Burroughs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_S._Burroughs)
* others: [Isaac Newton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Isaac_Newton), Nikola Tesla (the first which can be seen), Nicholas Ray, [Luis Buñuel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luis_Bu%C3%B1uel), [Rodney Dangerfield](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rodney_Dangerfield), [Buster Keaton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Buster_Keaton), [Rumi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rumi), [Sitting Bull](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sitting_Bull), [Geronimo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geronimo), [Harpo Marx](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harpo_Marx), [Jean-Michel Basquiat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Michel_Basquiat) and [Marcel Duchamp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcel_Duchamp).  *(Source: Wikipedia.)*

Truth drops: Too many to name. Free energy is real. Shakespeare was fake. People are food, useful idiots or zombies, metaphorical or otherwise.

**A person wearing glasses

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1. **Natural Born Killers (1994)** Love them or hate them,Mickey (Woody Harrelson) and Mallory (Juliette Lewis) are America’s most beloved serial killers whose gratuitous spree of murder and mayhem across the country is shamelessly sensationalized by the pandering, amoral, blood-thirsty media. Directed by Oliver Stone, *Natural Born Killers* tells the graphic tale of the destruction of the nuclear family, the obliteration of morality in general and the traumatized young lovers who unwittingly become celebrity mass murderers. Arliss Howard (uncredited) is Mickey and Mallory’s guardian angel/demon. Rodney Dangerfield plays Mallory’s sexually abusive, scumbag father. A violent psychopath himself, Tom Sizemore is the corrupt, obsessive cop on a mission to destroy them. Tommy Lee Jones portrays the overwhelmed authoritarian prison warden who appears in the last act of the film. Robert Downey Jr. is the hyper, sycophantic Australian? media personality and host of *American Maniacs* riding Mickey and Mallory’s bloody coattails to fleeting fame right to the end--even as the cheeky bloke is taken hostage during a prison interview and later viciously murdered to a national audience.

Truth drop takeaways: Do the mass media and violence perpetually reinforce each other? *Duh.*

Notable locations: Rio Grande Gorge Bridge, Taos N.M. Stateville Correctional Center, Joliet, IL.

Fun facts: During pre-production of the film all of the following events took place: *the O.J. Simpson trial, the Snoop Dogg trial, the Menendez Bros. case, the Tonya Harding/Nancy Kerrigan incident, the Rodney King riots and the Branch Davidian tragedy.*

During filming of the prison scenes, Stone would play African tribal music full blast to keep the frenetic energy up. Many of the extras were inmates.

The film features a fascinating soundtrack produced by Trent Reznor which includes Leonard Cohen’s prophetic “The Future*.*”  *(Source: Wikipedia.)*

*“Every film has deleted scenes, but sometimes an actor's entire performance is left on the cutting room floor; such was the case with Ashley Judd and Denis Leary in*Natural Born Killers*. Judd filmed a courtroom scene as the sole survivor of a sorority house massacre. Mickey cross-examines her and ends the questioning by stabbing her to death. Leary filmed a monologue as a prisoner in his classic manic manner of speaking.”* (*Source:* [*https://screenrant.com/natural-born-killers-behind-scenes-secrets/*](https://screenrant.com/natural-born-killers-behind-scenes-secrets/)*)*

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1. **Joker (2019**) Joaquin Phoenix stars as Arthur Fleck, a seriously down-on-his-luck party clown and aspiring comedian who lives with his neurotic, delusional, shut-in mother in the filthy, crime-infested urban wasteland of Gotham City. Penny, a former maid of elite billionaire Bruce Wayne, is adamant that she and Wayne were lovers years ago, and that Arthur is Wayne’s illegitimate son “who owes them”. Arthur is a terrible comedian, painfully awkward in social situations and suffers from an odd nervous condition which causes him to laugh uncontrollably under stress. After he is attacked by delinquents on the street, a creepy co-worker gives Arthur a gun, which he clumsily drops attempting to entertain children in a hospital ward, resulting in his firing from the job. One night on the subway, sad Arthur still in clown make-up is accosted by a trio of drunken a-hole businessmen from Wayne Enterprises. He shoots 2 of them and stalks the third onto the subway platform, shooting him in cold blood as well. And thus begins Arthur’s slow descent into madness and disassociation, as well as his subsequent rise to infamy and empowerment through his newfound nihilistic criminal alter-ego. Joker explores the themes of class warfare, good and evil, the shadow self, mental illness particularly trauma/madness/dissociation, urban decay, and the decline of western civilization in general.

Notable location: Gotham City. NYC.

Film notes: Written by Philips and Silver, the script draws inspirations from *Batman: The Killing Joke (*1988), *Taxi Driver* (1976), *The King of Comedy* (1983). *The Hangover* trilogy, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* (1975), *Serpico* (1973), *The Man Who Laughs* (1928) and many others. (*Source: Wikipedia)*

1. **Zombieland (2009)** *Zombieland* is the story of a small, ragtag band of zombie apocalypse survivors and their harrowing, sometimes comical misadventures. The protagonist is Columbus, a geeky college kid (Jesse Eisenberg), who encounters a trio of strangers on his cross-country trek seeking sanctuary from the mad-cow-infected zombie hordes. Woody Harrelson is the blunt loner, Tallahassee, an aggressive zombie killer addicted to Twinkies. Wichita (Emma Stone) and Little Rock (Abigail Breslin) are young sisters/con artists. The group also encounters the real Bill Murray. Like so many others, all roads in Zombieland lead to California and the supposedly zombie-free amusement park, Pacific Playland*. “A running gag (and a central theme throughout the film) is the list of rules Columbus comes up with for surviving in the zombie-infested world. By the end of the film, his list has 33 rules . . .” (Source: Wikipedia.)*

Locations: Netherworld Haunted House, Atlanta GA.

Truth drops: Possible predictive programming-of zombie apocalypse, real or metaphorical. The zombie apocalypse is real: it’s a metaphor for the tech-Borg mind controlling modern society.

1. **World War Z (2013)** In a freshly apocalyptic world, Brad Pitt stars as Gerry Lane, a former UN agent traveling the world for clues to stop the global zombie pandemic. Lane is stuck with his wife and two young daughters in heavy Philadelphia traffic when the city becomes overrun by a zombie horde. The family manages to escape to New Jersey, taking refuge in an apartment with a kind couple and their young son. Sadly their new hosts become infected and the family is forced to flee with the newly parentless Tommy. Meanwhile, an old UN buddy of Lane’s sends a rescue helicopter to extract the family to a U.S. Navy vessel located safely in the Atlantic. As scientists are working feverishly on a vaccine, Lane is informed he is the best available man to locate the source of the zombie plague and his family’s safe residence on the ship depends on the success of his mission.

Notable locations: Philadelphia. New Jersey. South Korea. Jerusalem. Cardiff, Wales. Nova Scotia. Malta. *(Source: Wikipedia.)*

A group of people posing for a photo

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**23) The Walking Dead, Season 1 (2010**) After an accident riding patrol with his partner, Shane**,** King County, GA Sheriff’s Deputy, Rick Grimes (Andrew Lincoln) wakes up from a coma to find the hospital eerily abandoned. While exploring the hospital he soon has his first of countless encounters with the relentless, flesh-eating zombies he will soon come to dub as “Walkers.” Escaping the hospital, Rick befriends the traumatized Morgan Jones as he sets out to find his wife, Lori, and son, Carl and discover the origins of the zombie virus. The primary characters of the first season include:  [Amy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_(The_Walking_Dead)), [Shane](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shane_Walsh_(The_Walking_Dead)), [Glenn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glenn_Rhee), [Carl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Grimes), [Lori](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lori_Grimes), [Rick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rick_Grimes), [Dale](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dale_Horvath), and [Andrea](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Andrea_(The_Walking_Dead)).

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24. **No Country For Old Men (2007)**

Based on the 2005 novel by Cormac McCarthy (*Blood Meridian, The Road),* this dark, neo-Western crime thriller, *No Country For Old Men*[[1]](#footnote-1)stars Javier Bardem as the lone, seemingly indestructible, cold-blooded assassin (Chigurh) who lives by a very odd moral code; Woody Harrelson, another expert tracker and hired ope rative; Josh Brolin as a Texas hunter (Llewelyn Moss) who comes across a shit-ton of drug money; and Tommie Lee Jones, a philosophical, tired, and probably depressed Sheriff on the verge of retirement, cautiously tracking them all. This very existentialist film explores the themes of fate, conscience, synchronicities and circumstance, as directors Joel and Ethan Coen had likewise done in *Blood Simple* (*1984), Raising Arizona (1987)* and *Fargo (1996).* Later on in the film, Sheriff Bell shares two dreams with his wife. In the first*, he lost some money his father had given him.* In the next, *he and his father were riding through a snowy mountain pass; his father had gone ahead to make a fire in the darkness and wait for Bell . . .*

Notable locations: New Mexico and Texas.

**25. Lost Highway (1997)** Here is another murky, neo-noir from David Lynch starring Bill Pullman as Fred, an LA musician who begins receiving mysterious VCR tapes of himself and his wife in their home. The police offer no assistance. At a party, a mysterious man (Robert Blake) who Fred saw in his dreams approaches Fred, claiming they have met before. The man strangely claims that he is at Fred’s house at this very moment and even answers the phone when Fred calls home. Understandably freaked out, Fred leaves. The final tape shows Fred standing over the dismembered body of his wife. Fred is subsequently convicted of his wife’s murder. During a routine cell check, a guard finds that Fred has been strangely replaced by another man, a young mechanic named Pete. Pete is released to the care of his parents. Police follow him to learn more about Pete. Pete becomes involved with a gangster and has an affair with the gangster’s femme fatale mistress and further strangeness ensues.



**26. Mulholland Drive (2001)** David Lynch’s masterful neo-noir mystery thriller, *Mulholland Drive* [[2]](#footnote-2) tells the surreal and twisted tale of an aspiring, wide-eyed Hollywood actress (Naomi Watts) and her strange encounter with a dark, disturbed woman (Laura Elena Harirng) suffering amnesia after surviving a terrible accident. In true Lynchian style, there are multiple non-linear timelines involved here including, to name a few: a troubled man who experiences recurring nightmares; an ambitious director whose film is commandeered by mobsters and his encounters with a strange cowboy; a deeply depressed actress on the skids named Diane; and a macabre, illusory theatre called *Club Silencio. What is the dream or fantasy, and what is real? It’s all up to you, according to Lynch.*

Notable locations: Hollywood, Los Angeles.

Film notes:A shadowy figure named Mr. Roque, who seems to control film studios, is portrayed by [dwarf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dwarfism) actor [Michael J. Anderson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_J._Anderson) (also from [*Twin Peaks*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Twin_Peaks)). Anderson, who has only two lines and is seated in an enormous wooden wheelchair, was fitted with oversized foam [prosthetic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prosthesis) arms and legs in order to portray his head as abnormally small. (*Source: Wikipedia.)*

**27. Call for Dreams (2018)** In Ran Slavin’s *Call for Dreams,*the main character, Eko, is a dreamy, nocturnal dweller who lives in rainy, neon-lit Tokyo and places ads in the paper soliciting narratives of the dreams of others. Eko offers a unique “dream re-enactment” service. One client dreams of shooting a woman 4 times. Another dreams of being stuck on a smoky airplane. “Eko is submissive and at the same time leads the game, a sort of mistress of illusion, a prostitute of dreams.” (Source: AMP: Asian Movie Pulse.

<https://asianmoviepulse.com/2019/03/film-review-call-for-dreams-2018-by-ran-slavin/#:~:text=Filmed%20seamlessly%20in%20Tokyo%20and%20Tel%20Aviv%2C%20%E2%80%9CCall,it%2C%20edited%20and%20populated%20it%20with%20dreamy%20effects>.)

As the narrative becomes more and more elusive, Eko finds herself in the midst of a murder investigation faraway in Tel Aviv.

Notable locations: Tokyo, Japan. Tel Avis, Israel.

**28. Memento (2002).** Christopher Nolan’s neo-noir thriller stars Guy Pearce as a man with anterograde amnesia, compelled to use a system of Polaroids and tattoos to remind himself of important things. We learn that the man, a former insurance investigator named Leonard, is searching for his wife’s killer, a “John G” and that the attack is what inflicted this condition upon him. The film begins with the Polaroid of a dead man and the sequence of events plays backwards. The film is presented as two different sequences of scenes interspersed during the film: a series in [black-and-white](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black-and-white) that is shown chronologically, and a series of color sequences shown in reverse order (simulating for the audience the mental state of the protagonist). The two sequences meet at the end of the film, producing one complete and cohesive narrative. *(Source: Wikipedia.)*

Notable locations: Los Angeles.

1. **Inherent Vice (2014)** Joaquin Phoenix plays Larry “Doc” Sportello, a lovably inept stoner hippie private eye in 1970. One day an ex-girlfriend, Shasta, visits Doc and tells him about her new lover, Mickey, a real estate developer whose wife, along with her lover, want to commit Mickey to an insane asylum. She solicits Doc’s help to prevent this from happening. Doc meets with a member of the [Black Guerrilla Family](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Guerrilla_Family), Tariq, who hires him to find Glen Charlock, a member of the [Aryan Brotherhood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aryan_Brotherhood) he met in jail, who owes him money and is one of Wolfmann's bodyguards. Doc visits Mickey's Channel View Estates project, entering the only business in the developing strip mall, a [massage parlor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Massage_parlor), where he meets employee, Jade. As he searches the premises for Charlock, he is hit with a baseball bat and collapses. Doc wakes outside, lying next to Charlock's dead body and surrounded by policemen. Interrogated by [LAPD](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Los_Angeles_Police_Department) Detective Christian F. "Bigfoot" Bjornsen (Josh Brolin), he learns that Wolfmann has disappeared.

Notable locations: LA

Film notes: Exploring LA’s eclectic criminal underground, *Inherent Vice* is the first Thomas Pynchon novel to be adapted to the big screen. Shooting permits in California covered a [San Fernando Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/San_Fernando_Valley) warehouse, a storefront on [Slauson Boulevard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slauson_Avenue), driving shots in the [Canoga Park](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Canoga_Park,_Los_Angeles) area, driving shots in canyon roads above [Malibu](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malibu,_California) and a warehouse in [Chinatown](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinatown,_Los_Angeles). In June 2013, filming also took place in [Pasadena](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pasadena,_California), and aboard the tall ship [*American Pride*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/American_Pride_(schooner)) located in [Long Beach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Long_Beach,_California).

30. **Harper (1966)** stars Paul Newman as L.A. private eye, Lew Harper, a cheeky loner about to sign his divorce papers who is given a new case by a former D.A. turned rich, private lawyer, Graves. Notoriously unstable and egotistical, multi-millionaire Ralph Sampson has gone missing after flying from Vegas to L.A. Sampson’s wife is the disabled but tough Elaine (Lauren Becall), stepmother to Sampson’s seductive young daughter, Miranda, who hate each other. Taggert (Robert Wagner), Sampson’s private driver is another suspect. The case leads Harper to a convoluted series of events and characters: an aging alcoholic starlet; the mysterious “Mr. Troy;” a sexy lounge singer; a bogus holy man and his Temple in the Clouds cult, and an underground smuggling operation.

Recommended reading: *The Moving Target* (1949), Ross McDonald.

*The Maltese Falcon*, Dashiell Hammett.

Film notes: In 1975, Newman reprised the role in [*The Drowning Pool*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Drowning_Pool_(film))*. (Source: Wikipedia.)*

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**31. Chinatown (1974)** Roman Polanski’s Chinatown stars Jack Nicholson as L.A. private eye J.J. “Jake” Gittes working the city in 1937. A new client, Evelyn, hires Gittes to follow her husband, Mulwray, the chief engineer at the LA Department of Power and Water. Jake tails the man, overhears a conversation regarding an unsafe new reservoir in the works, and photographs him with another woman. The pictures are published in the paper the next day and back in his office, Jake is confronted by a woman who claims to be the real Evelyn Mulwray (Faye Dunaway) and threatens to sue him. Jake knows he was set up but before he can talk to Mulwray, he finds out from Lt Escobar of the LAPD that the man was found drowned in a reservoir. Under the retainer of Mrs. Mulwray, Jake begins to investigate her husband’s suspected murder and in the process discovers that large amounts of water are being drained from the reservoir despite the present California drought. Jake is warned off the premises by the head of security and a henchman slashes Jake’s nostril.

Back at the office he gets a call from the imposter Mrs. Mulwray, and tips him off to check Mulwray’s obituary. He discovers that Mulwray was a former business partner of Evelyn’s wealth father, Noah Cross (John Huston). Over a semi-friendly meeting with Cross, Jake is warned that he has no idea of the forces at work here.

Drawn into a murky web of high-level corruption, homicide and incest, Gittes deduces that the water department is drying up the land so it can be bought at a reduced price and that Mulwray was murdered when he discovered the plan. (Source: Wikipedia.)

Notable location: L.A.

Film notes: In the film, Mulwray opposes the dam wanted by Noah Cross and the city of Los Angeles, for reasons of engineering and safety, arguing he would not repeat his previous mistake, when his dam broke resulting in hundreds of deaths. This alludes to the [St. Francis Dam](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/St._Francis_Dam) disaster of March 12, 1928 when the dam had been inspected by Mulholland on the day of its catastrophic failure. The dam's failure inundated the [Santa Clara River Valley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Clara_River_Valley), including the town of [Santa Paula](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Santa_Paula,_California), with flood water, causing the deaths of as many as 600 people (including 42 school-aged children). The event effectively ended Mulholland's career*. (Source: Wikipedia.*  *Nazaryan, Alexander (April 10, 2016).*[*"On the edge of L.A. lies the remains of an engineering disaster that offers a warning for us today"*](http://www.newsweek.com/2016/04/22/st-francis-dam-disaster-los-angeles-warning-engineering-445915.html)*. Newsweek.*[*Archived*](https://web.archive.org/web/20180311140802/http:/www.newsweek.com/2016/04/22/st-francis-dam-disaster-los-angeles-warning-engineering-445915.html)*from the original on March 11, 2018.)*

Polanski appears in a cameo as the gangster who cuts Gittes' nose. The effect was accomplished with a special knife which could have actually cut Nicholson's nose if Polanski had not held it correctly.

Graphical user interface, website

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**32. To Live and Die in L.A (1985)** A pair of U.S. Secret Service agents, the reckless hothead Chance and veteran Hart (William Peterson), literally days from retirement, are counterfeiting investigators in the L.A. field office. Staking out a warehouse alone in the desert, Hart is murdered by master counterfeiter Masters (Willem Dafoe) and his bodyguard. Assigned a new partner, Chance vows revenge on Masters. The agents surveil an associate of Masters, attorney Waxman. Rookie agent Vukovich falls asleep on the job and misses catching Masters kill Waxman. Chance works his sexual extortion relationship with parolee-informant Ruth to get more info on Masters and the agents come up with a plan to pose as Palm Springs bankers interested in Masters’ criminal services.

Recommended reading: *To Live and Die in L.A.,* Gerald Petievich.

*Film notes:* The lively soundtrack features Wang Chung’s hit title track.

The film contains an epic vehicle chase scene on the freeways of L.A. which drew inspiration from films such as *The French Connection, The Blues Brothers, Ronin* and *Bullitt.*

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**33. Kalifornia (1993)** In this compelling road trip thriller, we have a young David Duchovny portrayingBrian,an ambitiousgrad student obsessed with his book project chronicling infamous serial killers across America. Along with his aloof girlfriend, the avant garde photographer, Carrie, Brian gets the bright idea to help finance his extended road trip by inviting a pair of rideshare strangers. Unfortunately for them, Brian and Carrie end up stuck in uncomfortably close quarters in transit with the crude, creepy, white trashy hotheaded hick Early Grayce (a young Brad Pitt) and his dim-witted trailer trash girlfriend, Adele (Juliette Lewis). Early happens to be a psychopathic parolee who recently lost his job, owes a lot of people money, just murdered his landlord and is understandably desperate to get the hell outta Dodge. Among other things *Kalifornia* confronts obsession, the shadow self, social/cultural disparities and “contrary rituals of affirmation” (Sargeant and Watson, 1999).

Notable locations: Dreamland nuclear testing site, CA/NV border. Castleberry Hill, Atlanta GA. Louisville, Ky.

Recommended reading: *Lost Highways: An Illustrated History of Road Movies, Sargeant and Watson, 1999.*

*Fun facts:* On June 28, 1992, while filming at a gas station in rural California, the production was temporarily halted following a 7.5 [magnitude earthquake](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richter_magnitude). Brad Pitt and Juliette Lewis were a real-life couple during the filming.

Truth-drops: Further perpetuating the public’s morbid fascination with serial killers. Don’t ride with strangers.

34. **Seven (1995).** *Seven* is a psychological serial killer thriller starring Brad Pitt and Morgan Freeman as detective partners portraying the typical odd couple black/white duality In a dark and dingy, nameless urban landscape a brazen serial killer utilizes the Seven Deadly Sins as a motif for his grisly murders. Eventually the detectives track down the killer, John Doe (Kevin Spacey) only to have him escape. Later on, John Doe inexplicably turns himself into the police, offering to confess his crimes, only on the condition that he accompany the detectives to a remote location where, presumably the victims of Envy and Wrath are buried. Not to be a spoiler, but the ending is a real head-turner.

Recommended reading: [*Dyer, Richard*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Dyer)*(1999). Seven. London: British Film Institute.*[*ISBN*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISBN_(identifier))[*978-0-85170-723-5*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/978-0-85170-723-5)*.*

Fun facts: Director David Fincher considered the film more “A meditation on evil than a police procedural.”

Truth-drops: Further perpetuating the public’s fascination with serial killers.

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35. ***The Silence of the Lambs (1991)*** Directed by Jonathan Demme (*Caged Heat,* *Married to the Mob*, *Stop Making Sense*, *Philadelphia*) and perhaps the most iconic serial killer film ever, Jodie Foster portrays Clarice Starling, a rookie FBI agent “recruited” for a special project. Clarice’s assignment is to travel to the Baltimore State Hospital to interview notorious serial killer, Hannibal Lecter (Anthony Hopkins). Beyond arrogant and culturally refined, Dr. Lector is an elite former psychiatrist who possesses a supernatural intellect, a photographic memory and a taste for the finer things in life, including humans. Starling’s instructions are to attempt to gain Lector’s confidence and any insight he may have as the Feds are currently in pursuit of the serial killer, Buffalo Bill, who kills young women and wears their skin. A series of subtle Easter Eggs provided by Dr. Lector eventually puts Starling on the right path. Meanwhile, Lector brokers a deal with the creepy, corrupt Dr. Chilton, kills some more people, escapes and disappears.

Notable locations: Quantico, VA. Baltimore, MD. West Virginia. Memphis, TN.

Recommended reading: *Silence of the Lambs (*1988), Thomas Harris.

*The Red Dragon* (1981), Thomas Harris.

*Hannibal* (1999), Thomas Harris

*Hannibal Rising* (2006), Thomas Harris

Fun facts: Filmmaker George Romero (*Night of the Living Dead),* generally considered the father of the zombie movie genre, made a cameo as a jailer. Singer Chris Isaak had a cameo as a SWAT commander.

Truth-drop takeaway: Serial killers do operate in networks, many associated with organized crime and deep state intelligence. Government-sponsored trauma-based mind control is real. Also, the ongoing theme of fear-mongering and perpetuating the public’s morbid fascination with serial killers continues.

36. **Red Dragon** (2002). You know you can’t get enough Dr. Lecter. *Red Dragon* provides some delightfully disturbing backstory, if you can’t live without more Lecter.

Truth-drop takeaway: Repeating, serial killers frequently do work together in networks. Perpetuating the public’s ongoing fascination with the serial killer.

Film notes: A previous, critically acclaimed version of *Red Dragon* is *Manhunter (1986)* starring William Pederson (*To Live and Die in L.A.)* and Brian Cox.

37. **The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo** (2009, Swedish version) Cyberpunk protagonist Lisbeth Salander is a freelance surveillance agent and computer hacker with a troubled past. Lisbeth is hired by wealthy patriarch Vanger to do a background check on journalist, Mikael Blomqvist, recently sent to prison following his failed libel suit against billionaire Hans-Erik Wennerstrom. Vanger then hires Blomqvist to investigate the disappearance of his niece, who vanished on Children’s Day, 1966. Vanger believes his niece was murdered by a member of the family. Vanger’s brothers are also Nazi supporters. To make matters more mysterious, every year since the girl’s disappearance Vanger receives an anonymous flower in the mail. He believes the killer is taunting him. Meanwhile troubled hacker Salander is dealing with her new sadistic, cruel-hearted legal guardian, the dirty raper pig, as Lisbeth was ruled mentally incompetent as a child, muggers on the subway, a broken laptop and other miscellaneous troubles. Blomqvist eventually recruits computer whiz Salander, the victim-turned-vigilante, to help in his investigation. (*Source: Wikipedia*.)

Notable locations: Stockholm, Sweden

Recommended reading: *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo,* Stieg Larsson (2005).

Sequels: *The Girl Who Played with Fire, The Girl Who Kicked the Hornet’s Nest, The Girl in the Spider’s Web.*

Truth-drop takeaway: The global Satanic pedo/child sacrifice network is real.

38. **The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo** (2011-American version) Directed by David Fincher (*Seven),* the American version stands up well to the original, exploring the same disturbing themes of the phoenix and the dragon, nightmares, missing children, rape, misogyny, violence, power, mind control and revenge.

Notable locations: Stockholm, Sweden. Oslo, Norway.

Fun facts: The musical score was co-produced by Trent Reznor.

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39. **La Femme Nikita** (1990) Directed by Luc Besson, this psychological action thriller explores the themes of the Deep State and the globalist power structure, MK-Ultra-like mind control, the Manchurian candidate, violence, and the power of the feminine. Nikita, a nihilist teen criminal and junkie handed a life sentence for killing a policeman is recruited into a secret program and transformed into a talented professional assassin and gorgeous femme fatale.

(*Source: Wikipedia.* <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Femme_Nikita_(film)>)

Notable locations: Paris, France.

Fun facts: The film inspired 2 separate TV series: *La Femme Nikita* (1997-2001) and *Nikita* (2010-13, the American remake *Point of No Return* (1993) starring Bridget Fonda, the Hong Kong action film *Black Cat* (1991) and the South Korean film *The Villainess* (2017).

40. **Le Samourai** (1967) This neo-noir crime film was written and directed by Jean-Pierre Melville and stars Alain Delon. Impassive [hitman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hitman) Jef Costello (Delon) lives in a single-room [Paris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paris) apartment whose spartan furnishings include a small bird in a cage. Costello possesses a keyring allowing him to steal any Citroen DS. Costello's methodical [modus operandi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modus_operandi) involves creating airtight [alibis](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alibi), including ones provided by his lover, Jane ([Nathalie Delon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nathalie_Delon)). After carrying out a contract on a nightclub owner, Jef is seen leaving the club by several witnesses, including the club's piano player Valérie ([Cathy Rosier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathy_Rosier)), but their testimonies are contradictory. After rounding up numerous suspects, including Jef, the superintendent ([François Périer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fran%C3%A7ois_P%C3%A9rier)) firmly believes Costello is the culprit.

*(Source: Wikipedia.)*

Fun facts: *Le Samourai* inspired numerous subsequent films, characters and even the Madonna song *Beautiful Killer.*

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41. **Ghost Dog: Way of the Samurai** (1999). Written and directed by Jim Jarmusch (*Only Lovers Left Alive, Dead Man) Ghost Dog* features Forest Whittaker as the meditative and mysterious lone contract killer Ghost Dog who communicates via homing pigeon and lives by the code of the samurai outlined in Yamamoto Tsunemoto’s *Hagakure.*  Aside from his pigeons, his only friends are a French guy who drives an ice cream truck and doesn’t speak English and a young girl he meets in the park, Pearline. Ghost Dog considers himself the retainer of Louie, an ambivalent mid-level mobster who saved his life years earlier. Louie hires Ghost Dog to kill gangster, Handsome Frank, who is sleeping with the young daughter of local mafia Vargo. Ghost Dog arrives and kills Frank, before seeing that the girl is also in the room; he lets her live. To avoid being implicated in the murder of a [made man](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Made_man" \o "Made man), Vargo and his associate Sonny Valerio decide to get rid of Ghost Dog. The escalating violence, crime and dumbing-down of society, cartoon-watching, the inevitability of death, isolation, loyalty, morality, and birds as companions and harbingers of danger (similar to Le Samurai) are common themes.

“The film contains a number of references to [Seijun Suzuki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seijun_Suzuki" \o "Seijun Suzuki)'s [*Branded to Kill*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Branded_to_Kill), such as when a bird lands in front of Ghost Dog's rifle scope, referencing the incident with a butterfly in Suzuki's film.[[14]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_Dog:_The_Way_of_the_Samurai#cite_note-14) Ghost Dog shooting Sonny Valerio up the drain pipe is taken directly from *Branded to Kill*.” (Source: Wikipedia.)

Notable locations: An unknown city in the Industrial State. The Highway State? Jersey City?

Recommended readings: Wilonsky, Robert (March 23, 2000). ["The Way of Jim Jarmusch"](http://www.miaminewtimes.com/content/printVersion/241003). [*Miami New Times*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miami_New_Times). .

https://www.miaminewtimes.com/film/the-way-of-jim-jarmusch-6356787

https://www.twilight-distribution.com/5\_2000/5\_00\_film\_feat.html

Fun facts: The soundtrack/score was produced by Wu Tang Clan’s RZA (who had a cameo as a camouflage-clad inner-city warrior).

Truth-drop takeaways: The mafia is real. Death is inevitable.

Text

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**42. The Sopranos (1999-2007):**

**Episode 17, Commendatore** New Jersey mobster Tony Soprano travels to Naples, the homeland of his Italian ancestors, along with his associates Paulie and Christopher. His purpose is to negotiate a deal with a distantly related family to smuggle luxury cars into the U.S. Learning that the family Don is senile, Tony meets with the enchanting Annalisa, de facto head of the family, to make a deal for stolen cars and an influx of fresh henchman to join his crew in America, most notably the dependable, no-nonsense thug and made man Furio.

**Episode 66, “Members Only”** While cooking dinner for his dementia-ridden Uncle “Junior”, New Jersey mobster is shot by Junior, hallucinating that Tony is a long-dead mobster. While Junior cowers in a closet upstairs, Tony manages to dial 911.

**Episode 67, “Join the Club”** While Tony remains in a coma in hospital, the extended Sopranos family is in shock as chaos, family drama and intrigue abound. Doctors warn that Tony could die or suffer permanent brain damage. Meanwhile, Tony wanders the astral plan, dreaming that he is a traveling optics salesman on a business trip in California. He sees a strange light on the horizon (a possible brushfire?), visits a bar and realizes he is in possession of someone else’s wallet and briefcase, named Kevin Finnerty from Kingman Arizona. He makes a pass at a strange woman and gets into an altercation with disgruntled Buddhist monks. Later he falls down some stairs, is rendered unconscious and taken to the E/R where a doctor informs him he is in the early stages of Alzheimer’s disease. Back in his hotel room, the strange beacon of light continues to shine.

**Episode 68, “Mayham”.** Tony’s dream sequence continues. At his hotel room he receives a legal summons from the Buddhist monks and is disturbed by sounds from the adjoining room. After discovering a flier for the Finnerty family reunion, he decides to attend. Outside the illuminated fancy estate, Tony is greeted by a man who looks like his cousin. The man informs him that everyone is here and urges him to come inside, his home, and to let go of the briefcase and his business. He spots a visage in the doorway that resembles his mother and from behind, hears the voice of his daughter, urging him not to go in. Tony decides not to enter. Tony awakens in the hospital and life resumes as normal as he slowly recovers from his injuries.

**Episode 86, “Made in America,” the series finale**. In hiding with his crew, Tony meets with FBI Agent Harris and gives him information about suspected terrorists Ahmed and Muhammad, former associates of his dead nephew Christopher, in exchange for the location of rival Phil, who is trying to wipe out Tony and his crew. After Tony’s minions locate Phil at a gas station and shoot him dead, Tony and his family return home. Tony’s former associate Carlo has gone missing and is presumably in custody, planning to testify against Tony. Tony visits Uncle Junior in his care home but Junior is too far gone to even recognize him. Noticeably upset, Tony departs. Tony arranges to meet wife Carmela and children, Meadow and A.J. at a local diner. Fretting over Tony’s inevitable future legal troubles, the family briefly reminisces over “the good times” as a tardy Meadow struggles to park outside and a mysterious man conspicuously enters the diner. Meadow enters the diner late to the sound of a bell and the screen goes dark.

A person with his mouth open

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# **A Gratuitous Exercise in Cinema Woo, Volume 2**

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43. **The Godfather** (1972)

44. **The Godfather, Part 2** (1974)

45. **Godfather 3 (1990)/Mario Puzo’s The Godfather, Coda: The Death of Michael Corleone (2020)**

In the grand finale of the *Godfather* trilogy, Corleone patriarch Michael Corleone attempts to legitimatize his criminal enterprise. Guilt-ridden over the sanctioned assassination of brother Fredo and divorced, Michael donates millions to charitable causes. Reluctantly, Michael allows the fiery Vincent (Andy Garcia), illegitimate son of his long-dead brother, Sonny into the family business. The Vatican Bank has run up a massive debt to the mafia and Michael is in line to become the largest single shareholder of an international real estate company, pending ratification by the Pope. Unfortunately, Don Altobello, the avaricious NY mob boss, wants in on the deal.

Recommended reading: *The Godfather*, Mario Puzo.

A magazine cover with a person on it

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46. **Scarface (1983)** Al Pacino is Tony Montana, a penniless, low-level thug and ex-con from Cuba who rises up through the criminal drug trade of the 70s and 80s to become an ultra-violent cocaine kingpin married to blonde hottie Elvira (Michelle Pfeiffer.)

Notable locations: Miami, FL. NYC. Cochabomba, Bolivia.

Film notes: The script for *Scarface* was written by Oliver Stone who was reportedly battling his own cocaine addiction at the time. *(Source: Wikipedia.)*

*47.* **The King of New York (1990)** Christopher Walken stars as Frank White, a drug lord who returns to New York after his stint at Ryker’s Island to reclaim his criminal empire and possibly run for mayor.

Film notes: According to Director Ferrara, [Donald Trump](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Donald_Trump) gave him permission to film at the Plaza Hotel at no charge on condition that Walken would pose for a photograph with [Ivana Trump](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivana_Trump), who is a fan of the actor. *(Source: Wikipedia.)*

*48.* ***Traffic (2000***) Directed by Steven Soderbergh *(Contagion, Unsane, The Oceans trilogy), Traffic* explores the illegal drug trade from multiple perspectives*.* Benicio Del Toro portrays a Mexican police officer battling the Tijuana Cartel who becomes entangled with Cartel drug wars and endemic military and government corruption that reaches the highest levels of society. In another plot line, Michael Douglas plays a Conservative Ohio judge appointed to the President’s Office of National Drug Control Policy. Don Cheadle and Luis Guzman play undercover DEA agents in San Diego.

Recommended reading: *The Politics of Heroin,* Alfred McCoy

*Dark Alliance,* Gary Webb

*American War Machine*, Peter Dale Scott

*Dope Inc*., Executive Intelligence Review.

Film notes: Harrison Ford was originally slated for the lead role but turned it down, likely not wanting to take a pay cut to his formidable salary.

Truth Drop 101: Like so many things, the War on Drugs is fake.

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49. **Heat (1995)** Al Pacino stars as cool-headed veteran LAPD Robbery-Homicide Detective Vincent Hanna tracking a gang of elite professional thieves led by Robert DeNiro’s cold, no-nonsense perfectionist Neil McCauley. Val Kilmer portrays Chris, McCauley’s fearless right-hand man. Despite the heat of increased police surveillance, McCauley's crew agrees to one last bank robbery worth $12.2 million.

Film notes: Director Michael Mann wrote the original script for *Heat* in 1979, basing it on [Chicago](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chicago) police officer [Chuck Adamson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chuck_Adamson)'s pursuit of criminal and ex-Alcatraz inmate Neil McCauley, after whom De Niro's character is named

**50. Public Enemies (2009**). Johnny Depp portrays infamous 1930s gangster John Dillinger, notorious for his fearless bank robberies and audacious prison escapes and the FBI’s dogged pursuit of the legendary outlaw and his notable associates. Christian Bale portrays FBI agent Melvin Purvis.

Notable locations: Chicago (Biograph Theater.) Wisconsin. Tucson, AZ.

Recommended reading: *Public Enemies: America’s Greatest Crime Wave and the Birth of the FBI, 1933-4.*

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51) **Dead Man** (1995). *Dead Man* is an unconventional Western set in the late 1800s, written and directed by Jim Jarmusch and filmed entirely in monochrome black and white. Johnny Depp portrays William Blake, a mild-mannered city slicker from Cleveland who travels by train to the frontier company town of Machine to start a new accountant job promised to him. Like a pretty terrible dream, Blake’s journey and arrival are met with confusion and hostility with his Stranger in a Strange Land misadventures going from bad luck to way worse. Along the way leaving a trail of dead, Blake encounters the angry company owner (Robert Mitchum), the flower-peddling ex-prostitute Thel, her angry ex-boyfriend, a large Native American man named Nobody (Gary Farmer) who rescues him and 3 supposedly legendary bounty hunters (Lance Henrikson, Michael Wincott, Eugene Byrd) after his scalp, among others. Blake’s newfound spirit guide believes the wounded white stranger is the reincarnation of visionary English poet William Blake.

Recommended readings: The poems of William Blake including but not limited to: [*Auguries of Innocence*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Auguries_of_Innocence), [*The Marriage of Heaven* and *Hell*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Marriage_of_Heaven_and_Hell), and *The Everlasting Gospel*.

*Blood Meridian,* Cormac McCarthy.

Fun facts: The film’s soundtrack features Johnny Depp reading Blake’s poems to the music of Neil Young.

[Gary Farmer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Farmer) makes a [cameo appearance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cameo_appearance) as Nobody in Jarmusch's subsequent film [*Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_Dog:_The_Way_of_the_Samurai), in which he repeats one of his signature lines of dialogue, "Stupid fucking white man!"

[Johnny Depp](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johnny_Depp) makes a brief cameo as William Blake in [Mika Kaurismäki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mika_Kaurism%C3%A4ki)'s film [*L.A. Without a Map*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L.A._Without_a_Map).

The film contains conversations in the [Cree](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cree_language) and [Blackfoot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blackfoot_language) languages, which were intentionally not translated or subtitled, for the exclusive understanding of members of those nations, including several in-jokes aimed at Native American viewers.  The Native character was also played by an [Indigenous Canadian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indigenous_peoples_of_the_Americas) actor, [Gary Farmer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Farmer), who is a [Cayuga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cayuga_people). (Source: Wikipedia, Rosenbaum, Jonathan (2000). *Dead Man*. London: Cromwell Press. [ISBN](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ISBN_(identifier)) [0-85170-806-4](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Special:BookSources/0-85170-806-4) ).

Truth-drops: Death is inevitable. You may already be dead.

A person with the arms raised

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**52. Platoon (1986)** Directed by Oliver Stone, *Platoon* is a Vietnam War drama which focuses on a subtle power struggle between the hard, no-nonsense Sgt. Barnes (Tom Berenger), and the easy-going, philosophical Sgt. Elias (Willem Dafoe). *Platoon* also features Charlie Sheen, Forest Whittaker, Keith David Williams, Kevin Dillon and Johnny Depp.

Film notes: Filmed in the Philippines, the production was nearly cancelled due to the political upheaval in the country. Denzel Washington considered playing the part of Elias. Mickey Rourke, Emilio Estevez, and Kevin Costner were all considered for the role of Barnes. Keanu Reeves and James Woods each reportedly turned down roles in the film.

Recommended readings: *The Things They Carried,* Tim O’Brien

A close-up of a shoe

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53. **Full Metal Jacket (1987)** *Good-bye, my sweetheart, Hello, Vietnam.* Directed by Stanley Kubrick, *Full Metal Jacket* follows wisecracking Marine recruit Joker (Matthew Modine) and his traumatic bootcamp ordeal with the likes of relentless, hard-ass, and Uber-abusive gunnery drill sergeant Hartman along with Joker’s dim, slow-witted, hopelessly inept fellow recruit Pyle (Vincent Dinofrio). The second half of the film documents the combat-seasoned Joker’s harrowing and humbling experiences during combat missions in Vietnam. Much like he did with *A Clockwork Orange, The* *Shining* and *Eyes Wide Shut,* Kubrick grabs us and forces us to watch another sordid chapter of the dark underbelly of society, critically observing and acknowledging the shadow side of the soul. Full Metal Jacket explores the duality of good and evil, peace and war, perception vs. reality, propaganda, government mind control, dissociation and trauma, parallels of sex and violence, American imperialism and the casualty of youth (Source, analysis by Sean McDougall, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VXWoJNAnFYk>).

Notable locations: Vietnam. Parris Island.

Recommended readings: *The Phoenix Program,* Douglas Valentine

*The Short Timers,* Gustav Hasford

*Stanley Kubrick*, Vincent LoBrutto

Film notes:

Former U.S. Marine drill instructor Ermey was originally hired as a [technical advisor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technical_advisor). Ermey asked Kubrick if he could audition for the role of Hartman. Kubrick, who had seen Ermey's portrayal of drill instructor Staff Sergeant Loyce in [*The Boys in Company C*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Boys_in_Company_C) (1978), told Ermey he was not vicious enough to play the character. Ermey improvised insulting dialogue against a group of [Royal Marines](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Marines) who were being considered for the part of background Marines, to demonstrate his ability to play the character and to show how a drill instructor breaks down individuality in new recruits. While Ermey practiced his lines in a rehearsal room, Kubrick's assistant [Leon Vitali](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leon_Vitali) would throw tennis balls and oranges at him, which Ermey had to catch and throw back as quickly as possible while saying his lines as fast as he could. Any hesitation, slip, or missed line would necessitate starting over.

54) **Jacob’s Ladder** (1990) *Jacob’s Ladder* stars Tim Robbins as Jacob, a former American G.I. traumatized in Vietnam who returns to his home in New York City in 1975 working as a mailman and experiencing horrific visions, hallucinations and nightmares. In one of the film’s most telling and chilling scences, Jacob awakens in the [NYC Subway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York_City_Subway), glimpses what he believes to be a tentacle protruding from a sleeping homeless person, gets inexplicably locked in the station and narrowly misses getting hit by a train. Slowly losing his grip on reality, Jacob is tormented by strange entities or demons, sees visions of his dead son, nearly gets run over by a phantom vehicle, is picked up on the street and roughed up by thugs, experiences a dangerous fever, and watches an old Army buddy (similarly plagued by such phenomena) get blown up in his car. In the final act of the film, it is revealed to Jacob by Samaritan Michael, a former military chemist, that what Jacob experienced his last day in Vietnam was the horrific results of the government’s secret testing of an experimental drug called The Ladder.

Notable locations: Vietnam. New York City.

Recommended readings: *Inferno*, Dante Alighieri.

*Liberation Through Hearing During the Intermediate State (Tibetan Book of the Dead).*

*An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge, Ambrose Bierce (1890), later made into a 1962 short film by Robert Enrico.*

Fun facts:Writer Bruce Joel Rubin spent2 years in a Tibetan Buddhist monastery in Nepal and has also written the afterlife-themed *Brainstorm* and *Deadly Friend.*

Director Adrian Lyne said he was inspired by the art of Francis Bacon in filming the body horror technique scenes. (*Source: Wikipedia.)*

Truth-drops: Secret government experimentation on GIs and others is real. You may already be dead.

A picture containing mammal, night sky

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55. **Apocalypse Now (1979)** *Saigon. Shit.* Cpt. Willard (Martin Sheen) wakes alone in a hot, sweaty Saigon hotel room in the midst of a miserable haze, suffering intermittent bouts of boredom, drunken rage and self-loathing to the haunting music of The Doors as he anxiously awaits his next mission. When Willard finally meets with his superiors and a CIA spook, he is informed his (non-existent, classified, top-secret) mission is to travel up the Nang River in a Navy Patrol Boat then rendezvous with the commander of 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry, Lt. Kilgore (Robert Duvall) to negotiate safe passage up the river to locate his renegade target. He will travel into Cambodia, locate the remote sanctuary of AWOL Special Forces Col. Kurtz (Marlon Brando), accused of murder and presumed insane, and terminate Kurtz with “extreme prejudice.” Directed by Francis Ford Coppola, the epic *Apocalypse Now* explores the obvious themes of war, morality and madness.

Recommended readings: *Heart of Darkness,* Josef Conrad.

Film notes: Filmmakers experienced myriad troubles during filming including the destruction of sets by monsoons in the Philippines, Marlon Brando showing up in bad shape, and Sheen suffering a breakdown and near-fatal heart attack.

*Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker’s Apocalypse (1991)* is a fascinating documentary chronicling Coppola’s world of troubles in filming *Apocalypse Now.*

Two people posing for the camera

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56. **Aguirre, The Wrath of God.** (1972*).* Reportedly a huge influence on Coppola in filming *Apocalypse Now,* directed by Werner Herzog, *Aguirre* tells the tale of a mad Spanish conquistador’s (Klaus Kinski) disastrous, relentless journey into the Amazon in search of the legendary city of gold, El Dorado.

Notable locations: The Peruvian jungle. Machu Pichu.

Film notes: The film was the first of five collaborations between Herzog and Kinski. The details of their professional and personal travails are chronicled in the documentary, *My Best Fiend (1999).*

To obtain the monkeys used in the climactic sequence, Herzog paid several locals to trap 400 monkeys; he paid them half in advance and was to pay the other half upon receipt. The trappers sold the monkeys to someone in Los Angeles or Miami, and Herzog came to the airport just as the monkeys were being loaded to be shipped out of the country. He pretended to be a veterinarian and claimed that the monkeys needed vaccinations before leaving the country. Abashed, the handlers unloaded the monkeys, and Herzog loaded them into his jeep and drove away, used them in the shot they were required for, and released them afterwards into the jungle. *(Source: Wikipedia.)*

A picture containing person

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57. **Planet of the Apes (1968)** Based on a 1963 French novel by Pierre Boulle, this American sci-fi classic was co-written by Rod Serling (*The Twilight Zone)* and stars Charlton Heston as Taylor, part of a 3-man astronaut crew who crash-land on a strange planet some time in the future. Struggling for survival as they explore the seemingly unpopulated, desolate landscape, the surviving crewmembers encounter a frightening society of talking, highly evolved apes who control the planet. Putting up a hella good fight, the tough Taylor is eventually captured and placed in a primitive cell with an attractive but mute female captive he comes to call Nova. He soon learns the apes despise humans and consider them vermin, to be enslaved, exterminated or used in scientific experiments.

Notable locations: Lake Powell, Glen Canyon Recreational Area, the Grand Canyon. Page, Arizona. Malibu, CA.

Film notes: An odd phenomenon which occurred during the production was that during meal breaks, still in costume, actors would segregate into the species they were portraying. The original film series would go on to include 4 sequels with numerous subsequent re-makes.

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58. **12 Monkeys (1995)**  *12 Monkeys* features Bruce Willis as James Cole, a prisoner in an underground compound beneath Philadelphia in the year 2035 who is selected to be sent back in time to determine the origin of a virus that wiped out most of humanity. Haunted by strange memories of an airport shooting, Cole arrives in Baltimore in the year 1990, not 1996, as planned, and is arrested and incarcerated in a mental hospital following the diagnosis of Dr. Railly (Madeleine Stowe). Inside the asylum, Cole meets fellow mental patient Jeffrey (Brad Pitt), a rabid anti-corporate environmental activist, son of a well-known virologist and founder of the environmental terrorist group, The Army of the 12 Monkeys, suspected by the future scientists of unleashing the virus. 12 Monkeys explores the themes of the subjective nature of memory and time, time travel, mind control, mental illness, the Christ figure, monkeys and technology.

Notable locations: Philadelphia PA. Baltimore, MD. Muir Woods National Monument.

Film notes: *12 Monkeys* was inspired by the 1962 short French film, *La Jetee*.

Brad Pitt spent weeks at the psych ward at Temple University’s hospital preparing for his role. Due to strict budget restraints, the filmmakers were compelled to find abandoned buildings and other landmarks for sets over expensive soundstages.

In *La Jetee*, characters are haunted by visions of their own deaths and both films contain many references to Hitchcock films including *Vertigo*. (Source: Wikipedia)

59. **Brazil (1985**) Directed by Terry Gilliam (*12 Monkeys*), this sci-fi cult classic set in a polluted technocratic dystopian future tells the tale of low-level bureaucrat Sam Lowry who is haunted by a woman in his dreams. Wrought with predictive programing, Brazil explores the themes of absurd bureaucracy, corporatism, hyper-surveillance, and state capitalism among others. Thanks to a wayward fly, a misprinted arrest warrant leads to the arrest and death of an innocent cobbler instead of the intended suspect, a renegade heating engineer and wanted terrorist. Sam encounters the woman from his dreams, a truck driver assisting the widow of the wrongly arrested/murdered man who becomes a terrorist herself. Sam gets himself promoted to Information Retrieval to assist his dream love, Jill and further dystopian madness ensues.

Recommended reading: *1984,* George Orwell.

*An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge*, Ambrose Bierce.

*Amerika*, Franz Kafka

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60. **A Clockwork Orange (1971)**

Directed by Stanley Kubrick, *A Clockwork Orange* follows the violent misadventures of young Alex, a sociopathic n’er-do-well and tyrannical leader of his band of droogs who loves Beethoven and inhabits a filthy, amoral, dystopian Britain of the future. His impassive parents are neglectful idiots hypnotized by television. His probation officer is a sadistic creep, likely a pedo. Invading the home of a wealthy cat lady, Alex is betrayed by one of his droogs, injured and left to be arrested. In the hands of the authorities Alex is used as a human guinea pig, subjected to a painfully cruel experimental aversion therapy which shortly robs him of both his violent tendencies and his free will. Supposedly rehabilitated, Alex is proudly re-released into society by the authorities where, unable to defend himself, he is viciously attacked by the same old vagrants he used to harass, discovers his possessions have been sold to compensate his victims, his parents have rented his room and his old droogs are now brutal policemen. Nearly beaten to death and drowned by the brutal thugs, Alex wakes to find himself in the country home of a Samaritan, the disabled spouse of one of his old victims.

Recommended reading: *A Clockwork Orange,* Anthony Burgess.

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**61. American Psycho (2000)** *American Psycho* is the satirical and appropriately ultra-violent chronicle of modern-day materialistic American society as represented by one Patrick Bateman (Christian Bale). Bateman is an elite, narcissistic, OCD investment banker and sociopath only slightly less culturally refined (yet much shallower) than Hannibal Lecter who unabashedly abuses prostitutes, presumably kills people indiscriminately and graphically fantasizes about killing more. Willem Dafoe plays a detective investigating the disappearance of one of Patrick’s victims.

Notable locations: NYC

Recommended reading*: American Psycho (1991)* Brett Easton Ellis

Film notes: Nicholas Cages’ performance in *Vampire’s Kiss* was reportedly an inspiration for Bales in this role. *(Source: Wikipedia.)*

62. **Psycho (1960**) Generally considered Alfred Hitchcock’s most famous work, *Psycho* features Anthony Perkins *as* Norman Bates,proprietor of a lonely California motel far off the beaten path. Phoenix real estate secretary Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) is on the run after stealing a huge sum of cash from her boss. Caught in a storm, Marion stops for the night at the Bates Hotel. The rest is cinematic history . . .

Recommended reading: Psycho, (1959) Robert Bloch.

**63. Psycho (1998)**  The interesting and largely under-appreciated remake stars a young Vince Vaughn as Norman Bates, was directed by Gus Van Sant (*Drugstore Cowboys, My Own Private Idaho, Paranoid Park*) was shot in color and is set in 1998.

Film notes: Nicole Kidman was slated to play Marion Crane but was forced to leave the role due to scheduling problems. She was replaced by Anne Heche.

64. **The Machinist (2004)** This is the dark and surreal tale ofmachinist Trevor Reznik, a lonely guy whose terrible insomnia and poor health have caused him to become terribly emaciated. The only solace he can find in life is from sex worker Stevie (Jennifer Jason-Leigh) and the kind waitress Maria who works at an airport diner he frequents. After a serious workplace accident in which a co-worker is disfigured, Trevor is fired and falls into a deep spiral of guilt, paranoia and madness, haunted by hallucinations and a strange figure called Ivan.

Notable locations: California. (Filmed in Barcelona, Spain.)

Recommended reading: *The Double,* Dostoyevsky. *The Idiot,* Dostoyevsky.

*The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoyevsky.

Film notes: Bale reportedly lost over 60 lbs. for this role.

Musician and music producer Trent Reznik was the inspiration for the character’s name. The film features numerous Easter Eggs referencing Trent Reznik, Dostoyevsky and others.

*(Source: Wikipedia.)*

**65. The Zero Theorem** (2013) Another sci-fi cult classic directed by Gilliam, *The Zero Theorem* features protagonist Qohen Leth (Christoph Waltz), a reclusive computer genius whose main job is to “crunch entities” for the Mancom company. Suffering from existential angst, Waltz is referred by 3 company doctors to an AI therapist. Qohen is obsessed with waiting for a phone call that will lead to his happiness or some resolution to his angst and obsessive desire to work from home as he experiences nightmares involving a black hole. At a Management party, Qohen becomes enamored of a female partygoer, Bainsley with whom he strikes up a VR friendship through a suit she provides him with. As he works from home, Qohen is required to order the data of the Neural Net Mancrive, a massive supercomputer that contains all of the entities crunched by workers, with the goal of solving the "Zero Theorem", a mysterious mathematical formula intended to prove that life is meaningless through the Big Crunch theory. Qohen tells Bainsley that he believes he hung up on a phone call in the past that may have revealed the meaning of life.

(*Source: Wikipedia.)*

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**66. The Matrix (1999).** *The Matrix* stars Keanu Reeves as mild-mannered computer programmer Thomas Anderson who also goes by the alias Neo, the underground hacker. Anderson becomes repeatedly puzzled by recurrent online encounters displaying the phrase “the Matrix.” Meanwhile, on a separate plot line, Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss), a dark female character with superhuman abilities, is cornered by police in an abandoned city hotel. Using her abilities, Trinity overcomes her pursuers, including a relentless group of dark-suited agents, makes her way to a payphone and vanishes an instant before the phone booth is demolished by a speeding truck. Shortly thereafter, Neo and Trinity hook up via mutual underground associates, and the rest is cinema history.

The Matrix explores myriad themes related to AI, consciousness and the true nature of reality and time, and drops countless cinematic references and Easter eggs including but not limited to *Alice in Wonderland,* Plato’’s Allegory of the Cave, Buddhism, Gnosticism, The Book of Daniel, the Christ figure, the Necronomicon, predictive programming of the 9/11 incident, [Jean Baudrillard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Baudrillard)'s [*Simulacra and Simulation*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simulacra_and_Simulation)*, and* Japanese cyperpunk, among many others.

Notable locations: The Matrix. The fictional city of Zion, the Nebuchadnezzar hovership. New South Wales.

Film notes: Other actors considered for the role of Neo include Will Smith, Brad Pitt, Val Kilmer, Nicolas Cage, Leo DiCaprio and Johnny Deep (supposedly the Wachowskis’ first choice.)

The rooftop set that Trinity uses to escape from Agent Brown early in the film was left over from the production of [*Dark City*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dark_City_(1998_film)), (*Source: Wikipedia.)*

Recommended reading: [Kevin Kelly](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kevin_Kelly_(editor))'s [*Out of Control: The New Biology of Machines, Social Systems, and the Economic World*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Out_of_Control:_The_New_Biology_of_Machines,_Social_Systems,_and_the_Economic_World),

The film was followed up by a pair of sequels in the same year, 2003, *The Matrix Reloaded*, and *The Matrix Revolutions.*



**67. Dark City (1998).** The film’s protagonist, John Murdoch (Rufus Sewell) wakes up bewildered in a hotel bathtub and suffering from amnesia as he receives a strange phone call from a mysterious person urging him to flee immediately. Before he does, Murdoch notices in the room the corpse of a woman who has been ritualistically murdered. He flees in the nick of time, just as a creepy band of pale figures in trench coats (The Strangers) arrive. As we soon discover, the Strangers are parasitic energy beings, ETs or Archons, that inhabit human bodies. Following a series of clues, Murdoch finds out his name, the identity of his wife and the fact that he is a suspect in a series of murders committed around this dark, nameless city. Relentlessly pursued by the Strangers, he discovers that he likewise possesses psychokinesis, the ability to transform reality at will. As perpetual insomniac Murdoch explores the city, nobody appears to notice the perpetual darkness. As everyone else falls asleep he witnesses the Strangers physically re-arranging the city and changing the identities of the citizens of Dark City.

**Notable locations:** The fictional coastal town of Shore Beach.

**Recommended reading:** *Plato’s Allegory of the Cave.*



**68. Donnie Darko (2001)** Donnie Darko (Jake Gyllenhaal) is a thoughtful, intelligent but odd and troubled teenager who sleepwalks, led by a mysterious voice. Late one night he meets a mysterious figure in a hideous rabbit Halloween costume called Frank. Frank tells Donnie that the world will end in precisely 28 days, 6 hours, 42 minutes and 12 seconds. Donnie wakes up in the morning on a golf course and returns home to find that a jet engine of unknown origin has landed on his home. His family has escaped unharmed. Donnie’s mostly impassive, clueless parents consult with his psychiatrist regarding Donnie’s odd and disturbing behavior. Donnie’s lady shrink believes he is suffering from paranoid schizophrenia. Aside from being a scathing social commentary on the shallow, materialist lifestyle and culture of America in the 80s, *Donnie Darko* explores deep and complex themes of woo including the nature of time and space, time slips, multiple universes, consciousness, mental illness, prophecy, the dreamworld and the afterlife.

Recommended reading: *Watership Down,* Richard Adams.

*The Donnie Darko Book* (2003)

*The Philosophy of Time Travel*

Notable locations: Middlesex, VA. The Angeles Crest Highway.

69. **Let the Right One In (2008)** is a dark Swedish romantic horror film which tells the story of Oskar, a bullied 12-yr.-old who befriends the odd girl who lives in the apartment next-door. Eli is a strange, pale girl who lives with an older man and doesn’t attend school. Although at first she informs Oskar they cannot be friends, eventually the two develop a relationship and begin to communicate via Morse code through the wall. Meanwhile, Eli’s guardian must go to extreme measures to feed his charge.

Notable location: Stockholm, Sweden.

Recommended reading: *Let the Right One In*, (2004) John Lindqvist.

70. **Let Me In** **(2010).** An entertaining and equally dark remake of the 2008 Swedish film, this tells a nearly identical tale relocated to Los Alamos, New Mexico during the 1980s.

71. **Nosferatu the Vampyre (1979)** Directed by Werner Herzog and starring the fiendish Klaus Kinski, this is an interesting and entertaining remake of the classic vampire tale.

Film notes: A novelization of the screenplay was written by Paul Monette and published in 1979. Herzog considered Murnau’s 1922 *Nosferatu* the greatest film to ever come out of Germany. Herzog himself filmed the opening sequence at the [Mummies of Guanajuato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mummies_of_Guanajuato) museum in [Guanajuato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guanajuato_City), [Mexico](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mexico), where a large number of naturally [mummified](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mummy) bodies of the victims of an 1833 [cholera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cholera) epidemic are on public display. (*Source: Wikipedia.)*

**72. Shadow of the Vampire (2000)** is a fictionalized documentary of the making of the classic vampire film *Nosferatu,* directed by F. W. Murnau in 1921. John Malkovich portrays the legendary silent film director, Murnau. As the cast and crew leave Berlin for a remote location in Czechoslovakia, a series of strange happenings begin to occur. The crew is informed that the mysterious lead, an obscure German theatre actor, Max Schreck (Willem Dafoe), will portray Count Orlock. Orlock will only appear in full make-up, only at night and will never break character.

Recommended reading: Bram Stoker’s *Dracula.*

Film notes: Nicholas Cage, who produced the film, originally planned to play the part of Count Orlock but later cast Dafoe.

**73. Wings of Desire (1987).** In German filmmaker Wim Wenders’ fascinating (and wonderfully depressing) cinematic dreamscape*, Wings of Desire,* the black and white cityscape of Berlin is inhabited by invisible angels. Unseen and unheard (except by young children and the intuitive (former angel) Peter Falk, of TV’s Detective *Columbo* fame, playing himself), the empathic angels eavesdrop on the thoughts of humans, comforting them when they can*.* One day, after much angelic contemplation, and, having fallen for a dreamy human trapeze acrobat in a doomed traveling circus, angel Damiel sheds his angel wings and his immortality. Predictably, yet poignantly, no longer able to save the chronically depressed from jumping off bridges and other things, poor Damiel will finally meet the high-flying but depressed Marion, and get far more than he bargains for down on Earth . . .

Notable locations: Berlin, Germany.

**74. Faraway, So Close (1993).** Offering a slightly more complicated, dark and twisted plot, the sequel to *Wings,* 1993’s *Faraway, So Close*  takes place after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Part Two follows the plight of Damiel’s old angel buddy, Cassiel. Impulsively saving a young girl from a fall, Cassiel is compelled to shed his wings and become human. Down on Earth, in the underground (subway) the naïve newbie is seduced into gambling, drinking and other criminal behavior by the ambivalent Time Itself (played by the devilish Willem Dafoe). Cassiel further becomes involved with the likes of an American gangster—an arms dealer/pornographer/likely human trafficker as the plot further twists and turns along the dark criminal underworld of Berlin. (Interestingly, the film also features Peter Falk, Mikhail Gorbachev and Lou Reed, as themselves, and the alluring Nastassja Kinski as Angel Raphaela. And the film boasts a pretty decent, somewhat depressing soundtrack largely featuring Nick Cave and the Bad Seeds).

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75. **Angel Heart (1987)** *Angel Heart* stars Mickey Rourke as Harry Angel, a former G.I. and small-time private eye in NYC in 1955. One day Angel is contacted by a lawyer who represents a client interested in hiring Angel to investigate a missing persons case. The cynical, wise-cracking Angel agrees to meet the cryptic character, Louis Cyphre (Robert DeNiro) in a creepy church in Harlem. Cyphre reveals the missing person in question is a famous crooner called Johnny Favorite who suffered severe neurological trauma in WWII which disrupted a contract with Cyphre. Angel’s investigation leads him to a private upstate hospital and an apparent cover-up by a junkie doctor, Fowler, who confesses that Favorite was absconded by several of his associates years ago. The twisted trail of obfuscation, phantom personas and black magic eventually leads to the voodoo underworld of New Orleans, the dark, steamy backwoods of Bayou country and a grisly trail of dead bodies all leading back to the troubled soul of Angel.

Notable locations: NYC. New Orleans.

Recommended readings: *Falling Angel* (1978) William Hjortsberg.

*The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus,* Christopher Marlowe

*Faust,* Goethe

*Up Jumped the Devil: The Real Life of Robert Johnson* (2019), Wardlow and Conforth.

*Crossroads:* *The Life and Afterlife of Robert Johnson,* Tom Graves

Fun facts: Due to its explicit content, director Alan Parker was compelled to cut 10 seconds of footage to avoid an X rating. Both Robert DeNiro and Jack Nicholson were considered for the role of Harry Angel eventually landed by Rourke. In January 1986, Parker held an open [casting call](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casting_(performing_arts)) at a NY nightclub known as The Kamikaze, and another in New Orleans, with thousands auditioning for various roles.

Psychodynamic therapy uses the idea of a Faustian bargain to explain [defense mechanisms](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Defence_mechanisms), usually rooted in childhood, that sacrifice elements of the self in favor of some form of psychical survival. For the neurotic, abandoning one's genuine feeling self in favor of a [false self](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/True_self_and_false_self), more amenable to caretakers may offer a viable form of life, but at the expense of one's true emotions and affects.

(Source: D. Fosha, *The Transforming Power of Affect* (2000) p. 83.)

 For the psychotic, a Faustian bargain with an [omnipotent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Omnipotence) self can offer the imaginary refuge of a [psychic retreat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Steiner_(psychoanalyst)#Psychic_retreat) at the price of living in unreality. (P. Williams, *A Language of Psychosis* (2001) p. 23).

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76. **The Road Warrior: Mad Max 2 (1981)**. *The Road Warrior* is the second and pivotal installment of the *Mad Max* series. A global war has occurred, collapsing society. Mel Gibson returns as Max,an ex-policeman haunted by the death of his family as he wanders a post-apocalyptic wasteland in his supercharged V-8 Pursuit Special with his dog. Along his journey, he encounters a slippery gyrocopter pilot, a helpful feral kid and The Marauders, a desperate gang of bikers and drivers led by the imposing masked character, Lord Humungous. The Marauders are intent on taking over the compound of a mostly benevolent group of settlers and appropriating their fuel. Max negotiates a deal with the settlers to acquire a vehicle sufficient to haul the settlers’ fuel tanker to the far North as the Marauders’ merciless onslaught ensues.

Notable locations: Broken Hill, New South Wales, Australian Outback.

Fun facts: The Mad Max franchise was undoubtedly inspired by the sci-fi cult classic *A Boy and his Dog (1975)* starring Don Johnson and based on the 1969 narratives of author Harlan Ellison.

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77. **Mad Max Beyond Thunderdome** (1985). The third installment of the *Max Max* series finds Max crossing the desert in a camel-drawn V-8 wagon when he is ambushed by a pilot and his son. Continuing on foot, Max trails the thieves to Bartertown, a community of survivors slowly rebuilding from the Apocalypse. Arrested because he has nothing to barter, Max is taken to the leader, the bombastic and ruthless Amazon-like Aunty Entity (Tina Turner) who offers Max a deal. Aunty holds an uneasy truce with her rival “Master Blaster,” a troublesome dwarf that runs the town’s vital methane refinery and his humongous bodyguard who are challenging Auntie’s authority. Under Bartertown law, conflicts are resolved via hand-to-hand combat in the dreaded Thunderdome as Aunty chooses Max as her champion to defeat Master Blaster.

Notable locations: The Blue Mountains, Australia

Film notes: Producer Byron Kennedy perished in a helicopter crash location scouting for the film in 1983.

Recommended reading: *Riddley Walker* (1980), Russell Hoban.

**78. The Book of Eli (2010)** Denzel Washington stars as Eli, a blind desert nomad with uncanny fighting abilities traveling on foot across the wastelands of America 30 years after a nuclear holocaust. Eli is instructed by a strange voice to deliver a mysterious book to a safe location on the West coast. Searching for water, he wanders into a ramshackle town ruled by the warlord Carnegie, who seeks to control the people through the power of a certain book his henchman have been unable to find.

Notable locations: New Mexico.

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**79. I Am Legend (2007**) Based on *The Omega Man* by Richard Matheson, *I Am Legend* stars Will Smith as Robert Nevile, a U.S. Army virologist and one of the few survivors of a virus apocalypse which has turned most of humanity into bloodthirsty nocturnal mutants. Nevile is somehow immune to the virus and works to develop a cure as he fights off the troublesome mutants.

Notable locations: The Brooklyn Bridge

Film notes: It is the third feature-film adaptation of Matheson's novel following 1964's [*The Last Man on Earth*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Last_Man_on_Earth_(1964_film)) and 1971's [*The Omega Man*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Omega_Man).

80. **Stalker (1979)** Directed by Russian cinema icon Andrei Tarkovsky, *Stalker tells the story of an expedition led by a character called The Stalker into a mysterious, restricted land known as The Zone. Two clients, a melancholic writer and a professor are seeking scientific discovery. There is a myth that The Zone, in which the normal laws of physics do not apply, holds a secret room which will bestow one with their innermost desires.* Stalker examines the themes of consciousness*, faith, dreams, and the nature of human desire.*

Notable locations: Estonia.

Recommended reading: Roadside Picnic, (1971) The Strugatsky brothers.

*Tao Te Ching*, Lao Tse.

Film notes: In the novel, Stalker was a common term for those involved in the enterprise of smuggling alien artifacts out of The Zone.

Midway in the film, the Stalker has an interior monologue in which he quotes the entire section 76 of Lao Tse's [*Tao Te Ching*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tao_Te_Ching) the text of which characterizes softness and pliancy as qualities of a newborn, hence, new life; hardness and strength, on the contrary, are qualities nearing death. ("Man, when he enters life, is soft and weak. When he dies he is hard and strong."

In an interview on the MK2 DVD, the production designer, Rashit Safiullin, recalled that Tarkovsky spent a year shooting a version of the outdoor scenes of *Stalker*. However, when the crew returned to [Moscow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moscow), they found that all of the film had been improperly developed and their footage was unusable. The film had been shot on new [Kodak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kodak) 5247 stock with which Soviet laboratories were not very familiar.[[15]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stalker_(1979_film)#cite_note-rusico-16) Even before the film stock problem was discovered, relations between Tarkovsky and *Stalker*'s first [cinematographer](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cinematographer), [Georgy Rerberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georgy_Rerberg), had deteriorated. After seeing the poorly developed material, Tarkovsky fired Rerberg. By the time the film stock defect was discovered, Tarkovsky had shot all the outdoor scenes and had to abandon them. Safiullin contends that Tarkovsky was so despondent that he wanted to abandon further work on the film.

Several people involved in the film production, including Tarkovsky, died from causes that some crew members attributed to the film's long shooting schedule in toxic locations. Sound designer Vladimir Sharun recalled:

*"We were shooting near Tallinn in the area around the small river Jägala with a half-functioning hydroelectric station. Up the river was a chemical plant and it poured out poisonous liquids downstream. There is even this shot in Stalker: snow falling in the summer and white foam floating down the river. In fact it was some horrible poison. Many women in our crew got allergic reactions on their faces. Tarkovsky died from cancer of the right bronchial tube. And Tolya Solonitsyn too. That it was all connected to the location shooting for Stalker became clear to me when*[*Larisa Tarkovskaya*](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Larisa_Tarkovskaya&action=edit&redlink=1)*died from the same illness in Paris . . .*

(*Source: Wikipedia.* Tyrkin, Stas (23 March 2001), [*In Stalker Tarkovsky foretold Chernobyl*](https://web.archive.org/web/20180322094135/https:/people.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/Stalker/sharun.html), Nostalghia.com, *).*

81) **Annihilation (2018).** Annihilation follows the story of a group of explorers who enter the quarantined zone known as The Shimmer where plants and animals mutate from an alien presence. At a top secret government location, a biology professor and Army veteran, Lena (Natalie Portman), is being questioned as the sole survivor of the most recent expedition. Three years earlier, The Shimmer materialized from a meteoroid that landed in a lighthouse on the Southern coast of the U.S.

Notable locations: Windsor Great Park, England

Recommended reading: *Annihilation* (Part One of The Southern Reach trilogy) (2014), Jeff VandenMeer



82) **Alien (1979)** follows the crew of the commercial space tug, *Nostromo,* returning to Earth with a seven-person crew in statis, including Captain Dallas (Tom Skerritt), Executive Officer Kane, Warrant Officer Ripley (Sigourney Weaver), engineering tech Brett (Harry Dean Stanton), Lambert the navigator, Parker, the chief engineer, and Ash, the ship’s science officer who is an android. Receiving a distress call from a nearby moon, the ship’s computer, Mother, awakens the crew to investigate the distress signal. Despite some debate, the crew obliges as three of the crew proceed, entering a derelict alien ship. Very shortly Kane (John Hurt), stumbles upon a chamber containing hundreds of large, egg-shaped objects. When he touches one of the objects, a hideous creature springs out and breaks his helmet, attaching to his face . . . *Alien* explores the themes of American imperialism and space exploration, the alien threat, parasitism, fear and survival, the archetypal mother, among others.

Recommended reading: *Alien,* Allen Dean Foster.

*Alien, The Illustrated Story* (1979)

*At the Mountains of Madness* (1931) H.P. Lovecraft.

Film notes: Nigerian design student [Bolaji Badejo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bolaji_Badejo) portrayed [the Alien](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alien_(creature_in_Alien_franchise)). Badejo was discovered in a bar by a member of the casting team, who put him in touch with Ridley Scott. Scott believed that Badejo, at 6 feet 10 inches (7 ft inside the costume) and with a slender frame,[[](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alien_(film)#cite_note-24) could portray the Alien and look as if his arms and legs were too long to be real, creating the illusion that a human being could not possibly be inside the costume. *(Sources: Wikipedia.* Scanton, Paul; Cross, Michael (1979). *The Book of Alien*. London: [Titan Books](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Titan_Books))

Several critics have noticed multiple similarities between *Alien* and the 1965 Italian sci-fi cult classic, *Planet of the Vampires.*

*The Alien* franchise launched at least 3 sequels and countless copycat films, and video games.

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[**Paisley Abbey**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paisley_Abbey)**"Alien"**[**gargoyle**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gargoyle)**(c. 1990) in**[**Paisley**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paisley,_Renfrewshire)**, Scotland**

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83) **Android (1982)** stars Klaus Kinski asDoctor Daniel, the creator of android Max 404 and head of an illegal android program on a space station in deep space. The robot Max begins to show a growing interest in all things human, especially sex. A highly concerned Dr. Daniel fears that his creation’s increasingly insubordinate behavior could lead to a similar revolt, known as The Munich Rebellion, that occurred back on Earth. To make matters more complicated, Daniel is illegally working on another android, Cassandra One, intended to be a superior machine and which has the form of a human female.

Film notes: In the closing credits, Max 404 plays "himself", and the technical credits maintain the conceit that the film character Max 404 is played by an actual android called Max 404. (*Source: Wikipedia.)*

Recommended reading: https://web.archive.org/web/20071008115402/http://www.cyberpunkreview.com/movie/decade/1980-1989/android/

84) **Moon (2009)** In the near future, Lunar Industries has made a fortune after an oil crisis by building Sarang Station, a facility on the far side of [the Moon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Moon) to mine the alternative fuel [helium-3](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helium-3) from lunar soil, which is rich in the material. The facility is [highly automated](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post-scarcity_economy), requiring only a single human, Sam, (Sam Rockwell) to maintain operations, oversee the harvesters, and launch canisters bound for [Earth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth) containing the extracted helium-3. Sam Bell is nearing the end of his three-year work contract at Sarang Station. Chronic communication problems have disabled his live feed from Earth and limit him to occasional recorded messages from his wife Tess, who was pregnant with their daughter Eve when he left. His only companion is an [artificial intelligence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Artificial_intelligence) named GERTY (Kevin Spacey), who assists with the base's automation and provides some semblance of comfort for him.

Two weeks before his return to Earth, Sam begins to suffer from hallucinations of a teenage girl and a bearded, disheveled man. One such image distracts him while he is out recovering a helium-3 canister from a harvester, causing him to crash his [lunar rover](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lunar_rover) into the harvester. Rapidly losing cabin air from the crash, Sam falls unconscious*.*

Sam awakes in the base infirmary with no memory of the accident. He overhears GERTY having what appears to be a live chat with Lunar Industries management. Lunar Industries then orders Sam to remain on base and informs him that a rescue team will arrive to repair the harvester. Suspicious, Sam manufactures a fake problem to persuade GERTY to let him outside. He travels to the crashed rover, where he finds his unconscious [doppelgänger](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doppelg%C3%A4nger).

Recommended reading: *Full Moon,* Michael Light.

Film notes: According to first-time director Duncan Jones, the film paid homage to the films of his youth, including *Alien,* *Silent Running* and *Outland.*

*(Source: Wikipedia)*

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85) **Bladerunner (1982)** In this moody cult classic which has grown exponentially in popularity over the years, Harrison Ford stars as cranky loner Rick Deckard, a special kind of police, recently retired, whose job was to retire superhuman androids known as Replicants who have gone wonky or rogue. Replicants hold a subtle disgust for lower consciousness, weaker humans and humans largely fear and disrespect Replicants using the derogatory term, Skinjob. The setting is the dark, polluted, dystopian cultural melting pot of L.A. dominated by huge advertising screens, neon lights, massive airships, and the powerful Tyrell Corporation in the year 2019. Deckard is compelled by his old cop boss to come out of retirement and hunt a fugitive quartet of elite Nexus-6 Replicants who have recently escaped from an off-world colony and returned to Earth, led by the fearsome Aryan Ubermensch, Roy Batty (Rutger Hauer). Bladerunners use the Voight-Kampff machine to test whether individuals are human or Replicants. With subtle but heavy Freemasonic shading and symbology, the film explores diverse themes including the nature of consciousness, self-awareness, memories, human engineering, artificial intelligence, technocracy, nanotechnology, transhumanism, revolution, pan-opticism, Gnostic and Kabbalistic mythology, the eye, and the mythology of the owl, the eagle and the snake.

Notable locations: L.A. The Bradbury Building. The Ennis-Brown House. 2nd Street Tunnel.

Recommended reading: *Future Noir: The Making of Blade Runner* (1996) Paul M. Sammon. *Postmodern Metanarratives:* *Bladerunner and literature in the age of image,* Decio Torres Cruz. *Neuromancer* (1984), William Gibson

*Paradise Lost*, Milton.

Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*

The poetry of William Blake

Film notes: The film is loosely based on the Philip K Dick novel, *“Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep.”* Nearly every major Hollywood actor was considered for the role of Deckard until Harrison Ford landed it, largely for his work in *Star Wars* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark.* Director Ridley Scott credited Fritz Lang’s *Metropolis,* Edward Hopper’s *painting “Nighthawks”* and the French sci-fi comic *Metal Hurlant* as inspirations in choreography and stylistic mood choices.

Rutger Hauer called the film “a masterpiece which changed the way the world thinks.”

*Bladerunner* features an outstanding ambient soundtrack created by Vangelis.

(*Source: Wikipedia*.)

A picture containing text, swimming

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86. **Akira (1988)** Set in a dystopian 2019, this worldwide cult classic cyberpunk action anime tells the story of Shotaro Kaneda, the leader of a vigilante biker gang, whose childhood friend, Tetsuo, who acquires incredible telekinetic abilities following a motorcycle accident. Tetsuo’s newfound powers eventually threaten an entire military complex amidst the chaos and rebellion of sprawling Neo-Tokyo.

Diagram

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87. **Ghost in the Shell (1995)** is an anime neo-noir cyberpunk thriller based on the manga by Masamune Shirow. In 2029 Japan, Motoko Kusanagi is a cyborg public-security agent hunting a mysterious hacker known as The Puppet Master.

Film notes: A sequel action film was released in 2017 starring Scarlet Johansson



88) **Bladerunner 2049 (2017)**

In the year 2049, Nexus-9 Replicant K (Ryan Gosling) works as a Bladerunner, retiring rogue Replicants for the L.A.P.D. The Wallace Corporation has replaced the defunct Tyrell Corporation in designing and manufacturing Replicants. After a challenging retirement of fugitive Nexus-8 Sapper Morton on a remote protein farm, he discovers a box buried in the dirt beneath a tree. Lab techs discover that the box contains the remains of a female replicant who, impossibly seeming, died giving birth during a C-section. K’s superior, Lt. Joshi, fears that this discovery could lead to a war between humans and Replicants. She orders K to find and retire the Replicant child. Meanwhile, K is haunted by recurring childhood memories. The film continues an even deeper exploration of the themes of consciousness, A.I., subjugation, and fertility.

Film notes: Harrison Ford appears in the film as an aging Rick Deckard, a fugitive hiding out alone in the ruins of a remote hotel in Las Vegas, which has since been decimated by radiation.

Director Villeneuve considered David Bowie for the role of WC CEO Niander Wallace, but the singer died before filming began.

Three short films were made to explore events that occur in the 30 years between *Blade Runner 2049* and *Blade Runner*, set in 2019:

* [*2036: Nexus Dawn*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2036:_Nexus_Dawn) is directed by [Luke Scott](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luke_Scott_(director)), and follows Niander Wallace as he presents a new Nexus-9 replicant to lawmakers in an attempt to have a prohibition on replicants lifted. The short film also stars [Benedict Wong](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Benedict_Wong) as one of the lawmakers.
* [*2048: Nowhere to Run*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2048:_Nowhere_to_Run), also directed by Scott, follows Sapper Morton as he protects a mother and daughter from thugs.
* [*Blade Runner Black Out 2022*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blade_Runner_Black_Out_2022), is an [anime](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anime) directed by [Shinichirō Watanabe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shinichir%C5%8D_Watanabe" \o "Shinichirō Watanabe) wherein a rogue replicant named Iggy carries out an operation to detonate a nuclear warhead over Los Angeles, triggering an [electromagnetic pulse](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electromagnetic_pulse) that erases the Tyrell Corporation's database of registered replicants. [Edward James Olmos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edward_James_Olmos) reprises his role as [Gaff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Blade_Runner_characters#Gaff) in this film. [Flying Lotus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flying_Lotus) composed the soundtrack; Watanabe had used his music as a [temp score](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Temp_track) in making a rough cut of the short.



89) **Solaris (2002)** An American remake of Tarkovsky’s sci-fi classic, *Solaris* follows the space mission of psychologist, Dr. Chris Kelvin (George Clooney).

The DBA corporation which operates a space station orbiting the planet of Solaris has a received a message from Dr. Gibarian requesting Kelvin’s assistance with an odd phenomenon. The mission to study Solaris has been stalled as none of the astronauts wish to return home and a security team dispatched to the space station has disappeared. (*Source: Wikipedia.)*

Recommened reading: *Solaris,* 1961, Stanislaw Lem.

90) **Solaris (1972)** [Psychologist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychologist) Kris Kelvin, who is dealing with his suicidally depressed wife, is being sent on an [interstellar](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Interstellar_travel) journey to evaluate whether a decades-old [space station](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Space_station), positioned over the oceanic planet Solaris, should continue to study it. He spends his last day on Earth with his elderly father and retired pilot Burton. Years earlier Burton had been part of an exploratory team at Solaris but was recalled when he described strange happenings, including seeing a four-meter-tall child on the surface of the water on the planet. These was dismissed as [hallucinations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hallucinations) by a panel of scientists and military, but now that the remaining crew members are making similarly strange reports, Kris's skills are needed. (*Source: Wikipedia).*

Film notes: In the novel Lem describes science's inadequacy in allowing humans to communicate with an alien life form, because certain forms, at least, of sentient [extra-terrestrial life](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extra-terrestrial_life) may operate well outside of human experience and understanding. In the movie, Tarkovsky concentrates on Kelvin's feelings for his wife, Hari, and the impact of [outer space](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Outer_space) exploration on the [human condition](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_condition). (*Source: Wikipedia).*

**Graphical user interface

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**91) 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)** Directed by Stanley Kubrick, this timeless alchemical sci-fi classic follows the journey of 3 astronauts guided by the Supercomputer Hal 5000 to discover the origins of humanity.

Recommended reading/viewing: *Kubrick’s Odyssey: Secrets Hidden in the films of Stanley Kubrick ; Part One: Kubrick and Apollo, Jay Weidner*

[*https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1992167/*](https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1992167/)

*From Alchemical Kubrick,* Jay Weidner

[*https://rense.com/general7/alchemkubrick.htm*](https://rense.com/general7/alchemkubrick.htm)

*“Before going on with rest of the film it is important to stop and address the monolith. This is the most important single aspect of the film. It unites all of the plot elements and it is, in a sense, the author of the film. It is interesting and extremely pertinent to the argument that I am making here that one understands the meaning of the word 'monolith'. Monolith come from the Greek Mon and Lith. Mon means 'one' and lith means 'stone'. So the monolith is a direct reference to 'one stone'. This film then, is about the one stone, or the single stone. And in this case, Kubrick has made sure that the stone is black. In alchemy all things that exist come from the black stone, or the 'prima materia'. The black stone is the stone of transformation, and even more important to this argument the stone of projection. This is the Philosopher's Stone. This is the object that can change, or transmute mankind, according to alchemical lore. It is rare and, when it makes an appearance, it transforms the seeker. There is little doubt that the black monolith in 2001 is the Philosopher's Stone.”*

# **Honorable misfits:**

**Taxi Driver (1976)**

**Candyman (1976)**

**Sorcerer (1977)**

**The Fury (1978)**

**The Ninth Configuration (1980)**

**The Dead Zone (1983)**

**1984 (1984)**

**2010 (1984)**

**A Soldier’s Story (1984)**

**The Serpent and the Rainbow (1988)**

**Twin Peaks (ABC TV series) (1990)**

***Until the End of the World* (1991**) Directed by Wim Wenders

**The Adjuster (1991)**

**Pulp Fiction (1994)**

**Event Horizon (1997)**

**Secret Window (2004)**

**V for Vendetta (2005)**

**The Messenger (2009)**

**The Men Who Stare at Goats (2009), based on the 2004 Jon Ronson, non-fiction book.**

**Inglorious Basterds (2009)**

**Daybreakers (2009)**

**El Incidente (2014)**

**Fury (2014)**

**American Gods, Season One (2017)**

**Us (2019)**

**Wander (2020)**

**Candyman (2021)**

1. The title comes from the first line of W.B. Yeats’s 1926 poem, *Sailing to Byzantium.* [*https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No\_Country\_for\_Old\_Men*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/No_Country_for_Old_Men)*. Miramax Films.* [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mulholland_Drive_(film)>. Universal Pictures. Also, here is the best analysis of the film I have found on You Tube: The Terrible Secret of Mulholland Drive. https://youtu.be/OiCfHW3N3vo [↑](#footnote-ref-2)