Surveillance & Society

Screenplay

HOMEFRONT*

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EXT. URBAN STREET -- HANDHELD LONG SHOT -- NIGHT

We see a POV of a woman who is walking quickly along a deserted urban street. She appears to be following a man who is walking up ahead. We are seeing through the lens of her videocamera as she videotapes him. We feel the agitation behind the videocamera and hear her quickened BREATH as she attempts to keep up with him.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- AERIAL LONG SHOT

An aerial view of a woman, who appears to be the same person who is carrying the videocamera. We do not see her face, due to the high angle of the shot and the grainy texture of the image, and we cannot identify her.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- HANDHELD LONG SHOT

We see a continuing POV through the window of the handheld video camera. An unidentifiable man, visible from behind, appears up ahead, walking briskly up the street. He is briefly illuminated as he walks under a street light. The woman who is videotaping him appears to be following him. Although the woman pursues the man aggressively, she keeps her distance. She does not want to be discovered by him.

Suddenly the man stops and looks around, as if he were momentarily uncertain of his direction. The woman ducks behind a

* This screenplay is accompanied by a number of stills from HOMEFRONT:
http://www.flickr.com/photos/surveillance_and_society/sets/72157624083983201/show/

tree, and then rights her camera to quickly aim at him again. She watches him carefully from afar, and we feel the videocamera moving from her breathing. We do not know whether she is driven by jealousy and revenge or passion and voyeuristic pleasure.

After several seconds, the man continues walking.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- SURVEILLANCE VIEW

We see surveillance camera footage of the man performing this same action, in EXACTLY the same way. It is as if it were an instant replay, though with a different device, a different rhythm, and a different camera angle (a lateral angle downward). The surveillance camera appears to have documented the action.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- AERIAL VIEW -- NIGHT

We see a continuing aerial view of the woman who is implicitly pursuing the man. Even though we do not see her face or videocamera because of the orientation of this camera angle (which looks down on her from a slight angle behind her), we assume that the POVs are hers, because her movements correspond.

WOMAN V.O.

(in a haunting confessional tone)

I followed you...

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- NIGHT

Continuing POV of the man being followed. He stops at a streetcorner, and the woman waits behind the corner of a building, keeping her videocamera focused on him.

WOMAN V.O. (CON'T)

(raw)

I couldn't help it. I needed to know.

(whispered)

Someone is watching me.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- SURVEILLANCE VIEW -- NIGHT

We see another surveillance view of the man, but from another location. We assume that the area must be heavily surveilled. Again, the action on this sequence matches the previous one, as if it were a replay of the action.

MAN V.O

This was not he. This is not me here.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- NIGHT

Continuing POV through the woman's videocamera. Gradually the man's head becomes blurred on screen, in the manner of live-action crime television, when it is necessary to protect someone's identity. The man continues walking down the dark street.

MAN V.O

This was not me. That is not me there.

I am h[xxxx]. I defend against him.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET — SURVEILLANCE VIEW -- NIGHT

We see another surveillance view of the man, from another location. This sequence, however, does not appear to replay a previous action. Rather, it registers an entirely new action, which is not seen in the POV shots. The man approaches the door of a house. The surveillance camera begins to slowly PAN right, as if it were automated.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- NIGHT

Continuing POV through the woman's videocamera. The man continues walking down the dark street.

MAN V.O

(his voice wavers in space, with a police radio background noise)

You followed someone else. I was not there. I will have been in some other place. It is not h[xxxx]. It was not me. This is not me. He am here. I am somewhere else.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET — SURVEILLANCE VIEW -- NIGHT

Continuing surveillance view of the man, as he approaches the door of a house and puts his hand on the door knob. The surveillance camera continues to slowly PAN right.

MAN V.O.

I was not here. I would have been in some other place. He am there. He -- there -- him.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- NIGHT

Continuing POV through the woman's videocamera. The man continues walking down the dark street.

MAN V.O.

(angrily)

What do you want from me/him?

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- NIGHT (CON'T)

Continuing POV, with a jump in time to several seconds later, and with a computer processing overlay atop the image. The image is now being scanned by an image analysis program. The processing changes the rhythm of the video flow.

WOMAN V.O.

(with processed dialogue, and
contradictory/overlapping speech)

I suspected you. You went to see her/me. They/We
suspected/are suspecting that you went to see me/her. They
followed her/We followed us/They are following us. They/We
followed/are following me/her following you following
me/her. They/We have followed her.

CUT TO:

INT. MYSTERIOUS EMPTY ROOM -- SURVEILLANCE VIEW -- NIGHT

A burst of static occurs and we find the man inside the house that he was just about to enter. It is a completely empty room with no windows.

WOMAN V.O.

[xxx] entered her home.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- AERIAL VIEW -- NIGHT

Aerial view of the woman standing on the street.

MAN V.O.

(whispered)

Who follows you?

CUT TO:

INT. MYSTERIOUS EMPTY ROOM — SURVEILLANCE VIEW -- NIGHT

The man, inside the house, begins to move toward a woman who approaches out of the shadows. She is a shadowy figure, difficult to discern.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET — AERIAL VIEW -- NIGHT

The woman, standing on the street, begins to move toward a man who walks into the frame. It is the man who she has been following. THE STREET BACKGROUND BEGINS TO TRANSFORM INTO AN INTERIOR SPACE — THE MYSTERIOUS EMPTY ROOM.

CUT TO:

INT. MYSTERIOUS EMPTY ROOM — SURVEILLANCE VIEW -- NIGHT

The man and the woman move toward each other. It is still difficult to distinguish who the woman is, since her upper body is blurred. She might be carrying a camera, but it is difficult to tell. The surveillance camera TRACKS DOWN from its mount and slowly moves down to groundlevel.

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. URBAN STREET/EMPTY ROOM BLEND — AERIAL VIEW -- NIGHT

An aerial view of the man and the woman approaching each other, as the exterior street space is gradually transformed into the interior space.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- NIGHT

Continuing POV through the woman's videocamera. The man continues walking down the dark street, as if he had never entered a room or encountered the woman. The woman's POV, however, begins to gain on him, and appears to approach him more closely from behind.

CUT TO:

INT. MYSTERIOUS EMPTY ROOM — SURVEILLANCE VIEW -- NIGHT

The surveillance camera begins to track along the groundlevel to a position behind the man. The back of his head conceals hers.

WOMAN V.O.

I am watching [xxx] with her. [xxxx] touched/is touching her-me.

CUT TO:

INT. MYSTERIOUS EMPTY ROOM – AERIAL VIEW -- NIGHT

The aerial camera begins to track down to groundlevel as the man and the woman approach each other.

WOMAN

(raw)

Touch me now. Touch it.

CUT TO:

INT. MYSTERIOUS EMPTY ROOM – SURVEILLANCE VIEW -- NIGHT

The surveillance camera moves to a position behind the man and stops there, as he and the woman approach closely.

WOMAN V.O.

(a violent accusation)

How could you?

CUT TO:

INT. MYSTERIOUS EMPTY ROOM – AERIAL TO GROUNDLEVEL VIEW -- NIGHT

The aerial camera completes its descent and zooms in on the man and the woman as they approach each other closely.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- NIGHT

Continuing POV through the woman's videocamera as the man continues walking down the dark street. The woman has now approach him closely from behind and she begins to zoom in on him. THE CAMERA SUDDENLY BECOMES A HANDHELD SURVEILLANCE CAMERA. She ZOOMS IN on him.

CUT TO:

INT. MYSTERIOUS EMPTY ROOM – SURVEILLANCE VIEW -- NIGHT

The man and the woman appear to touch face to face. Her face is occluded by his. THE IMAGE IS VAGUE ENOUGH SUCH THAT THE WOMAN COULD HAVE A VIDEOCAMERA IN FRONT OF HER FACE. They stand face to face in such a way that it is not apparent whether they are taking an amorous or confrontational stance. The image freezes on the contact, as if he were being caught in the act.

CUT TO:

INT. MYSTERIOUS EMPTY ROOM -- NIGHT

The man and the woman continue standing face to face. The video stops on a still frame, as if it were providing evidence, and ZOOMS IN in an incriminatory manner.

MAN V.O.

Place position avoid --

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- NIGHT

Continuing POV through the woman's videocamera, which has become a surveillance camera, as she ZOOMS IN on the man from behind.

CUT TO:

EXT. URBAN STREET -- NIGHT (CON'T)

We suddenly see an EXTREME CLOSE UP OF THE MAN'S FACE, which replaces the back of his head. The image freezes.

WOMAN V.O.

(in a deeply reflective moment)

That we were desired enough, thought worthy enough.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE -- NIGHT

We see CLOSE UPS of the man and the woman, facing the camera. A police spotlight shines on them occasionally, as if they were under interrogation.

The man and the woman are shouting directorial commands at one another. In addition to their own personal commands, they also appear to be "channeling" the voice of the director, whom they acknowledge periodically with a quick and self-conscious offscreen gaze. In these moments, the drama assumes a "staged" quality. For the most part, however, the man and the woman are seriously engaging one another in an intense power play. At several key points, they each fully submit to one another.

Their voice commands are edited and processed such that they combine and overlap. The sound does not match the speaking; often there is a delay, or a divergence of some kind. Pseudo-classical TV sound (of the kind that signifies heightened drama) occurs, but it breaks up at key moments, reflecting the cuts and the defractions of the voices.

We see a CLOSE UP of the woman.

MAN & WOMAN

Look!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the man.

MAN & WOMAN

Look at me!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the woman again, though this time the man is standing behind her. He is a shadowy presence, lurking behind her.

MAN & WOMAN

Look there!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the man. His face is blurred, in the manner of live-action crime television, when it is necessary to protect someone's identity.

MAN & WOMAN

Look here!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the woman.

MAN & WOMAN

Look how I look at you!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the man again, though this time the woman is standing behind him. She is a shadowy presence, lurking behind him.

MAN & WOMAN

Look there!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the man alone.

MAN & WOMAN

Look how he/she sees you!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the woman alone, from another angle, as if defracted in a mirror.

MAN & WOMAN

Look at yourself!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the man, with the woman standing behind him as a shadowy presence, from another angle.

MAN & WOMAN

Look at him/her!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the man alone, from another angle, as if defracted in a mirror.

MAN & WOMAN

Watch!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the woman, with the man standing behind her as a shadowy presence, from another angle.

MAN & WOMAN

Look at me look at you!

CUT TO:

We see a CLOSE UP of the woman, standing behind the man, forcibly restraining him by pulling his head back and covering the mouth.

MAN & WOMAN

Look here!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the woman alone. Her face is blurred, in the manner of live-action crime television.

MAN & WOMAN

Look as she/he does!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the man alone, from another angle.

MAN & WOMAN

Look as her/him!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the man, standing behind the woman, forcibly restraining her by pulling her head back and covering the mouth.

MAN & WOMAN

Look how you look as her!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the woman, with the man standing behind her as a shadowy presence, from another angle.

MAN & WOMAN

Look!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the woman alone.

MAN & WOMAN

There!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the man, with the woman standing behind him as a shadowy presence, from another angle.

MAN & WOMAN

Look at him/her!

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP of the man alone, from another angle, as if defracted in a mirror.

MAN & WOMAN

Look like him!

A CLOSE UP of the woman alone, from another angle, as if defracted in a mirror.

MAN & WOMAN

Look as her!

CUT TO:

A FAST-FORWARDING AND REWINDING OF THE ABOVE ACTION, AS IF IT WERE A VIDEOTAPE RECORDING.

MAN & WOMAN V.O.

(heavily processed and overlapping dialogue;
improvised)

This is how I will have seen you/her|This is how you/I will
have looked at me/him|I am watching myself, myself as
you/they saw me/see me|I see myself as you/he saw me|Look
how I will have seen you|This is how you will have looked to
me/looked at me.

WOMAN V.O.

At this point she walked over to you.

WOMAN V.O.

They see me. I am watching. She/it watches me. They would see us.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE -- NIGHT

We see a police light at the exterior of the house -- the same house that we saw the man entering earlier. We hear the sound of a police radio. The handheld camera bursts through the door aggressively.

INT. HOUSE -- NIGHT

We see a highly intense fight in process.

MAN & WOMAN

(improvised speech, accusing one another in terms of wrong and right, true and false. There are many sounds of scuffling and fighting.)

The woman strikes him. She then becomes aware of the intruding camera.

WOMAN

(pointing an accusatory finger)

Him!

(simultaneously)

You!

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE — SURVEILLANCE VIEW -- NIGHT

A burst of static and then we see the same action, but from a surveillance camera view, as a replay.

CU TO BLACK.

WOMAN V.O.

That I would become me at the onset of your capture, take shape through the disintegration of your face.

[whispered:] Convict me.