

2007 April 06  
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## ENEMY OF THE STATE \_\_ 9/10

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*Exciting, frightening film about the 900-pound gorilla that's already in the kitchen*

*Written by David Marconi*

*Directed by Tony Scott*

*Produced by Jerry Bruckheimer*

Will Smith ...	Robert Clayton Dean
Gene Hackman ...	Edward 'Brill' Lyle
Jon Voight ...	Thomas Brian Reynolds
Regina King ...	Carla Dean
Lisa Bonet ...	Rachel F. Banks
Jake Busey ...	Krug
Scott Caan ...	Jones
Jamie Kennedy ...	Jamie Williams
Jason Lee ...	Daniel Leon Zavitz
Gabriel Byrne ...	Fake Brill
Stuart Wilson ...	Congressman Sam Albert
Jack Black ...	Fiedler
Jason Robards ...	Congressman Phillip Hammersley
Tom Sizemore ...	Boss Paulie Pintero
Loren Dean ...	Loren Hicks

When I first saw this movie—geez, hard to imagine this film being made nearly 10 years ago!—I was more moved by the technical wizardry than tuned into this jumbo-sized chronicle of the national security state gone awry.

That, and I remember feeling so friggin' irritated with Carla (Regina King) for bitching about Robert (Will Smith) doing business with Rachel Banks (Lisa Bonet):

The Claytons' home has been broken into, the NSA has framed him, his high-powered legal firm has fired him, and his reputation has been trashed in the D.C. papers. So this stand-by-your-man wife throws him out of the house without giving him a chance to explain.

Keep in mind Carla is an ACLU attorney and has just the day before given Robert a lecture about how our rights are being trampled by the state. Their lives are unraveling from some hostile agent, and she's getting emotional about some old flame he still has to talk with occasionally? Women!

Turns out Carla's bitching is the least of his troubles:

A high-level National Security Agency (NSA) schmuck (Jon Voight) has a Congressman (Jason Robards) killed for refusing to support a new Patriot-Act-like surveillance law. The murder takes place in a park where a wildlife camera captures the entire scene on tape. The camera attendant (Jason Lee) soon figures out what he's found, and so does the NSA team.

The chase is on.

Camera guy makes a disk then by pure chance the disk, enclosed in a portable video game, winds up in Robert Dean's Christmas shopping bag. Unbeknownst to Dean, his seven-year-old son raids the package and takes the game and disk with him to a friend's house on a sleepover.

The chief complication in the plot underlies Dean's relationship with Rachel. In their university days they were lovers; yet Dean uses her now and then as a go-between to obtain first-class PI work from a shadowy investigator named Brill (Gene Hackman).

Eventually, Dean and Brill have to hook up to confront the statist goombas who are ruining everyone's lives to retrieve the damned tape. Brill is a former NSA wonk forced out 20 years ago by upper-level spook-management screwups. Off the grid and underground, he's an aging libertarian high-tech loner with a grudge.

By turning the tables on the system aggressors and eventually agreeing to try to help Dean "get his life back," Brill seizes the hour and stirs at least *my* sense of true patriotism. This is a movie about the individual against tyranny, which now has disturbingly powerful intrusive technology. (Remember, these are tools the government had 10 years ago!)

The movie is a litmus test:

If your SUV still sports a *Bush-Cheney 04 sticker*, you'll undoubtedly be rooting for the agents—the NSA, the snoops, the door-bashing goons, the paid killers (Bruckheimer has some class actors filling these sicko roles, especially Voight, Loren Dean, and Jack Black when he was not a star). However, if you're human, you'll be jumping up and down, screaming for Brill, Robert Dean, and all the innocent civilians to get the heck away from these statist assholes.

Like most of the Bruckheimer body of work, *Enemy of the State* is an intense roller-coaster ride with a lot of action—gunplay, incredible car chases, footchases, things blowing up—which totally contributes to the intensity of the experience. It's *Three Days of the Condor* on steroids.

The ending is fully satisfying. Not to give anything away, there's a Mafia subplot that gets resolved at the same time. Wonderful scene. (I also appreciate the realistic portrayal of the Mob as sleazy slimeballs every bit as malevolent and murderous as the government. The Sopranos they ain't.)

As it comes down, the movie is more a lesson in reality than a fictional adventure. The lesson is the Cartel's spy forces are out of control and threaten absolute tyranny; let me just say that if you feel we solve this problem by electing the *good* Republicans or Democrats... well, I just don't think that's responsive.

Death to the state, dissolution to the Cartel, life to the planet!