

th 499 - Dr. William Lafferty

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

underlying themes of Cold War paranoia in John Carpenter films

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For years, many have seen a majority of the films of John Carpenter as either horror or escapist action adventure, commenting on the isolation of the individual. But there is something deeper there, something else Carpenter is afraid of aside from the badguy. Most of Carpenter's films possess a deep-hidden fear of Communism and foreign takeover - the badguy being more than a lone figure or a collective group, but symbolizing a whole government or political ideology. In an interview with Jordan Fox, Carpenter himself said, "Every great film has a message, or a theme, built right into it," and there are definitely allusions to a sort of Red Scare in his films.

Cold War paranoia in Carpenter's films can be divided up into at least three different categories: takeover from the outside, takeover from the inside, and a raw deal from the government. Many of his films fit into more than one category, but usually embody more or stronger elements of one specific category than those of another.

Takeover from the outside would be seen as a kind of metaphor for Communist forces invading the country with brute force in actual war. This strategy would include a buildup of outside forces and then a swift, sudden nuclear attack on the U.S., almost like what the country feared from Russian missiles in Cuba in the 60's.

A takeover from the inside would be slow and subtle, starting with brainwashing and ending with trials, a gradual sort of resistance to democracy that makes people revolt, causing the country to crumble in on itself. A case such as this, though extreme, would be analogous to the McCarthy hearings.

A raw deal from the government can encompass many things, from our government lying to us, to changing political parties in office, to people in power starting a war and sending over our troops to be slaughtered.

Takeover From the Outside

Assault on Precinct 13

In Assault on Precinct 13, the action takes place just as a real Communist invasion might. The U.S. is tired of the policies of a Communist country and tries to force our style of government down its throat. The police of Anderson, California can no longer take the violent actions of the Street Thunder gang in the area, so they ambush some of its members. The Communist country reacts violently by invading, saying that they don't want our style of government, but they do want our country. Street Thunder's actions prove even more violent than the police's by stealing heavy weaponry, killing innocent citizens, and laying siege to an almost abandoned police station.

Tough cop Starker is the general who stupidly leads his troops (convicts Wilson and Wells) into battle. When he is killed early in the war by the invading army, a still wet-behind-the-ears Lt. Bishop has to take charge of the troops and hold back the invading forces. Some troops go catatonic in the face of the enemy (Lawson), some want to flee (Wells), and others want to give up (Julie). Wells, consequently, is the soldier who gets shot for running away.

The cooperation between Bishop and Wilson, cop and criminal, demonstrates a kind of dependence or reliance on each other that a commander and a private may find in battle. Wilson doesn't get along with his initial commander (Starker), but is much more obliging with Bishop when the threat of Communism or Street Thunder frighteningly escalates.

The women in the film are almost typical war movie women. Julie can be seen as the mother who doesn't

want to see her son go into battle and possibly be killed, so she would much rather surrender to the Russians, letting them take over the country. Leigh, on the other hand, is the tough, spirited nurse, backing up the soldiers 100% and fighting at their sides.

The attack on the precinct is an invasion on the U.S. and resistance to democracy and the free world - Street Thunder would much rather have total anarchy. With the help of patriotic and brave soldiers (Bishop, Wilson, and Leigh), democracy once again reigns in the country. And, when the backup finally arrives at the station, Bishop does not surrender Wilson, but instead pins a medal for bravery on his chest.

Halloween

Michael Myers represents in Halloween the policies of a single Communist dictator. He silently watches our actions from inside his own country, and when he thinks the time is right, he slowly builds up a program of Communism, invading the country; in this instance it is our last and most sacred battlefield, our homes - specifically Laurie's house. And her last line of defense is not a nuclear weapon, but a coat hanger.

Like some twisted John Wayne war film, she avenges her dead fellow soldiers (Lynda, Lindsay, and Bob) and strikes against the Communist threat that is Michael Myers. She is almost the typical buck private of the 50's and 60's: almost out of high school, young, innocent, naive, and still a virgin.

The men of the film are an interesting and varied lot. Deputy Leigh Brackett is the President who doesn't want to believe that Communism could be so close to his country, not wanting to listen to Loomis when he's told that evil has invaded his town. Dr. Loomis is the Secretary of Defense who tries to tell Brackett that the threat is real and also, the commander who finally comes to Laurie's aid, like Bishop letting Wilson out of his cell to fight. Bob is the green private who sees war as the last chance to have sex and smoke dope, like an American soldier in Vietnam ("This is my rifle, this is my gun..." from Full Metal Jacket). And of course, Michael Myers is the ruthless dictator who wants to see democracy crushed, intent on killing all the sexually active teenagers in the film. His murdering people is the spreading of Communism, a loss of freedom in the small town of Haddonfield.

The Fog

The fog comes slowly and quietly rolling into town, like the Russian soldiers parachuting into a small, western town at the beginning of Red Dawn. In each film, the evil force is held off as long as humanly possible and when defeat looks imminent, the human U.S. will pull through and conquers the invading enemy, only to leave us with the last glimpse of another return.

Stevie Wayne, the lone disc jockey, is the small town's last strategic hope, warning citizens over the air of the fog and telling listeners not to come out of their homes. This is almost a throwback to the original The Thing, when the Cold War was new, and the scientist is warning over the radio (just like Stevie) for people to "keep watching the skies." Each is telling us to watch out for other countries and beware. How ironic, since Hawks is a heavy influence upon Carpenter's work, but the latter took a decidedly different thematic approach to his version of The Thing.

In the Mouth of Madness

In this film, author Sutter Cane comes at the residents (and also the viewers) in a different way, the way real evil and Communism might: not snarling and rambling, but silently and seductively, coaxing us into thinking that Communism is better for our country. He and his black church invade the small town of Hobb's Corner, slowly taking it over by starting with the young and impressionable children, who are often the last hope, next to The Bomb, in a war.

Insurance fraud investigator John Trent is the lone general still fighting the Communist force, when everyone else has been brainwashed by Cane's books. He is exploited by publisher Jackson Harglow and he is sent into a war not knowing what his real mission is or just how life-threatening it is, like so many young soldiers in Vietnam or Dutch in Predator (a film where someone is used for his skills to fight against a growing foreign threat in a foreign place). His last attempt at keeping the evil away is drawing many,

many crosses on himself and his padded room. Trent is put in a cell to make him come around to the ways of Communism. "What?" they say. "You don't like Communism? You must be mad!" It's like a fear of the future, that we would do away with democracy, embrace Communism, and punish those who didn't. This is comparable to 1984 with its loss of freedom.

The two less solid characters, Linda and Jackson, think they know what they're up against, but really have no idea. Linda is weak and is seduced fairly easily into accepting Cane's black church evil, like the Iron Curtain government. She is brainwashed almost as easily as the children. Jackson, on the other hand, is totally aloof to Cane's real intentions. He just mindlessly pays attention to sales and controversy, contributing the riots of mass hysteria to bandwagon fever. He's almost embracing Communist ideals and spreading its propaganda to the thousands of unwitting readers.

Takeover From the Inside

The Thing

A helicopter chases a dog, shooting at it, into a U.S. Antarctic research station. This scene at the very beginning of the film should tell us that something is very wrong here. Definitely one of Carpenter's darkest films, it also dwells on the severe isolation of man, both physical and psychological. The men at the research station are already suffering from cabin fever, not able to stand being around one another. Now, they cannot trust each another.

The dog comes to the research station innocently enough, supposedly a victim of crazed Norwegians who may also have gone through cabin fever or even starvation. The Norwegians, being the cause of the dog escaping to the new station, are seen as its cohorts, spreading the Communism themselves.

The dog will cause the same events at the U.S. station and it will then go on to another one, closer and closer to civilization as we get further and further. There is a Cold War on a much smaller scale at the research station; just as countries are distanced from and cold to each other, so are the men.

The film could be called "The Thing That Came in From the Cold" because after all, it is at its base, a spy. Infiltrating the research station and disguising itself as one of their own, it learns more and more about the human race; just as a spy disguises himself and filters into our headquarters, learning about our government and our tactics.

Since the thing can replicate its cells to look like anyone and anything, everyone and even the dogs are suspect. Clark, shot because MacReady thinks he might really be a thing, is metaphorically a Communist sympathizer since he defends the dogs and almost cares more about them than his fellow "soldiers". Everyone's blood is then tested in a McCarthy-like trial, trying to find out who the Communist-thing is. When Clark's blood doesn't react, everyone else yells bloody murder and MacReady is practically crucified for being cautious and thinking logically. It's as if MacReady is the only one still opposing Communism. The men turning into things behind each other's backs is a sort of physical brainwashing - they go over to its side, the bad side, unwittingly.

When Blair has barricaded himself in his room and is shooting at everyone, it is a forerunner to John Trent's suspicion that everyone is crazy in In the Mouth of Madness. Later, Blair has turned into a thing and has built a technologically advanced spaceship in an ice cave, suggesting that even in the most primitive of environments, Communism can not only help one survive, but thrive. This from a man who was shooting at people and busting equipment earlier in the film so the evil force wouldn't escape and destroy other countries - he has crossed over.

Since the thing represents Communism and looks like the men, they quickly learn to fear Communism and, in essence, each other - this built upon their already growing dislike for one another in the cramped quarters. Is it being suggested to us that Communism doesn't work in small regions, as well as large, such as the Soviet Union?

Christine

Christine, like Sutter Cane, approaches Arnie in a soft, quiet way, seducing him into being her accomplice - he essentially embraces and defends Communism. He's brainwashed by her from the start and will have nothing to do with any other form of government or any other girl. Christine, likewise, thinks her ideals are best for Arnie and won't let anyone (Leigh) change him back into the young, red-blooded, patriotic American that he once was before his coming of age, both physically and psychologically.

Arnie, the young American who's not sure of himself (not sure of which form of government to choose), is weak-minded. This leaves Christine (Communism) with an opening, a way to win him over by making him popular (and her, too). And what is popularity, but the acceptance of someone by other people. Other people embrace Arnie and he embraces Communism, so consequently, they are accepting this ideology, too. Dennis and Leigh, his only real friends who aren't using him, are disliked by Christine and Arnie because they are still patriotic Americans who don't agree with her ideals.

Christine's murderous revenge on Arnie's enemies is her slow, gradual invasion and takeover of the U.S. She, like the Thing, is a spy and is disguised - as an all-American car. By customizing her and keeping her in good condition, Arnie gives Christine new life, making her miles roll backward. This rejuvenation of the car is the renewed life of Communism in foreign countries, a growing acceptance of its ideals.

In a sort of World War III, Arnie dies, another lost country that once supported Communism. Dennis and Leigh do battle with Christine in a bulldozer, a machine as seemingly American as a 1958 Plymouth Fury. They crush her and Communism, ending the miniature Cold War that was the struggle for the country of Arnie. This, in effect, destroys the first fears of invasion, implanted when the Cold War was new back in the 50's and 60's. But, alas, along with Christine dies the rock 'n roll she so enticed Arnie with that was the only innocence and escape from such fears of invasion in those simpler times.

Big Trouble in Little China

All-American, good ol' boy trucker Jack Burton has as scary a wakeup call to a Communist-style threat as any of us would when his friend's fiancée is kidnapped. A long-hidden evil (Lo Pan) resurfaces to claim a green-eyed woman as his bride so he can become young and mortal again. Lo Pan is the long-hidden evil of Communism, trying to trick us into thinking that it's dead and that there is no more Cold War. But Lo Pan suddenly comes back to life, reaffirming the existence of Communism, and tries to take over the country and spread his evil form of government. Lo Pan's regained youth would be the strength and vitality of new Communist leaders and reforms that would be detrimental in taking over a country.

Jack Burton is the brash, young, brawling John Wayne imitation, even adopting the latter's cocky smirk and attitude and trademark swagger. Why does Jack unite with Wang and Egg Shen against Lo Pan? Not necessarily to get Wang's fiancée back, but because he's American and because "a man's gotta do what a man's gotta do." Jack is a stereotypical war movie hero, like Wayne, jumping in over his head, but still overcoming near-impossible odds (and making it look like it's all in a day's work, no less). Even with lipstick on his face, he still looks cool, calm, and tough. He loves the excitement and adventure, much like the glorification of fighting in patriotic war movies like The Green Berets.

Jack and Egg Shen and his rebels become allies, two different ethnicities and races joining forces to fight a common evil. Just as in actual war, people from different backgrounds come together to fight a force that doesn't care who it crushes in its conquering of the world. They ignore their differences and fight to save something they have in common: their country and their freedom.

Whereas Lo Pan is a centuries-old evil and represents ancient China, Wang and Egg Shen represent young Chinese-Americans in this country. This is their country, too and they see it as their home, not China, where their ancestral roots are. Lo Pan is older and embodies the traditional Communist China that came about after World War II. Egg Shen is younger and is the new China, a country in turmoil with young people fighting for more freedom and a better form of government. Just as these people are tired of their oppressive government that has held them down for so long, Egg Shen is tired of the oppressive evil in Little China that has scared its residents for years.

Prince of Darkness

His most ambitious effort by then, Carpenter borrows heavily from many other films of his, classifying it as a sort of potpourri of Carpenterian elements and simultaneously fitting in the Cold War paranoia.

As in Assault on Precinct 13 and The Fog, the research team in the church is under attack from an outside force, the street schizos. This group, having been possessed by the evil in the church, is now evil itself. The once-patriotic Americans, brainwashed by the Communists, are now Communists, too and seek to either destroy their fellow Americans or change them to Communism also.

There are also weaker- and stronger-willed members: ones who continue fighting until the end and ones who give up almost immediately. In the case of Catherine, for example, she gives her life for the betterment of the team, the world. Other members think of their own survival and they perish for it. It is a small, forgotten, seemingly helpless group in a tight area against a mass of evil.

Not unlike Sutter Cane or Christine, the evil force in the church is already there, invading from within and controlling by possession or brainwashing. It comes sweetly enchanting the team members. Weak-minded individuals, just like Linda and Arnie, respectively, are possessed by the evil so they can help in spreading it. Stronger members of the team, whom the evil might not be able to possess, are destroyed. Like in an actual invasion, it kills the ones that are of no help to its cause.

Also comparable to Lo Pan and the Thing, the evil in the church has been lying dormant for many, many years in the midst of civilization without us knowing it. It capitalizes on our mistakes and foolishness and strikes when the time is right. More like the Thing, though, the evil possesses team members one by one, isolating them and making them fear and fight each other. They look and act almost normal, but secretly do the bidding of the evil in the church.

They Live

This is the ultimate takeover by the Communists from the inside. Aliens (definite foreigners) disguise themselves as humans and have been living among us for quite some time. They are controlling us through subliminal messages in the mass media. What better way to take over a country than to brainwash unwitting citizens through something they see and hear every day?

Released before the collapse of Communism, it practically centers around the decay of the economy, with the main characters living in a vagrant camp. It says that the aliens are the reason for so many people being out of work and homeless, and compares the state of our country to that of the Soviet Union, where millions of people have to wait in line for hours to get a loaf of bread. It suggests that democracy and capitalism have gone downhill and the aliens' form of government is the wave of the future, the right way to go.

In the film, the aliens and those humans that have sided with them are the only prosperous citizens in the country. They don't even perform manual labor or work for a living. If we want to live well, then we must sell out on the human race and side with them. This is demonstrated by showing that all of the aliens are businesspeople, some celebrities, even politicians - they are taking our country right out from underneath us.

Nada (Nothing) comes to this sudden realization and tries to stop the aliens and reclaim the country and the world as the humans'. But he is nothing (homeless, out of work, and human) and cannot do it without paying some kind of a price. When he enlists the help of Frank, they cannot accomplish their mission without getting killed, suggesting that even in great numbers (the rebels), you can't defeat the force of Communism. Since the aliens have taken over the country through the media, they must destroy that avenue they have taken.

Strength doesn't really matter, since they invaded silently and never used brute force. Hence, the humans employ the use of sunglasses that reveal the aliens' true identity, and also try jamming their signals and spreading the word over television. The aliens know we rely on the media every day and never suspect that we will one day use the same tactics that they do. They think we are stupid and hence, we walk through life like zombies, seeing and obeying their messages of "stay asleep" and "no thought". We are

supposed to ignore the threat of Communism. The sunglasses, revealing what is really there, is a kind of subliminal message, too.

Again, there is the element of distrust. We cannot trust our police, who have become a Nazi-like sort of army in a police state. We can't trust fellow humans, who sell out to the aliens. And we can't trust our friends, who we think are on the same side as us.

Stylized like a western, Nada carries his shotgun and revolver around, shooting the aliens. He is one of the few remaining humans pushing away Communism, calling back to a time when the country was simpler and people still had values, something to stand up for.

But, as often happens, the human U.S. spirit (that of the Old West) proves alive and well as Nada (becoming something, but still dying) destroys their cloaking device and frees the country of their reign.

Village of the Damned

This film has perhaps the subtlest and the sneakiest approach to takeover. Once again, we fall prey to an alien invasion, one that knocks out the whole town and impregnates our women. The alien force is like a wall, barricading the town and not letting anyone in or out - much like the Berlin Wall or the wall that surrounds Manhattan Island in Escape From New York.

The impregnation of the women while they are all unconscious is a kind of physical and psychological rape. The alien force has practically brainwashed them, making them think that it was all just some freak occurrence instead of a silent alien invasion and setup for takeover. The women unwittingly carry the alien babies inside them, giving new life to the evil government and providing nourishment for their inevitable takeover.

The alien-Communist babies rapidly develop into demonic, mind-controlling children. The power of the alien force controls the children just as easily as it tricked the citizens into thinking that that first day was nothing more than an accident. By turning the children evil and against us, it has destroyed our last hope of survival against Communism, like the children under Sutter Cane's power.

The children take over the town and control people with their minds, much like the evil in the church in Prince of Darkness or the subliminal suggestions in the mass media in They Live. They want only what is good for them and anyone who tries to disobey them, dies. They are a force like the invisible wall around the town at the beginning, and the punishment of death is like being shot if you tried to climb over the Berlin Wall.

Dr. Susan Verner is with the government and knows more than she pretends to, telling us just enough so that we won't ask too many questions. She tries to harness the power of the alien-Communist children and use them to our advantage. She is another in a long line of evil government figures in Carpenter films.

Almost all the alien children in the film are the same. Most of them copy off Mara, leader of the Communist revolution. She decides what is good for the whole, like the highest figures in a Communist government deciding what is good for the country. David, on the other hand, learns compassion and sadness, something we think Communism doesn't have. He begins to have doubts about this strange form of government that he belongs to, much like Arnie in Christine. He decides, half-heartedly, to come to our side, the good side.

Raw Deal From the Government

Dark Star

The crew members of the spaceship Dark Star are being all but ignored by the people who sent them into space. What's worse is that the crew doesn't know exactly how bad they've got it.

First off, they've been sent up in a trash can with a computer in it. They hardly have enough room to walk around. Their quarters are cramped, both living and working. They have no freedom. Like in The Thing,

this leads to extreme boredom and isolation, separating them from each other. This dissention creates an atmosphere that's not good to work in; the result is that they end up fighting with each other more than working with each other. Talby is totally cut off from the rest of the crew, staying in the observation room all the time, even to eat. And they can't even work together when their lives are at stake. For example, Bailer and Pinback fight with each other over what should be done about the bomb.

Secondly, many things go wrong with the ship. A chair short-circuits, killing their commander; they run out of toilet paper and aren't sent more; they have a faulty bomb that disobeys its orders and tries to reason with the crew on why it thinks it should explode. (The failure of the bomb's fail-safe alludes to Dr. Strangelove.) They tell a number of their problems to the people on earth, but their superiors don't listen to them - a metaphor for the disadvantages of big government, like setting up a colony in another land and then forgetting about it. Or, much like a Communist country not caring about its citizens, thinking that everything's on the right track and no reforms are needed.

What about the mission of bombing the planets? Since virtually everything else on the ship is faulty, the computer could be wrong, too. There could be life on one or some of the planets and we could be telling Dark Star to just blow it up - treating something we don't even know is there as a threat.

The Communist elements of loss of identity and individuality come into play when Talby and Doolittle are talking, and Doolittle doesn't even remember his own first name, let alone Talby's. Also, when a bomb can talk and think and reason, what need is there for a human? How can you tell the two apart? In fact, the bomb puts up almost as good of an argument as Doolittle does and a far better argument than Pinback and Bailer can offer. This is the Communist government reasoning with its citizens on why it makes certain changes, not letting the citizens have it their way and at the same time, trying to convince them that their decisions are right. And in the end, even if the government is wrong, it still wins, just like the bomb.

Escape From New York

This is how the U.S. treats its war veterans and heroes? Snake Plissken is getting screwed by the government: he flew over Leningrad in The War and was decorated, now is being sent to the most dangerous prison in the world for a botched robbery, in which he didn't even use a gun.

Before he's sent in, Bob Hauck, head of the Communistic police-army, cuts him a deal. He tells Plissken (the anti-hero and anti-authoritarian) to get the President (highest authoritarian figure) out of New York. So Plissken is still being sent in, but is allowed to live if he comes out with the President alive, and more importantly, the tape. What he doesn't tell Plissken, though, until the last minute, is that he's had microscopic explosives implanted in his major arteries. Plissken can do nothing but cooperate. Once again, it's a Communist-style government taking control of the situation and not giving us the whole story, but only what they think will make us happy.

Manhattan Island is a paradox. It is walled off from the rest of the country, essentially civilization. Hence, the prisoners are not free people. But inside, they have total freedom. They have all the elements of free society and no rules. It is an anarchic society being controlled by a Communist-like police state. They even have the opportunity of bargaining with their Communistic government and giving the orders when the President is being held hostage. The Duke, no less, is the revolutionary leader of this style of government, bargaining with the real people in charge of the country.

Plissken is the rebel without a cause: a sort of mix between John Wayne's upstanding, law-serving sheriff and Clint Eastwood's low renegade Man-With-No-Name. These characters are as different as the times in which each was popular. Snake has his own values, not getting caught up in anything that would hinder his mission, but at the same time, doing all that he does in order to save himself. And at the end, he turns down Hauck's offer and switches the President's tape, showing us that he's still anti-establishment and against the Communist government.

Starman

Starman comes flying through space and encounters greetings from Earth in every language. This planet

Earth seems like a very nice, inviting place. Instead, he discovers the total opposite. He lands in probably the worst possible place: the U.S.

The U.S. essentially goes back on its word. Starman first comes into contact with Jenny Hayden, who initially doesn't like him because he looks like her dead husband - she doesn't trust him, just like the men at the research station in The Thing. Then, she doesn't want to take him to his rendezvous point. They slowly develop a solid friendship and then a beautiful love for each other. They learn a lot from each other and come away from the adventure having given each other a wonderful gift.

Like so many politicians, the government says one thing and does another. They send positive messages from Earth, inviting alien beings to make contact. When one gets here, though, we treat the foreigner as a threat to our way of life, our government. A government official is dispatched to catch and kill the alien. He doesn't even bargain with Starman (at least Hauck cut Plissken a deal). We see the alien as a Communist-like threat, treating his visitation as more of an invasion. What's worse is the fact that the alien is a clone of someone who was a U.S. citizen. The situation turns out to be like McCarthyism, where the U.S. persecutes one of its own or the Soviet Union, imprisoning citizens in the Gulags for being so-called dissenters. It's as if we say that we're on good terms with a Communist nation one week and then we invade them the next week because of some misunderstood incident. Oddly enough, this has happened more than once.

Starman joining up with his mother ship is comparable to a foreigner retreating to his homeland. He goes away knowing that we have prejudices, that we persecute for no reason, because someone is different or because a form of government is different from ours. He also goes away knowing that some people (Jenny) can overcome their fears and initial distrust, and learn to understand and respect something foreign to them, much like David in Village of the Damned.

Memoirs of an Invisible Man

Nick Holloway starts out the film as a nobody and becomes even more so. Jenkins, the CIA man after him, points out that it was hard to track him down because he doesn't have any really good friends or any hobbies, etc. Like Nada, he is nothing and upon turning invisible, people don't even know he's there. In this film, too, there is the Communistic element of loss of individuality.

Nick is accidentally turned invisible by an experiment mishap and Jenkins relentlessly pursues him, trying to use him to his advantage. He wants to use Nick as a spy, the ultimate spy. With Nick, the possibilities are endless. Jenkins turns power-hungry and tries to entice Nick into working for him, but Nick will have no part in it.

Released in 1992, when the Cold War is supposedly a thing of the past and Communism essentially dead, Nick's invisibility as a spy would return the world to the way it was shortly after World War II. As in Starman, the government is evil and distrustful of other countries. Jenkins seeks to gain access to the most private information with Nick as the superior espionage weapon.

There is again the Cold War on a much smaller scale. Nick already isolates himself from people, but now becomes even more distanced from others once he is transformed into nothing. And since the government only wants Nick for his untapped abilities, he now becomes cold and distrustful of society. He thinks almost anyone will turn him in and he learns to distrust members of the government and law just as Jenkins distrusts other countries.

Alice is just about Nick's only saving grace. She doesn't think he's a freak, but instead loves him for who he is and doesn't exploit him for what he is, as she could since she's a filmmaker. She exhibits some of the only human compassion toward Nick, demonstrating, in the end, that we aren't totally an evil, conniving nation and that there is still some U.S. free will left; a quality embodied in characters of many other Carpenter films.

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Note: except for the quote by John Carpenter in the interview with Jordan Fox on page 1, no information was used from any of the sources, just read.

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