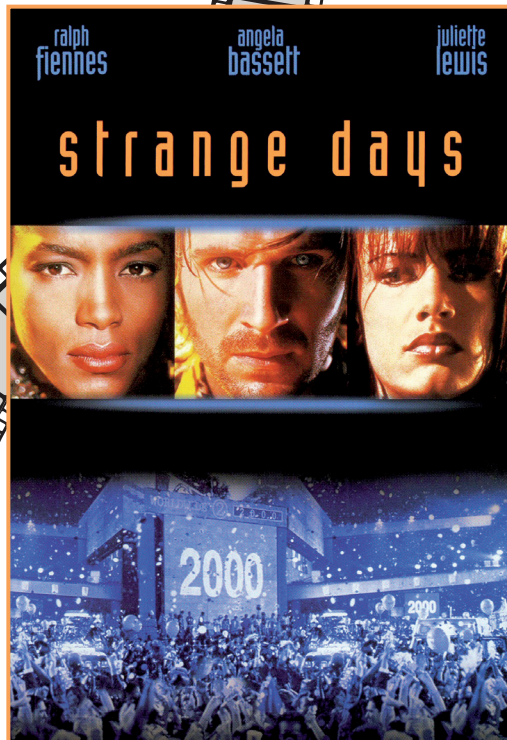


STRANGE DAYS



PRODUCTION: USA 1995

DIRECTOR: Kathryn Bigelow

STARRING: Ralph Fiennes (Lenny Nero), Juliette Lewis (Faith Justin), Angela Bassett (Mace Mason), Tom Sizemore (Max Peltier), Michael Wincott (Philo Gant).



SYNOPSIS

The story takes place in Los Angeles during the last two days of 1999. The protagonist, Lenny Nero, a former LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) vice cop, now deals with data discs, containing memories and emotions recorded directly from the cerebral cortex of people. These discs allow viewers to experience the participants' recorded emotions through a brain wave transmitter (SQUID). SQUID is described as a drug and Lenny is highly dependent on it, always trying to recreate through it the emotions that he experienced with Faith his former girlfriend, a beautiful singer. Lenny is a loser, still pathetically in love with her and relying on his two friends, Mace Mason, a bodyguard and limousine driver who is secretly in love with him, and a private detective, Max Peltier. On 30th December, Lenny receives a disc which contains the memories of a murderer while killing a prostitute, Iris. He and Mace start to investigate and discover a conspiracy of blackmail, murder and rape. Iris's death is tied to a cover-up of the murder of Jeriko One, a rapper killed for political reasons. Another man, Tick, has been rendered brain-dead from highly amplified SQUID by Iris's killer, and Philo Gant, Faith's manager, is also killed in the same way. Faith is involved in the conspiracy with Max, who is thrown off the balcony by Lenny after a hand to hand fight. In the meantime Mace is pursued by two other criminals who are finally arrested. The new year is coming and, with it, the New Millennium and Lenny, who is no longer in love with Faith, kisses Mace passionately.



BEFORE VIEWING

1 Answer the questions.

1. After reading the synopsis, how do you imagine the SQUID?
2. Do you think it is immoral to experience other people's emotions? Why? Why not?
3. Would you like to record happy moments to "feel" them later?
4. The protagonist's surname is Nero. Do you remember a famous Nero in history? What was he famous for?
5. What is the connection between Nero and discs?
6. What kind of crimes are described in the synopsis?



FILM CLIP

2 Watch the clip and decide if these statements are true or false.

Lenny Nero is in a bar, sitting at a table with a potential customer, Keith.

1. Keith is a policeman.
2. Keith has never tried SQUID.
3. The technology was developed by the CIA.
4. SQUID is illegal.
5. Lenny only deals with software.
6. Lenny can provide hardware on request.
7. SQUID is better than TV.
8. SQUID is part of somebody's life.
9. The clips come directly from the neurons.
10. The viewer can see and hear, but not feel.

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3 Watch the clip again and decide who says these statements: Lenny (L) or Keith (K).

1. Have you ever **jacked in**? Have you ever **wiretripped**?
2. A **virgin brain**! Good, we're gonna start you off right, okay?
3. That the technology was developed for the Feds to replace the **body wire**. And now **it's gone black market**.
4. **I must set you up**, I'll get you **a deck at my cost**... since **my thing is the software**.
5. This is not like TV only better. This is life. It's a piece of somebody's life. **It's pure and uncut**, straight from the cerebral cortex. I mean... You're there. You're doing it, you're seeing it, you're hearing it... you're feeling it.

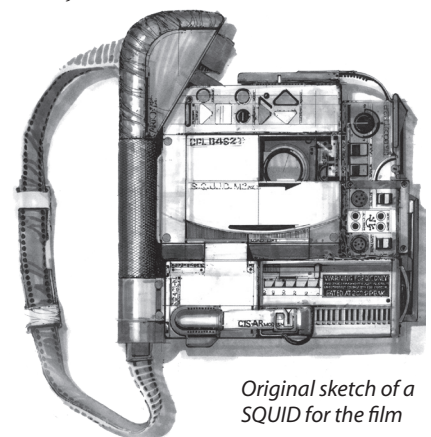
4 With the help of a dictionary find out the meaning of the expressions in bold. Which ones remind of drug dealing?

AFTER VIEWING

5 Read this extract from the film script in which Lenny meets Tick, who is one of his regular suppliers of clips. In this scene the whole SQUID system is described.

Lenny has a Haliburton case often next to him, like a drug dealer. In fact the whole setup looks like a drug deal, but it's not. Though it is illegal. The case holds Lenny's personal playback deck, his trodes, and a rack of the little tapes in which he deals. They are about the size of DAT (digital audio tapes) tapes, and hold about 30 minutes of sensory experience... everything a person sees, hears, and feels... recorded directly from the cerebral cortex at the moment it is happening. Tick holds up a Ziploc bag containing a Walkman-sized stainless steel cortical resonance recorder, or record deck, with a wire running to the squid array, a matrix of sensors designed to conform to the human head (this looks much more complex than the playback trodes). SQUID stands for Superconducting QUantum Interface Device.

1. The system is made up of three essential parts. What are they?
2. How can the playback deck be connected to the SQUID array?
3. How is the record deck connected to the SQUID array?
4. What does SQUID stand for?
5. What is the technical name of the record deck?
6. What are the tapes like?
7. What size are the tapes?
8. Why, in your opinion, can the squid be compared to a drug?



Original sketch of a SQUID for the film