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Dr. Randolph Lewis interviewed in The Texas Observer by American Studies



Congratulations to UT AMS PhD and current faculty Dr. Randolph Lewis who was interviewed this week in the *Texas Observer* about his new book, *Under Surveillance: Being Watched in Modern America*. We've included an excerpt below, and you can read the whole interview [here](https://www.texasobserver.org/surveillance-author-hidden-costs-watched/) (<https://www.texasobserver.org/surveillance-author-hidden-costs-watched/>):

You introduce the concept of the Funopticon, or the lighter side of surveillance — from hobby drones to surveillance cameras (<https://www.wired.com/2014/05/disney-meets-orwell-with-these-super-cute-surveillance-cameras-are/>) designed to look like cuddly animals. Why did you want to write about how surveillance can be fun?

The Panopticon, from Foucault, was the dominant metaphor in surveillance studies in the last 100 years — thinking about how we're going to internalize the gaze of the warden in all these senses. It's a powerful metaphor, but it tends to be deployed in a sinister, scary, Orwellian way. And I was looking for a way to account for the lighthearted, voyeuristic and sexual side of surveillance. What do you do with the fact that people like to download apps that let them see random CCTV footage from around the world?

So much of surveillance culture is driven by men looking at women in objectifying ways, sometimes called "perveillance." For example, a lot of casino CCTV operators and shopping center parking lot operators are young men who are using the equipment maliciously as a form of sexual harassment. There's pleasure in there, and some of it's dark and disturbing.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. Lewis!

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