

Top Five Political Paranoia Films

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With the looming election and current financial crisis, the time is right to view 5 classics that deal, in various ways, with political paranoia.

5. *Wag the Dog* (1997) When the President is caught molesting a girl scout less than two weeks before the election, his spinmaster (Robert De Niro) creates a phony war with the help of a famed Hollywood producer (Dustin Hoffman). This film is quite funny, yet also infuriating in showing how politics and the media working in tandem can so easily beguile the public. Hoffman's performance is outstanding and steals the movie.

4. *JFK* (1991) This movie is full throttle Oliver Stone, with all the subtlety of a wrecking ball. However, his theory/recreation of that fateful day in Dallas is still outstanding, absorbing filmmaking, whether you agree with the arguments made or not.

3. *The President's Analyst* (1967) James Coburn plays a renowned psychiatrist hired for private sessions with the President, who is starting to crack under pressure. When the psychiatrist quits, he finds himself hunted down for what he knows by various agencies, foreign and domestic. This strange, surreal, but funny comedy thriller has developed a cult following.

2. *The Parallax View* (1974) After the assassination of a U.S. senator, a journalist (Warren Beatty) soon realizes that witnesses to the murder are dying. He discovers a link to a mysterious corporation-yet does not know who he can trust. A scary, well done, claustrophobic political thriller. The more Beatty discovers, the more the walls close in on him.

1. *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962) Superior to the 2004 remake, this 1962 classic remains as suspenseful as when first released. Laurence Harvey plays a Korean War hero who has secretly been brainwashed into being a sleeper assassin for Red China. The final 30 minutes remain unbearably intense-and Angela Lansbury is unforgettably his-worthy as the villain.