Counter-Images of Security and Insecurity in the Post 9/11 Era: The Murky Politics of Security and Securitization in the Film Minority Report and the TV Series Forbrydelsen (The Killing) Season 2

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“Something is rotten in the state of Denmark” Marcellus, in William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 1, Scene 4

The question of security - what it actually means, who defines it, the best ways to ensure it - has preoccupied every society that has ever existed. So it is hardly surprising that it has been present in so many films and television series, especially in the United States, from the Western, the war film to the police procedural, to name just three of the most popular genres of both the silver and the small screen. But since the events of September 11 2001 the obsession with security has reached new heights. Rarely a week goes by without a movie or a TV series appearing somewhere in the Western world to remind viewers of the constant internal and external threats to their safety and their way of life (Prince, 2009: Hammond, 2011). It would be wrong to think that all these films and shows necessarily endorse what could be called the catastrophic view of security that governments and parties of the right have tended to foster, portrayed, for example in TV series like *24* (2001-2014) or films like *The Sum of All Fears* (2002). On the contrary, many of these films and programs participate in the ongoing debate over security in the post-9/11 era by questioning official narratives on the topic and offering alternative accounts or what could be called counter-images of security. In doing so they remind us that this issue lies at the very heart of the struggle to control the political agenda. As such, it shares the mixture of personal ambition, tactical manoeuvring, alliances, intrigue and betrayals usually associated with politics.

This paper will take up this argument by exploring a film and a TV series, produced in very different political and national contexts, and which both attracted large audiences when they were released. Both have something important to say about the debate over security in their respective countries. The film is the Steven Spielberg’s science fiction blockbuster *Minority Report* (2002), which, although it finished production several months before the events of September 11 and was only released a
year later it reflects the mood and the fears of the post-9/11 era.¹ For the TV series I have chosen the second season of the popular Danish TV program *Forbrydelsen* (literally *The Crime*, but usually known as *The Killing*) (2009), which was widely shown outside Denmark.² Both are police procedurals which tackle the politics of security and securitization in societies obsessed with security, and show how legitimate feelings of fear and insecurity can be manipulated by those in positions of power to advance their own interests. They also illustrate what Ulrich Beck (2009: 11) has concluded about the growing differences between American and European conceptions of security since 9/11, when he noted: “Not only are the cultural perceptions and definitions of threat in Europe and America drifting far apart: but because they are drifting apart, Europeans and Americans are effectively living in different worlds”.

But before examining these two artefacts of popular culture in detail, the paper will begin by outlining of the analytical framework on which the argument of this paper is based.

**The Analytical Framework**

Already during Hollywood’s film noir period of the 1940s and 1950s, the police procedural suggested a critical alternative to the traditional image of the good policeman serving the public and ensuring security through law and order, present in such popular TV programs as *Dragnet* (1951-1959), *The Streets of San Francisco* (1972-1977) or the more recent British series *Inspector Morse* (1987-2000). Many contemporary police procedurals - novels, movies and TV series - tend to follow the film noir tradition of presenting police investigations as complex and not a simple choice between good and evil. They are carried out by unorthodox detectives, ready to use violent or legally dubious means to solve their cases if necessary, and who care little about promotion. Unwittingly these detectives, whose personal views of the world would probably put

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² During its first run in the fall of 2009, *Forbrydelsen* 2, a program clearly aimed at an adult audience, constantly topped Sunday primetime viewing on Danish TV, with an average audience of over 1,500,000 for each of its ten episodes, peaking at 1,735,000 for the last one. See the figures for the relevant weeks, (September 27-November 29, 2009), given by the rating agency TNS Gallup, at [http://tvm.gallup.dk/tvm/pm/default.htm](http://tvm.gallup.dk/tvm/pm/default.htm). (Denmark has a population of just over 5,500,000). The first two seasons of *Forbrydelsen* were bought by some 120 countries, see Bakken Riise (2012).
them well to the right on the political spectrum, act as critics of the official security order. They rarely propose any alternative social or political agenda, but rather, in the course of their investigations, deconstruct their case by showing the social and political reality behind it and questioning the official version given by their bureaucratic or political superiors. Their investigations rarely end with satisfactory closure. These are noir police procedurals, following in the footsteps of film noir and the *roman noir* rather than in those of the traditional crime and punishment narrative. The television series *The Wire* (2002-2008) represents one of the best known recent examples of the noir procedural. *Minority Report* and *Forbrydelsen* belong to the same category.

Given their moral ambivalence, their social and political content and their tendency to deconstruct the crimes or the criminal activities they portray, these visual noir procedurals can make an important contribution to critical security studies. To begin with, the protagonists of these stories tend toward a form of epistemological skepticism, distrusting obvious or clear-cut solutions. The investigator knows that the “truth” is rarely an absolute and that the “facts” of a case can be subject to several, conflicting interpretations. Knowledge in the police procedural is never limited just to establishing the identity of the author of the crime. It cannot simply be a matter of applying sound deductive reasoning, of *explaining* the singular events that led to the crime taking place and the individual motives behind it. It seeks rather to uncover the conditions that made the crime possible, to *understand* how such an event could happen. Secondly, the police detective will constantly challenge the motives of those in authority who might want to impede an investigation or to push it in a direction aimed at avoiding any embarrassment to influential people in society. Thirdly, the protagonist of the noir police procedural film or TV series overtly assumes his or her implicit normative positions, of which the overriding one is a sense of justice, not just about discovering who committed the crime, though this is obviously important, but, above all, about social justice and its relationship to security. This means they will often continue an investigation, despite lack of official support, or being ordered to cease and desist. Finally, true to the tradition of film noir, these police procedurals rarely offer total closure. The case may have been solved, but the conditions which led to the original crime usually continue to thrive. There can rarely be any “happy ending”.

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Combining “futuristic film noir with Spielberg sentimentality” (Weber, 2005: 484), *Minority Report* leaves few observers indifferent. It has been thoroughly analyzed from a variety of points of view – as philosophy (Sharpe, 2005; Kowalski, 2008), as a view of utopia/dystopia (Friedman, 2003; Atkinson, 2007), as a comment on the use and misuse of technology (Kammerer, 2004; Wright, 2007; Krahn et al., 2010; Gad and Hansen, 2013), as a reflection on the future of surveillance and security (Sarkar and Adshead, 2002; Capers, 2009; Novell, 2009), or for its parallels with American foreign policy (Huiskamp, 2004; Weber, 2005). All of these approaches are very relevant for any study of what this film has to tell us about the nature and practice of security, but they tend to neglect the actual politics of security and securitization raised by it: who defines security? and for what purpose? what means are used for ensuring security? what are their consequences? what are the debates, if any, about the definition of security and the means to achieve it? what room is there for opposing the dominant view of security? is total security possible, and if so at what price?

Beyond the obvious philosophical issue of determinism versus free will which underlies much of this movie, *Minority Report* also raises a number of other ethical and judicial questions associated with security, such as the use of invasive technology and surveillance techniques in the name of security or arresting and holding people for crimes they were destined to commit, but never actually realized. But first of all, we have to look at how Spielberg uses *Minority Report* to get his audience to think critically about the politics of security and securitization.

Most observers agree that this film is all about the dangers of trying to achieve total security, a security state, of trying to create Bentham’s panopticon, using the latest technology (Sarkar and Adshead, 2002; Friedman, 2003; Atkinson, 2007; Wright, 2008; Novell, 2009; Gad and Hansen, 2013). Though *Minority Report* specifically deals with prevention of murder, it can be seen as a fable about the general obsession with security and its cost for society. This is nothing new in itself – the dangers of surveillance have

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3 For a synopsis of the plot of *Minority Report* see Annex A
4 In a very critical article of the film, which accuses it, amongst other shortcomings, of “cheap ethics”, Krahn et al., (2010: 84) blames the film narrative for avoiding “engaging issues related to social

Despite its setting in the near future of 2054, much of the film’s décor remains very familiar. True that traffic runs rather differently and is peppered with futuristic-looking vehicles, but, most people continue to wear the same clothes as today, Georgetown brownstones have not changed, and urban decay lives side by side with ultra-modern apartment blocks. With a few exceptions, the technology used to assert social control or to hunt down suspects represents extensions or potential development of existing technology. All this gives the film an air of a very possible, and by no means remote, reality. This is a future that could just happen, one where the citizen and the consumer are one as free enterprise joins the state to track the individual’s every movement. Acting like cookies on the internet, commercial billboards use retinal scanning to identify the passing consumer and adapt their messages to that particular individual’s perceived tastes or needs. Through the precogs’ visions the state ensures that murderous intentions can never reach the stage where they might be acted upon, and presumes automatically the guilt of a would-be perpetrator whether or not he or she changes his or mind at the last minute.

*Minority Report* takes place on a background of a referendum aimed at making Precrime national. An advertisement in favour of a “yes” vote shown early in the film sums up the conception of security Precrime represents:

determinants of crime, what is criminalized, and recognition that the directions taken by society are reflections of our complicity”. This critique appears to completely miss the point of the film, which is not about crime and its roots, but rather the misplaced idea that crime can be prevented, if not eliminated, by resorting to purely technological means.

5 The decision to locate the movie in Washington (the place is not mentioned in the original short story) was clearly not fortuitous. Not only does it constitute the centre of US politics, but until the 1990s it was considered the murder capital of the United States. There were 232 registered murders in Washington D.C. in 2001, a rate of 40.6 per 100,000, when *Minority Report* was produced. These figures dropped to 88 and 13.9 in 2012. Crime Rate in Washington, District of Columbia (D.C), [http://www.city-data.com/crime/crime-Washington-District-of-Columbia.html](http://www.city-data.com/crime/crime-Washington-District-of-Columbia.html) (accessed July 2, 2014).
Precrime? It works.

Precrime can work for you. We want to make absolutely certain that every American can bank on the utter infallibility of the system, and to ensure that which keeps us safe will also keep us free.

Victory for the yes side is by no means certain, as we are reminded during the hunt for Chief John Anderton, the film’s main character, when one Precrime officer notes that the latest polls are “dead even” and that the numbers in favour of the yes vote have been going up since the chase began: “People feel better, they know we’re willing to go after our own”. This comment explains the elaborate attempt to frame Anderton for a crime he will in fact never commit. As the audience discovers, the politics of Precrime are entwined with the personal ambition of Washington’s Precrime director, Lamar Burgess, to become the first director of the national Precrime agency. Any threat to the system’s declared infallibility must be eliminated. As is often the case in politics, personal ambition and policy objectives are tightly linked in this film. Burgess firmly believes in the system, even if he knows it has its flaws. He is also convinced that it must be expanded and that he is the right person to lead it nationally. For him the ends justify the means, and he would not be the first politician to let the facts get in the way of a policy he or she believed in, but as Anderton tells him, after revealing his undetected crimes to the world, he now faces a dilemma:

You see the problem, don’t you? If you don’t kill me, it means the precogs were wrong and Precrime is over. If you do kill me, you go away, but... it proves the system works. The precogs were right. So what do you do?

What’s it worth? Just one more murder... You'll rot in hell with a halo, but people will still believe in Precrime. All you have to do now is pull the trigger like they said you would. Except... You've seen your own future. Which means... You can change it if you want to. You still have a choice, Lamar...

At the beginning of the movie, Anderton exhibits two of the three characteristics often attributed to the noir detective: he is alone and an addict, not to alcohol, but to a particular drug. But he is devoid of the third one, skepticism, proclaiming his absolute faith in Precrime. He accepts not only the system’s premise that murderers can be apprehended before they act, but that their very anticipated guilt is enough for them to be “haloed” and sent to be suspended forever in the Department of Containment. From the very moment Anderton realizes that he will become the suspect in the murder of a
complete stranger, he begins to doubt, and he gradually becomes a skeptic as he sets in motion the process of deconstructing the very institution on which he has built his existence. He begins by learning from Gideon (Tim Blake Nelson), the warden of the Department of Containment, that people can fake their ID, and so fool the system simply by changing their eyeballs, an operation which can be easily carried out illegally. Later, during the chase, he actually resorts to this technique himself, which allows him to avoid recognition by the robotic spider-like creatures sent out to find him. Later the retinal-scanning advertisements in a shopping mall mistakenly identify him by his newly grafted eyeballs as Mr. Yakamoto. Anderton’s ex-wife also uses one of his eyeballs to gain access to the Department of Containment’s in order to free him.

His epiphany comes when he discovers, in his conversation with Doctor Hineman, the inventor of Precrime, that the system is by no means as foolproof as he had always believed. In the past it has been deliberately manipulated by Precrime’s hierarchy to prevent sowing any seeds of doubt in the public mind. She informs him that in fact precogs can and do differ in their visions of the future, producing minority reports, or what she calls “alternate futures”. These minority reports are destroyed as soon as they occur. As she tells him: “Obviously, for Precrime to function, there can't be any suggestion of fallibility. After all, what good is a Justice system that instills doubt? It may be reasonable, but it's still doubt”. Hineman also confirms that Burgess knew about these reports but considered them “an insignificant variable”. Anderton is horrified: “Insignificant to you maybe, but what about those people I put away with alternate futures? My God, if the country knew there was a chance they might not…” She completes his thought: “The system would collapse”. From now on he knows that his search for the truth about his apprehended murder of a stranger he will also bring down the system in which he so firmly believed. He completes his transformation when he meets Crow, and despite the latter’s plea to kill him, chooses to read him his Miranda rights before attempting to arrest him, a sign that he has rejected Precrime and gone back to traditional policing. Finally, when he learns the full extent of Burgess’s role in the death of Anne Lively and the explanation for it, he has no hesitation about denouncing his former superior publicly thereby revealing how the system can be unscrupulously
manipulated, and knowing only too well that in doing so he will be destroying completely
Precrime and all the illusory certainty it stands for.

*Minority Report* tells the story of a loss of innocence, of the growing awareness
that the perfect security system the main protagonist has come to believe in is seriously
flawed. Unlike Burgess, who is only too willing to bend his principles and to commit two
murders and set up an unsuccessful third one, none of which have been correctly
forecasted by Precrime, Anderton does not waver from his personal sense of justice, and
readily accepts irrefutable evidence not only that Precrime does not work, but that it must
be dismantled.

It is at this point that the film becomes more ambiguous than it seems at first
stance. After his capture Anderton is haloed and in the following scene we see him about
to become another suspended body in the Department of Containment. Gideon, the
warden, welcomes him: “Your part of my flock now, John. Welcome ….It’s actually a
kind of a rush. They say you get visions; that your life rushes before your eyes. That all
your dreams come true”. The film then cuts away to the scene between Burgess and Lara,
during which Burgess lets slip that he drowned Anne Lively. We then see Lara pressing a
pistol against Gideon’s temple, ordering him to let her speak to her husband. The rest of
the film leads up to the confrontation between Burgess and Anderton and then to the final
scenes after Precrime has been abandoned.

Taken at face value the conventional “happy ending”, depicting on the one hand
Anderton reconciled with his obviously pregnant wife, and on the other the three precogs
at last at peace with the world, jars with what we would expect from a noir procedural.
For Friedman (2003) this ending means “salvation rests in the reconstitution of the
family, not the power of the state or, for that matter, any sort of superior being or
consciousness”. Douglas Kellner (2010: 192) talks scathingly of the “saccharine
Spielbergian ending of the restored bourgeois couple and redeemed father” which
“provides a soppy happy ending for adolescent viewers unable to face up to the dangers
of a frighteningly repressive government”. Such interpretations seem a little too pat,
suggesting that Spielberg was calling for a return to family values as the solution to the
modern dilemma of security versus freedom. Sean Weitner (2013[2006] proposes a more
complex reading of the film’s conclusion, suggesting it should be seen “as a joke Spielberg plays on his detractors”, a conclusion which starts from the moment Anderton is taken to the Department of Containment. Weitner cites Gideon’s welcome as the key to this understanding of the ending. Everything that happens after this moment should be seen as a series of dreams that Anderton would have liked to come true rather than what actually happened.\(^6\) As Weitner admits, this is only one possible reading, adding: “A screenwriter like Scott Frank doesn't write a scene like the one described above, and Steven Spielberg likewise does not film it, without being savvy to all its meanings”. Such an interpretation would certainly be in keeping with the lack of closure characteristic of so many films noirs, and would underscore the *Minority Report*’s general warning about the dangers of thinking democratic societies can ever achieve total security and hope to remain democratic. After all, whether Precrime has or has not been destroyed, all the other aspects of the surveillance society remain solidly in place, and nothing suggests they will disappear.

*Forbrydelsen 2: Security In the Service of Politics*\(^7\)

To fully understand the political impact of *Forbrydelsen 2*, a few words must be said about the socio-political context in which it takes place. Like most Western European countries, Denmark joined the post-9/11 war against terror, in particular by participating in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The country also adopted several tough anti-terrorist laws, restricting freedom of expression and strengthening the surveillance powers of the internal security and intelligence service, *Politiets Efterretningstjeneste* (PET) (Sullivan, 2005; Legislationonline, 2006).

Danes became particular sensitive about an “Islamist threat”, not just because of possible links with terrorism but because of a perceived threat to Danish identity and the country’s way of life. The famous Mohammed cartoons crisis, set off by the publication of a series of editorial cartoons depicting the prophet Mohammed by a conservative

\(^6\) To support Weitner’s view, one could cite a scene in the original script (Frank, 2001) and which was omitted from the final cut, in which Anderton dreams of meeting his son, now eleven years old, and says to him “You’re not real”, to which Sean replies “You gotta have faith, Dad”. We never actually see Anderton being freed from his “cell” in the Department of Containment.

\(^7\) For a synopsis of the plots of *Forbrydelsen 2* see Annex B. All the quotes from this series are taken from the English subtitles of the version played on BBC 4, available on YouTube, at https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLM5eV_s00q1PDVgNNDsDb3rR0K9DKgxSP
Danish newspaper, *Jyllands-Posten*, in September 2005. This deliberately provocative act led to a host of violent demonstrations and threats in the Muslim world and protest in the Danish Muslim community, which only further heightened existing tension between Muslims and non-Muslims within Denmark. It soon became a world-wide event pitting defenders of Islam and religious tolerance against supporters of freedom of expression. In the ensuing years, this crisis sparked off several attacks against people connected with *Jyllands-Posten* and suspected terrorist plots in Denmark, so that by the time of the first broadcast of *Forbrydelsen 2* in the fall of 2009 any reference to a possible Muslim threat would easily find an echo amongst Danish television viewers.

Growing anti-Muslim feeling has given rise to a political party, the anti-EU Danish People’s Party (*Dansk Folkeparti*) founded in 1995, which proclaimed in its 2002 party platform that Denmark was a country proud of its continuing Christian heritage, where “Danish culture must be preserved and strengthened”, and that “Denmark is not an immigrant-country and never has been. Thus we will not accept transformation to a multiethnic society”. It has always made it clear that its main target is Muslim immigration and the granting of citizenship to Muslim immigrants. This party quickly became the third party in the Danish Parliament, behind the centre-right Liberal Party (*Venstre, Danmarks Liberale Parti*) and the centre-left Social Democrats (*Socialdemokraterne*). Given Denmark’s proportional representation electoral system

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9 A New York Times, article published in September 2007, reported: “After three terrorism cases in less than two years, including an alleged bombing plot broken up this month, intelligence officials say tiny Denmark is on the front line in the battle against Islamic terrorism in Europe” (Kulish, 2007). In 2014 in its assessment of the terrorist threat to Denmark, the Danish security and intelligence service (PET) announced that “The global terror threat, and thus the terror threat to Denmark, is still primarily influenced by militant Islamist terrorist groups” and that “the active foreign and security policies pursued by Denmark, along with the Cartoon Case, form the key motivation for militant Islamists who wish to carry out a terrorist attack against Denmark” (Center for Terror Analysis, 2014: 2-3).


11 In December 2013 the People’s Party announced it would oppose the bi-annual citizenship law granting Danish citizenship to around 1,600 individuals because the list contained the names of too many Muslim immigrants, “DF says no to more Danish Muslims”, *The Copenhagen Post*, December 17, 2013, [http://cphpost.dk/news/df-says-no-to-more-danish-muslims.8128.html](http://cphpost.dk/news/df-says-no-to-more-danish-muslims.8128.html) (accessed July 16, 2014).

12 With 26.6% of the vote (compared to just under 14% in the 2011 Danish parliamentary elections), to the Social Democrats’ 19.1% and the *Venstre’s* 16.7%, the People’s Party topped the Danish polls for the
and its numerous minor parties, no single party can ever hope to win a parliamentary majority. All Danish governments are more often than not minority coalition governments constantly vulnerable to defeat by a non-confidence vote. Hence the People’s Party found itself in a strong position to influence Danish politics between 2001 and 2011 by being an indispensable supporter of the minority coalition government of the time, formed by the Liberals and the smaller Conservative Party. This was the situation that prevailed during the first broadcast of Forbrydelsen 2.

This program makes an important contribution to Danish thinking on security and securitization by taking one of the most burning security questions of the day and treating it in the form of a thriller, knowing that it will draw a huge domestic audience. It begins by proposing a situation, the horrifying murder of a woman lawyer, which appears at first to reinforce the dominant view of the “Islamist threat”. Having gained the audience’s full attention, the program then proceeds to deconstruct this threat at two levels simultaneously: the police investigation and the party and government politics that lie behind attempts to increase or misuse state power in the name of security.

Unlike Minority Report’s Chief John Anderton, Forbrydelsen’s main police protagonist, (former) Chief Inspector Sarah Lund, fits perfectly the model of the noir police procedural from the very beginning. In her late-thirties/early-forties, divorced, living alone, she finds social relationships difficult, is totally dedicated to her job, but does not buckle down easily to authority. Strong-willed and impetuous, she follows her own instincts and sense of truth, and refuses to follow lines of enquiry she does not believe in. She expresses no political views of her own, and will not let the niceties of politics dictate her investigation. On the other hand, she is recognized as an excellent police officer, and can count on the support of her immediate superior, Lennart Brix, Chief of Homicide, even against the wishes of his own boss, Deputy Commissioner Ruth Hedeby.

Offered the chance to come back from exile as a border guard in the small Baltic port of Gedser to take part in a homicide investigation in Copenhagen, she only accepts

Mounting evidence suggests that the murder of the first victim, Anne Dragsholm, is linked to Islamist terrorism. To begin with, in a video put on the internet showing her murder, Dragsholm, who had worked as a military counsel in the Balkans, Cyprus and Afghanistan, reads a statement accusing the government and the Danish people of crimes against humanity: “The time has come for Allah’s revenge. The Muslim League will avenge the suffering Denmark has caused in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. I plead guilty. My blood will be shed. And many will die along with me”. The video and flyers left at the scene of this crime and the next murder lead the investigation to the arrest of a known Islamist sympathiser, Moroccan immigrant Abdel Hussein Kodmani, who runs a Muslim bookstore, and who ran the Dragsholm video on his website. With the skepticism characteristic of the police detectives of the noir procedural, Lund refuses to accept at face value the evidence against a suspect who corresponds only too well to the Danish image of a Muslim terrorist. She soon concludes that Kodmani has been set up. She suggests that the investigation should be redirected toward the army. This position pits her against the Danish internal security and intelligence service, which is convinced that the murders are an Islamist-inspired revenge against Danish soldiers. The PET even accuses her of jeopardizing one of their operations, by arresting a man, Kodmani, whom it had been keeping under surveillance, and clearly wants her off the case, which Brix totally refuses to do.

This episode establishes an important distinction between the role of intelligence services and the police play in the process of securitization. The former belong to a category of people Didier Bigo (1995: 17) refers to as “security professionals”, who “tend to read any event in the social world as a potential source of insecurity”, and who include policemen, gendarmes, intelligence services, military people, providers of technology of surveillance and experts on risk assessment (Bigo, 2002: 65), but from which I would exclude the protagonists of the noir procedural. Because of their expertise, these security professionals not only pursue people suspected of endangering national security, but also participate directly in identifying exactly what constitutes such threats, usually defining them in fairly broad terms, and in doing so wield enormous power over which their seems

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13 The first person to be charged, in 2005, under Denmark’s 2002 anti-terrorism law forbidding instigation of terrorism or offering advice to terrorists was Said Mansour, a Moroccan immigrant (Sullivan, 2005)
to be little or no democratic control. The detectives of the noir procedural, on the other hand, resist attempts to define as security issues what they see first and foremost as crimes to be solved. Part of the reason for this, of course, is the question of professional turf, because once the intelligence and security services succeed in raising security issues, they automatically take a case over. But I would contend that these noir police detectives also know that in allowing a case to become a matter of security, it is no longer subject to the usual rules of due process. In this way, they express opposition to the tendency over-securitize, so prevalent in the post-9/11 era.

Lund can hardly be considered a police officer imbued with the mission to oppose the security services in the name of democracy. This is what makes her actions all the more interesting and more convincing for the audience. Her only aim is to get to the truth. Simply by refusing to be intimidated by PET bullying and holding her ground, even against her own bosses, she manages to steer the investigation in the right direction, towards the existence of a possible killer within the ranks of the army, and, she reluctantly admits, within her own police team. She offers an alternative to the dominant narrative and becomes a critical security analyst *malgré elle*.

The political story begins simultaneously with the police investigation into the Dragsholm murder with the appointment of a new Justice Minister, Thomas Buch, a young naïve idealist MP, by Prime Minister Gert Grue Eriksen, leader of a minority centre-right government, having to deal with the People’s Party (PP) on its right and the Progressives on its left. By mentioning only the People’s Party by name, the producers give a clear sense of their intentions: to deconstruct the politics of securitization of the “Muslim threat” in Denmark and to show which party is playing the leading role in this process.

Buch is set the difficult task of getting the government’s anti-terrorism bill through Parliament by the following week, which means negotiating a compromise with the two opposition forces. The alleged link between the murders and Islamist terrorism give the PP a golden opportunity to push its agenda. Its leader, Erling Krabbe, talks of the Islamic threat: “The people must be protected. Think of London and Madrid”. He demands that certain Muslim associations should be banned. Buch retorts that there can
be no compromise on the constitution’s basic democratic values: “No threat or scare campaign from you or even from terrorists can change that”, adding that only one democratic government has ever banned a legal association in Denmark, and that was the Communist Party in 1941. In a joint press conference, announcing an agreement on the anti-terrorist bill Buch and Krabbe set out the basic terms of the debate:

Buch: These [terrorist] threats must not force us to compromise our democratic values. We must protect our freedom and fight the dark forces.

Krabbe: We will not be trampled on by these medieval fanatics who have hatched from Muslim schools and fanatical organisations subsidised by the Danish state. We must take strict measures against groups who try to undermine our society. Otherwise, we are selling out on the core of our identity as Danes. We can’t allow that.

This important debate between defending constitutional rights against the demands of increased security on the part of a party which has used fear of immigration in general, and suspicion of Muslim immigrants in particular, to boost its popularity, is only one part of Forbrydelsen 2’s double attack on the politics of securitization in this segment of the program. The other aims at an even more fundamental concern, the use of the security argument to increase government power at the expense of Parliament and the constitution.

In the fight over the anti-terrorism bill, Buch is constantly put under pressure to accede to the PP’s demands and realizes only too late that he had been chosen because the Prime Minister thought he would get the PP onside and ensure the government would stay in power. The government may privately have reservations about the PP’s demands to strengthen security against the “Muslim threat”, but they take second place to remaining in power. As for the PP, it never budges from its position on the bill and gets its way. Despite expressing concern over a possible cover-up, the party finally opts in favour of supporting the government rather than face a snap election when it is down in the polls. In both cases, securitization is achieved at the price of defending political principles.

It is only when he becomes aware of all the ramifications of the Alpha 3-2 murders that Buch begins to suspect that there has been a cover-up. First he is informed about a memo from the PET to Monberg warning of a connection between Dragholm’s
murder and terrorism. Then he receives a copy of a fax sent to the Defence Minister and indicating a possible civilian death at the hands of squad Alpha 3-2. This document is then in turn contradicted by another medical report made public two months later, one which allowed the Prime Minister to get more money from Parliament to send more troops to Afghanistan. But it is only in the final episode of the series that he discovers the real nature of the cover-up involved. The Prime Minister has known all along who the killer was, and that it had never been a question of covering up civilian deaths but of concealing the presence of a Special Forces officer (Strange) on a secret mission, which had not received the necessary approval of Parliament. If the news of this illegal mission had got out the government would have fallen. In his defence, the Prime Minister cites the standard greater good (or lesser evil) argument: “We are at war, what else could we have done? Do you think round-table discussions are useful in this time of war? …. The Taliban are gathering strength. Sometimes we have to put aside democracy in order to fight democracy”. He tells Buch that he appointed him Justice Minister because he thought he was harmless.

Like Lund, Buch is a fighter, but also a political novice. He does not lack courage – it takes a lot of it to dare to try and bring the Prime Minister, and leader of your party down after only ten days in office – but is easily outmanoeuvred by his more experienced colleagues. In exposing the political realities of the securitizing process, Forbrydelsen 2 adopts the pessimistic, not to say cynical, position that the logic of politics, seen as the will to power, in the final analysis overrides other considerations. Expediency will always trump principle. At the same time, this program reminds its viewers that despite the efforts of governments and intelligence services to silence debate over security by according the latter a special status that puts it above politics (i.e. protects it from any criticism), securitization, the process which determines what are the referent objects of security and the nature of the threats to it, remains a highly political activity. As such the citizen should always be wary of measures and policies taken in the name of security and be prepared to question them. Buch fails despite his persistence because he is unable to rally sufficient political support. Lund succeeds not only because she refuses to back down, but above all because she has the confidence of her superior, Lennart Brix, who appreciates her skills, and his backing against both his own hierarchy and the PET. She
also shows total lack of professional ambition. She is not prepared to change her ways even if it means being sent back to passport control duties in Gedser. Both Lund and Buch question authority and ferret out the truth whatever the cost. Buch refuses to be bought off with the offer of another cabinet post. In both cases the message would appear to be the need for awareness about the politics behind security and that the only valid position that can be adopted is one of resistance. True to the final scenes of the typical noir procedural, *Forbrydelsen* 2 cannot offer a particularly satisfying conclusion, and certainly not a “happy ending”. Lund may have solved the case, but in the process she has had to shoot a colleague, one of the few with whom she had built up a good personal and professional relationship. She has discovered a possible cover-up, but has no idea of its ramifications, and probably never will. Buch, on the other hand, knows only too well what and who the cover-up involves, but because of its national security implications can say nothing, and knowing full well he could be charged with treason.

**Conclusion**

*Minority Report* and *Forbrydelsen* 2 both serve dire warnings about the dangers of the obsession with security in their respective countries and about the close relationship between power and security policy. Neither offers any solution beyond the need for citizens to remain vigilant in the face of the arguments of those who would increase security measures that restrict traditional freedoms. Both are only too conscious that the demand for more security at the expense of (temporary?) limits to freedom of speech and the increased chances of arbitrary arrest constitutes an important part of the post-9/11 Zeitgeist. Their message is not one that passes easily, but popular culture, especially movies and TV series, provides one of the most powerful vehicles for presenting an alternative narrative to the version presented by governments, parties of the right and the security and intelligence services. By its very nature, popular culture also expresses the concerns of the societies in which it is produced. This brings us back to Ulrich Beck’s remark about the widening gap between European and American conceptions of security since 9/11 and what our two cultural artefacts tell us about it.

In the aftermath of 9/11 Europe appeared to share American concerns about terrorism, fears exacerbated by the Madrid and London bomb attacks in 2004 and 2005.
In the United States this situation led to the adoption of the USA Patriot Act and to the imposition of more and more security measures not only in US airports, but also in most airports throughout the world. It also induced most West European governments to step up their own anti-terrorist legislation and to give a much freer hand to their security and intelligence agencies. The United States also responded to the attacks against the Twin Towers by launching the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Neither war has been very popular in Europe, despite official support from many Western European governments, including Denmark. However, beyond the immediate shared fear of Islamist terrorism, which is indisputably very real on both sides of the Atlantic, at a deeper level the search for security on the part of the population has concentrated on different issues especially since the end of the Cold War. Movies and TV series reflect these differences.

In the US popular US TV programs like Profiler (1996-2000) and Criminal Minds (now in its tenth year at the time of writing) explore the possibilities of forestalling crimes, others, like CSI and its spin-offs (now in its fifteenth year) emphasize the use of technology in the service of crime prevention. Pre-9/11 movies such as True Lies (1994), The Siege (1998) and the various episodes of Die Hard, and a host of post-9/11 films and TV shows raise the spectre of terrorism. These all suggest a general feeling of insecurity felt across the United States, clearly expressed, for example, in the growing support for gun ownership, which has reached new heights since 9/11, but which has been there for a long time. Minority Report and its reflections on the illusion of total security deals with these concerns, not to denigrate them but to put them in perspective.

In many West European countries, as the strong showing of far-right parties in the May 2014 elections for the European Parliament confirmed, security has come to be more and more associated with national identity and way of life. The arrival of growing numbers of undocumented immigrants and asylum-seekers, especially from outside Europe, has been creating a backlash in many Western European countries since the end of the Cold War. It was palpable in countries like France, the UK and West Germany even before then. As these immigrants begin to settle in their new homes, the perceived trend towards what could be called creeping multi-culturalism, especially in countries like France and Denmark which have always been hostile to it, has been deeply resented. These feelings have often focused on Muslims as the group which seems to represent
both the greatest source of difference and the most resistance to assimilation. Making the connection between Islam and terrorism was an almost inevitable step in the wake of 9/11, one which *Forbrydelsen 2* questions.

*Minority Report* does not address the question of national identity, even though it is a common theme in Hollywood cinema and the object of constant debate and controversy, in particular since the outbreak of the so-called cultural war in the 1960s and which has raged ever since. But this battle over national identity, or more specifically over what it means to be a “good American”, is largely an internal political fight between left and right. To the extent that immigration has now entered the fray, it involves almost exclusively illegal immigration from the south, from Latin America, and has nothing to do with religious practices or terrorism. It is therefore not in itself a security issue. As *Forbrydelsen 2* reminds us, in Western Europe perceived threat to national identity has become a security concern, at least in the minds of an important segment of the population, one which is far too easily exploited.
Annex A

Synopsis of *Minority Report*

Freely adapted from a short story by science-fiction author, Philip Dick, written in 1954 and first published in 1956, *Minority Report* is set in Washington D.C. in the year 2054, in a society which has managed to eliminate all murders on its territory since the creation of the experimental Precrime police unit six years before. Headed by Chief John Anderton (Tom Cruise), this special force’s task is to arrest persons about to commit a murder before they act. The information leading to these arrests comes from three precogs (precognitives), twin brothers and a woman, survivors of a genetic experiment gone wrong, and who have acquired the gift of foreseeing murders soon to happen. Those apprehended before committing their crime are “haloed”, i.e. administered an electronic headband preventing them from any further thought or action, and are then taken, without any due process, to the aptly named Department of Containment where they will live out the rest of their lives in a state of suspended animation.

Anderton is totally dedicated to the success of Precrime, largely because of the disappearance, and probable death, of his son, Sean, six months before the program was initiated. His feelings of guilt over the loss of his son, for which he totally blame himself, have led to the break-up of his marriage and his addiction to a drug called Clarity. His faith in Precrime is shaken when he finds himself accused of intending the murder of someone he does not know 36 hours hence, and sets out to discover what is going on in a system in which he firmly believes. He is convinced that this is a set-up organized by a Department of Justice official, Danny Witwer (Colin Farrell), sent to investigate Precrime before it goes national, and whom Anderton (rightly) suspects of wanting to take over his job.

Anderton learns from retired scientist Iris Hineman (Lois Smith), the inventor of Precrime, that on rare occasions the precogs may disagree on a forecast scenario and one may produce an alternative to the view of the two others, a minority report. During his flight, Anderton abducts the female precog, Agatha (Samantha Morton), the one most likely to produce a minority report, only to discover that none exists in his particular case. He takes her to a hotel room where he is to meet Leo Crow, the unknown man he is
supposed to murder, who tries to provoke him into killing him by telling him that he killed his son. Instead of shooting him, Anderton decides to arrest him and discovers that Crow has nothing to do with the disappearance of his son, but is just a criminal whose family will be looked after if he agrees to allow Anderton to kill him. In an ensuing struggle Crow causes Anderton to shoot him. On the run, Anderton realizes he is being targeted because of his investigation into the missing file on the possible murder of a woman called Anne Lively. Meanwhile Witwer begins to doubt that Anderton murdered Crow, as forecast, and has concluded that someone has been fudging the evidence about Lively’s case, concluding that she had in fact been killed by someone who had avoided detection by Precrime, and that that someone necessarily belonging to the Precrime hierarchy. He reports his findings to Lamar Burgess (Max von Sydow), head of Precrime and Anderton’s mentor. Burgess then shoots Witwer, using Anderton’s pistol previously brought to him by Witwer, who was obviously getting uncomfortably close to the truth about Lively’s disappearance.

Anderton is finally caught, haloed and sent to the Department of Containment. In a meeting with Lara (Kathryn Morris), Anderton’s ex-wife, Burgess accidentally indicates that he drowned Anne Lively. Anderton escapes with Lara’s help and confronts him, first by phone, then in person, with his guilt for two murders at an official dinner organized to celebrate his appointment as director of the newly-formed national Precrime. Anderton explains, as the scene is projected for all the guests to see and put together by Anderton’s team, how Burgess had set him up to murder the supposed killer of his son, to avoid suspicion for the murder of Anne Lively, Agatha’s mother. In Burgess’s view she had to die because she wanted her daughter back, and without Agatha, the most important of the three precogs, it would mean the end of Precrime. Given the choice of killing Anderton, which would prove the precogs were right, but would lead to his arrest, or sparing him and showing they were wrong, and that Precrime had failed, Burgess shoots himself. The film ends with a voiceover from Anderton announcing Precrime was abandoned in 2054, and showing scenes of a reconciled Anderton couple and the three precogs now settled in peaceful retirement in an undisclosed isolated location.
Annex B

Synopsis of Forbrydelsen 2

Following the pattern of the first season of Forbrydelsen, the second one switches constantly between two distinct plots, a police investigation and a political intrigue, which occasionally converge, over a period of ten days in November. The two stories are connected by the war against terror and Denmark’s role in the war in Afghanistan. It is easier to understand the issues involved if each story is taken in turn.

The police investigation starts ten days after the murder of Anne Dragsholm (Sarah Gottlieb), found tied to a post and stabbed 21 times in the middle of Mindelunden, the park and cemetery erected in memory of Danish resistance fighters executed on the same spot by the Nazis during the occupation, on the outskirts of Copenhagen. Homicide Chief, Lennart Brix persuades former Chief Inspector Sarah Lund (Sofie Gråbøl), now demoted to the post of border guard in the small southern port of Gedser for her handling of the murder case featured in the first series, two years previously.

Everything seems to link this murder with Islamic extremism. Dragsholm’s death is followed by that of Allan Myg Poulsen (Nicolai Dahl Hamilton), an Afghanistan veteran, found stabbed and hanging upside down. The investigation leads to an Islamic bookshop, run by Abdel Hussein Kodmani (Ramadan Huseini), a Moroccan immigrant and well-known Islamist activist, but Lund soon suspects that Kodmani has been set up, and that the case has in fact got nothing to do with Islamist terrorism.

With the murder of two other war veterans, an army chaplain and then another former soldier hiding on a Swedish island, it becomes more and more obvious that the case is tied to Denmark’s role in Afghanistan, and more particularly to a squad known as Alpha 3-2, now disbanded, accused of massacring civilians two years before in an “incident” in which three members of the squad were killed. Dragsholm had acted as the squad’s lawyer in the ensuing enquiry, which cleared the squad of any wrongdoing. She had recently applied to re-open the case with new evidence and had been sacked by the army. Meanwhile the squad’s leader, former sergeant Jens Peter Raben (Ken Vedsegaard), is being held in a mental institution and has been denied early release. Lund learns from one of the members of the squad, Lisbeth Thomsen (Lotte Munk), before she
is killed, that “some fucked-up Danish officer went mad”, during the incident, and identifies him as “Perk”, who would seem to be Lieutenant Per K Møller, killed in Afghanistan. Raben, who has escaped, is chased and cornered by Lund and her partner Ulrik Strange (Mikael Birkkkjær), cries out “Perk” on seeing Strange, who shoots and wounds him.

The police hierarchy, following the lead of the Danish intelligence service, continues to suspect an Islamist plot, but Lund is more and more convinced that they should look at the army. She learns from Brix that Strange served as an officer in the Danish Special Forces in Afghanistan, but was demobbed six months before the Alpha 3-2 incident. Strange also admits to Lund that he has a tattoo on his shoulder, similar to the one Raben claims that Perk had. During his interrogation, Raben maintains that Perk murdered civilians and then got away before any help could come, and still insists that Strange is Perk.

Wanting to follow up another possible suspect, the brother of one of the soldiers killed during the Alpha 3-2 incident, Lund gets permission to extend her investigation to Afghanistan. Accompanied by Strange, she finally finds evidence of civilian deaths. In her mind, they should still look at the Special Forces, and tells Brix she suspects Strange. On the way to taking Raben back to hospital, Lund confronts Strange at Mindelunden. He gives himself away with a detail about Dragholm’s murder that only the killer could have known. He tells Lund Dragsholm had seen his tattoo during a military enquiry and had realized he was Perk. Strange takes Lund’s gun and shoots her with it. As he is about to shoot Raben, Lund appears and hits him from behind, shoots him dead when he tries to retrieve his pistol, and then pulls off her body-armour.

The political intrigue begins simultaneously with the police investigation. A young idealist member of the governing centrist party, Thomas Buch (Nicolas Bro), replaces Justice Minister Frode Monberg (Niels Anders Thorn), recently hospitalized following an alleged heart attack. His main task, according to Prime Minister Gert Grue Eriksen (Kurt Ravn) is to build a consensus with the opposition parties, the right-wing People’s Party and the leftist Progressives around the government’s anti-terrorism bill, no easy job. The leader of the People’s Party, Erling Krabbe (Jens Jacob Tychsen), pushes
for a much harder bill, outlawing certain Muslim associations. A position the Progressives reject, withdrawing from any further negotiations. Buch realizes that a lot of relevant information about the murders and their connection with Afghanistan has been kept from him, and suspects a cover-up, and which finally leads him to the Prime Minister, and decides to bring him down. Krabbe and his own party colleagues agree with his assessment, but refuse to vote the Prime Minister out of office, because that would lead to an election that the polls show they would surely lose. In a final meeting between the two, the Prime Minister lets Buch know exactly what has been going on. There was no cover-up of civilian deaths, but rather that of the presence of a Special Forces officer on an illegal secret mission, since it had not been authorized by the Parliament.. As Buch realizes, the Prime Minister has known all along who the officer was and did nothing to stop his killing spree, in the interest of national security. The Prime Minister then opens the door to the next room where the whole cabinet and Krabbe are waiting to show their full support for his position, leaving Buch totally isolated.
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