

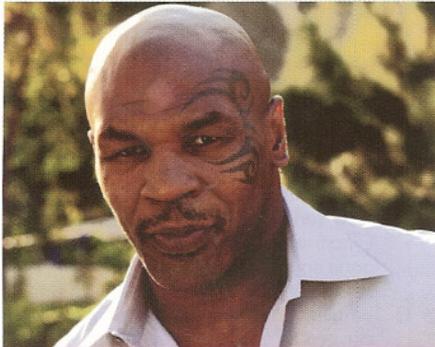
BRONSON (18)

DIRECTOR: NICOLAS WINDING REFN
RELEASED: MARCH 13TH
(Vertigo)

Michael Peterson, better known as 'Charles Bronson' has the dubious honour of being 'Britain's most notorious prisoner'. A fascinatingly complex and self-destructive figure, he has spent most of his life behind bars. Prison gave him the recognition he craved; earning a reputation for insane random acts of violence and a punishing exercise routine.

This grimly humorous and often surreal drama takes us through the pivotal moments of Bronson's life, including hold-ups, prizefights and dancing to the Pet Shop Boys in a mental hospital. No punches - or kicks, or chokeholds - are pulled along the way.

Despite the film's commitment to ultra-realistic violence, its second half concentrates on the man's idiosyncratic artistic ability; developed through prison classes and encouraged by James Lance's entertainingly camp teacher. Bronson's twin passions of art and violence culminate in an extraordinary climax, which will surely be one of the most talked about in a British movie this year. **8/10** (ROB MONK)



TYSON (TBC)

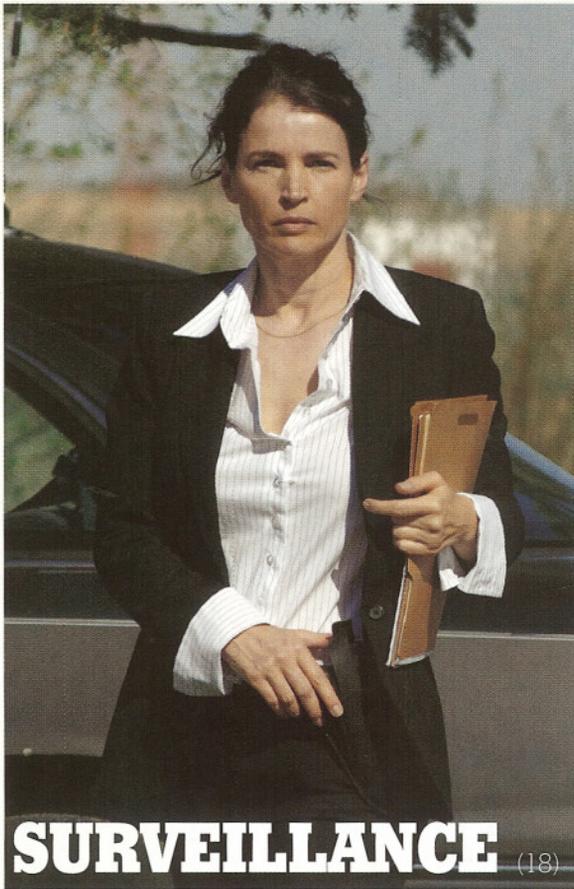
DIRECTOR: JAMES TOBACK
RELEASED: MARCH 27TH
(Revolver)

World champion, washed-up has-been or Dredrick Tatum; there's an element of all of them in the persona of boxing legend Mike Tyson. This documentary follows his life in his own words, supplementing his story with archive footage of a remarkable athlete both breathtaking and utterly terrifying in his strength, pace and agility.

What's most surprising is how vulnerable Tyson's soul is, as he almost breaks down when recounting how he realised he would never be bullied again. For a man occasionally demonised, he's also remarkably entertaining; sometimes with a wit as powerful as his punch, sometimes inadvertently as he muddles his words. Even now, he's impossible to second guess.

Unfortunately this is a strong documentary weakened by a self-serving edge. With his rape conviction studied only in the context of its impact on his confidence and career, it's hard to feel any sympathy for the man who fought against the odds to temporarily have it all.

7/10 (BEN HOPKINS)



SURVEILLANCE (18)

DIRECTOR: JENNIFER LYNCH
RELEASED: MARCH 6TH
(Odeon Sky Filmworks)

It's been so long since Jennifer Lynch's previous film, *Boxing Helena*, that in an ideal world it would be fairer to judge *Surveillance* as a debut feature. However, comparisons with her father David Lynch will always be made, so it's hard to argue against the fact that a sizeable percentage of *Surveillance*'s early adopters will be eager to see if she displays the family traits of compelling, unconventional filmmaking with more success this time around.

On first impressions, *Surveillance* appears to be hedging towards being a routine crime investigation drama, its central participants being fun lovin' junkies, bored policemen equally as likely to protect as to sever, and a family apparently national lampooning themselves across Middle America. Investigators Elizabeth Anderson (Julia Ormond) and Sam Hallaway (Bill Pullman) are faced with the task of unravelling how this disparate collection of strangers are united by a series of murders - the secret of which is surely extractable from unsettlingly unaffected child Stephanie (Ryan Simpkins), officer-by-numbers Jack Bennett (Kent Harper, also the film's co-writer), and self-assured party girl Bobbi (Pell James).

As the truth strips itself away from the myriad interrogations, allegations and counter-claims, *Surveillance* proves itself to be anything but generic. Lynch and Harper steer what appears to be a simple formula via a deviancy of extended, obtuse theorems into something far more creatively rewarding. As *Surveillance* progresses, it twists, cracks and melts into something darker, more obtuse and, well, plain Lynchian.

Her father's films don't just split opinion, they identify the middle-ground and systematically massacre it out of existence. *Surveillance* does the same, although with far more conviction than the ill-fated *Boxing Helena*. Dissenters will struggle with this film's dark soul, lack of respect for convention, and gnarled, almost comic book gore that seems at odds with a work seeking to push boundaries and expectations. Much like the musician's cliché that a hateful audience is better than an indifferent one, the vast majority of great films have a small but dedicated anti-fanbase that only seems to further validate the experience.

The concept of lazy journalism is a common, bitter complaint on website forums the world over, but sometimes the simplest comparisons are the best. In that respect, *Surveillance* can be described lazily - but accurately - as being as complexly structured and creepily sinister as *Mulholland Drive* meets *Blue Velvet*. On a more base level, *Surveillance* is destined to be one of the year's great films. **9/10** (BEN HOPKINS)



THE DAMNED UNITED (TBC)

DIRECTOR: TOM HOOPER
RELEASED: MARCH 27TH
(Sony)

Brian Clough's brief and highly unsuccessful tenure as manager of Leeds might not be the most obvious subject for a film, but *The Damned United* proves to be highly enjoyable for fans of football nostalgia. Seemingly unable to avoid clashing egos with players, opponents, chairman and even his own assistant, Clough's spell at the helm saw the club's fortunes take a near immediate u-turn following years of success under Don Revie.

The focus of *The Damned United* generally falls on the comedic side of the story, with Clough's famously witty one-liners given priority over the darker elements that a more studious biopic may have highlighted. Timothy Spall reiterates that feeling in his role as assistant Peter Taylor, in this case often the funny man to Michael Sheen's straighter lead performance. As such, *The Damned United* is far from perfect, but if you yearn for the days of football being a glamour-free battlefield of machismo, you'll find it great fun nonetheless. **8/10** (BEN HOPKINS)



HUSH (15)

DIRECTOR: MARK TONDERAI
RELEASED: MARCH 13TH
(Optimum)

The latest offering from the Warp X stable can be neatly summarised as *Wolf Creek* on the M1, as Zakes (Zakes?) battles to save his unfaithful girlfriend Beth from the clutches of a mysterious hooded trucker. As the cinematography prioritises realism, and a succession of close-up shots hint at clues and red herrings galore, it appears that Mark Tonderai is aiming for a psychological thriller, but that aim is undermined by an over-reliance on clichés and coincidences.

Although largely a reverse cat and mouse by numbers scenario, *Hush* establishes its twisted credentials with some old fashioned nastiness and a finale as gut-wrenchingly intense as it is utterly ludicrous. If you expect a taut, cerebral darkness comparable to something like *Funny Games* or the otherwise very similar *The Vanishing*, you'll be disappointed as the film's innate moral quandary is underplayed. But *Hush* is successful on a more base level as it delivers a quick, uncomplicated thrill. **7/10** (BEN HOPKINS)