



## Nineteen Eighty-four

Director: Michael Radford  
©: Virgin Cinema Films  
Production Company:  
Umbrella-Rosenblum Films Ltd  
For: Virgin Cinema Films  
In association with: Virgin Benelux, B.V.,  
Virgin Schallplatten  
Executive Producer: Marvin J. Rosenblum  
Producer: Simon Perry  
Co-producers: Al Clark, Robert Devereux  
Associate Producer: John Davis  
Production Accountant: Jack Smith  
Assistant Accountant: Beryl Brown  
Accounts Secretary: Rebecca Starr  
Cashier: Sandra Nixon  
Production Co-ordinator: Margaret Waldie  
Production Manager: Gladys Pearce  
2nd Unit Production Manager: Paul Sparrow  
Unit Manager: Paul Shersby  
Location Manager: Richard Craven  
Technical Supervisor: Charles Staffell  
Production Assistant: Sarah O'Brien  
Floor Runner: Gerard Wall  
Production Runner: Simon Cellan Jones  
Assistant to the Producer: Mary Davies  
Original Research: Paul Collard  
Film Researcher: Sue Sudbury  
1st Assistant Director: Chris Rose  
2nd Assistant Director: John Dodds  
3rd Assistant Directors: Patrick Kinney,  
Dave Keating  
Continuity: Ene Watts  
Casting Director: Rebecca Howard  
Assistant Casting Director: Jane Arnell  
Screenplay: Michael Radford  
Additional Script Material: Jonathan Gems  
Based on the novel by: George Orwell  
Director of Photography: Roger Deakins  
Camera Operator: Roger Deakins  
Senior Focus Puller: Andrew Speller  
Focus Puller: James Ainslie  
Clapper/Loader: Fraser Taggart  
Camera Grip: Mike Andrews  
Chief Electrician: John Higgins  
Chargehand Electricians: John Haylen,  
Michael James  
Stills Photography: Sarah Quill  
Matte Artist: Ray Caple  
Special Effects Supervisor: Ian Scoones  
Special Effects Technicians: Chris Verner,  
Andrew Thompson  
Special Effects Assistant: David Scholefield  
Graphics Designer: Sid Sutton  
Editor: Tom Priestley  
Associate Editors: Polly Moseley, Nicolas Gaster  
Assistant Editors: Neil Farrell, Simon Harris,  
Nicolette Bolgar, Eva Martin  
Editing Room Runner: Sarah Rains  
Production Designer: Allan Cameron  
Art Directors: Martin Hebert, Grant Hicks  
Assistant Art Director: Mark Raggett  
Art Department Assistants: Amanda Grenville,  
Eddie Andres  
Sketch Artist: Simon Murton  
Draughtsman: Royce Baxter  
Scenic Artist: Tony Strong  
Prop Master: John Allenby  
Production Buyer: Peter Rutherford  
Chargehand Propman: Kieron MacNamara  
Propman: Mark Fruin  
Construction Manager: John Godfrey  
Supervising Rigger: Phil St. John

Muse of Fire: Richard Burton

# Nineteen Eighty-four

Burton was not first choice for the role of inscrutable Inner Party official O'Brien in Radford's as-yet-unmatched adaptation of the totemic dystopian novel. Yet his casting opposite Hurt's Winston Smith proved a masterstroke. Shot over the exact period specified by Orwell, the film was released two months after Burton's death at just 58. All the more chilling for its restraint, his performance was a sobering swansong to an extraordinary career.

### A contemporary review

When a Sunday supplement asked her what she was doing for Christmas, Brigid Brophy once replied that she was off to Istanbul so as 'to eat turkey in Turkey'. To judge from the queues outside the cinemas, audiences felt much the same about 'seeing *1984* in 1984'. How right they were. The novel is a wasting asset and, now the year is out, is destined for the literary shelf alongside other Utopias. The film-going public were quick to appreciate that Mike Radford's *Nineteen Eighty-four* is definitive in this respect, a coup achieved in the nick of time which no one else can ever pull off.

But how will it look in 1985? It is not an interpretation of Orwell's novel, a '1984 for our times'. It might be argued that plot and characterisation are so flimsy in the original that flights of analysis were out of the question, but the authors' extraordinary – some might say slavish – fidelity to the novel is a deliberate choice, not a *pis aller*. There is a particular pleasure when the washerwoman's song comes in pat on cue or the picture in Mr Charrington's shop falls off the wall to reveal a screen, and it derives from knowing the outcome. Radford's *Nineteen Eighty-four* presupposes a childlike disposition in its audience – a disposition that requires the exact repetition of a favourite bedtime story and will not tolerate the slightest departure from the canon. Not enough has been made of *Nineteen Eighty-four* as a classic of juvenile literature (the rats are a case in point), but it has been cleverly identified here.

What this means, however, is that the slightest deviation takes on disproportionate significance, and I confess to a feeling of immense frustration when Winston sits down to write his diary by merely placing himself to the side of the screen instead of hiding in the cunning little nook, calculated to appeal to adolescents, which his room by chance contained. There are also a couple of interpolations of a slightly different order: the boy Winston seeing his mother devoured by rats and the adult Winston's fantasy that Room 101 opens on to fields of wheat. The first is genuinely obtrusive, not as an improbable source for Winston's phobia but because it is an extraordinarily vivid memory for the man who otherwise has to struggle for recall. But if the psychoanalytic mode sits uneasily with the collective amnesia of Oceania, this is really Orwell's problem, not Radford's. Both here and at the end, it must be said that the rats are highly satisfactory. As for Room 101, the image recurs through the film. It is not simply that Winston under torture babbles of green fields; he has, more interestingly, fallen victim to Inner Party propaganda. The Two Minutes' Hate always begins with views of a green and pleasant land that Goldstein has supposedly destroyed, but Winston's vision of paradise is artificially induced and shot in that distinctive yellow light usually reserved for margarine ads, so that it becomes a highly effective and economical statement of what Ingloc is all about.

*Costume Designer:* Emma Porteous  
*Wardrobe Supervisor:* John Brady, Philippe Pickford  
*Wardrobe Assistants:* Colin Wilson,  
Cynthea Dowling, Noel Radford  
*Make-up Supervisor:* Mary Hill  
*Make-up Artists:* Debbie Scragg, Anna Dryhurst  
*Hairdressing Supervisor:* Paula Gillespie  
*Hairdresser:* Stephanie Kaye  
*Opticals:* General Screen Enterprises  
*Laboratory Engineer:* John Hemmings  
*Colour by:* Eastmancolor  
*Music:* The Eurythmics  
*Music Director:* Dominic Muldowney  
*Sound Mixer:* Bruce White  
*Sound Assistant:* Gerry Bates  
*Boom Operator:* Guido Reidy  
*Dubbing Mixers:* Gerry Humphreys,  
Robin O'Donoghue  
*Re-recording Mixer:* Trevor Pyke  
*Sound Editor:* Colin Miller  
*Assistant Sound Editors:* Bill Barringer,  
Joe Gallagher  
*Dialogue Editor:* Derek Holding  
*Effects Editor:* Bryan Tilling  
*Crowd Co-ordinator:* Jack Ross  
*Project Development:* Robin Dalton  
*Unit Nurse:* Lynne Buckley  
*"With love and admiration 1925-1984":*  
Richard Burton  
*Stunt Co-ordinators:* Bill Weston,  
Terry Walsh, Eddie Stacey  
*Rat Handler:* David Corke  
*Unit Publicist:* Anne Tasker  
*Studio:* Shepperton Studios  
*Cast:*  
John Hurt (*Winston Smith*)  
Richard Burton (*O'Brien*)  
Suzanna Hamilton (*Julia*)  
Cyril Cusack (*Charrington*)  
Gregor Fisher (*Parsons*)  
James Walker (*Syme*)  
Andrew Wilde (*Tillotson*)  
David Trevena (*Tillotson's friend*)  
David Cann (*Martin*)  
Anthony Benson (*Jones*)  
Peter Frye (*Rutherford*)  
Roger Lloyd Pack (*waiter*)  
Rupert Baderman (*Winston as a boy*)  
Corinna Seddon (*Winston's mother*)  
Martha Parsey (*Winston's sister*)  
Merelina Kendall (*Mrs Parsons*)  
P.J. Nicholas (*William Parsons*)  
Lynne Radford (*Susan Parsons*)  
Pip Donaghy (*Inner Party speaker*)  
Shirley Stelfox (*whore*)  
Janet Key (*instructress*)  
Hugh Walters (*artsem lecturer*)  
John Hughes (*man in white cat*)  
Robert Putt (*shouting pole*)  
Christine Hargreaves (*soup lady*)  
Garry Cooper, Matthew Scurfield (*guards*)  
John Golightly, Rolf Saxon (*patrolmen*)  
Ole Oldendorp (*Eurasian soldier*)  
Eddie Stacey (*executioner*)  
Norman Bacon (*man on station*)  
John Foss (*youth leader*)  
Carey Wilson, Mitzi McKenzie (*party members*)  
Phyllis Logan (*telescreen announcer*)  
Pam Gems (*washerwoman*)  
Joscik Barbarossa (*Aaronson*)  
John Boswall (*Emmanuel Goldstein*)  
Bob Flag (*Big Brother*)  
UK-West Germany 1984©  
110 mins  
Digital 4K

The screening on Mon 15 Dec will be introduced by  
Lucy Bolton, Queen Mary University of London

The authors' wish to be faithful also extended to the casting. It is known that John Hurt was always central to the producers' conception of the film, and he is made for the part (where is his leg ulcer, though?). Richard Burton's performance is remarkable for being so low key when both the actor's reputation and previous attempts at the role led one to expect more conspicuous charisma. O'Brien, in fact, figures less than might have been imagined, and it would be interesting to know whether this was a result of very tight shooting schedules. However, any film version of *Nineteen Eighty-four* must stand or fall by its Julia, and if the authors considered Orwell's fantasy of a sexpot in a siren suit slightly pathetic they give no hint of it here. Julia is played straight: Suzanna Hamilton is neither too young nor too old, too glamorous or too dowdy, and she succeeds in being credible.

Even so, there must only be a limited number of people who will go to *Nineteen Eighty-four* simply to relive their childhood. But the real surprises and the genuine exercise of creative talent come with the design of the film, which is brilliant. Every item in these carefully constructed sets is both familiar and strange. Outdated technology is deployed for very modern kinds of surveillance. It is rather like paying a visit to the Irish Republic and finding that people still smoke 'Craven A': Winston dials an old-fashioned metal telephone of the kind found in Button B call-boxes; the documents he has to revise arrive in suction impelled tubes that department stores once used to send money to the cashier; when the Thought Police want to know what is going on in somebody's apartment, they resort to the crude expedient of flying an ancient helicopter low along the street and peering in through the window. Nor is breakfast television forgotten: simply, Winston is awoken not by a Green Goddess but by an old-style gym mistress complete with divided skirt and whistle.

Radford is trying here to do something more than appeal to the nostalgia (or infantilism) of a certain generation. In *Nineteen Eighty-four* design is a mode of Orwell interpretation. Deconsecrating, re-naming, or changing the function of monuments is more symbolic than their destruction. The Convention knew this and so does Mrs Thatcher (County Hall, it should be said, does not figure). So when familiar London landmarks such as Alexandra Palace, Battersea Power Station and Senate House appear in new guises, London momentarily takes on the appearance of modern Berlin: nothing is quite what it seems, what you remember, or what you learned before. It is too often forgotten that what Orwell describes in *Nineteen Eighty-four* is the English Revolution. Radford has rightly seized on this aspect of the book, but imaginatively and in a way which provides that rare thing: a British film in distinctively English locations. Catch it while you can.

Jill Forbes, *Sight and Sound*, Winter 1984/5