

## — Book —



### Spooked

Nicholas Schou

With the force of an M1 tank, Nicholas Schou batters at the silence surrounding the insidious relationship between America's intelligence agencies and the media. Schou, an award-winning investigative reporter (an endangered species), names names throughout his book, *Spooked*. You won't find "anonymous" anywhere.

The CIA has had its slimy tentacles in the media since the Cold War. But after 9-11, with the speed of a Ferrari, the Mount Everest of propaganda the public has been fed (can you say "super-duper sized"?) is utterly staggering. So much for "free press."

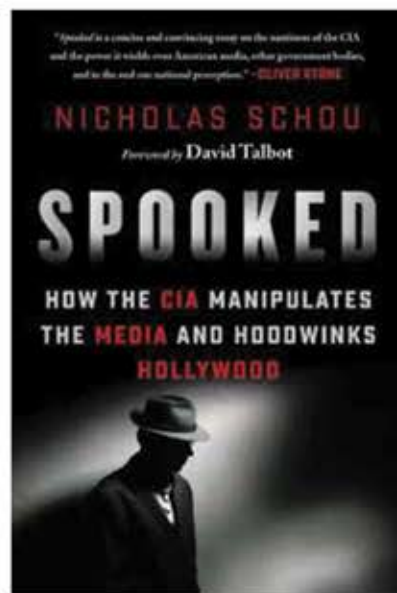
The lies and deceit run all the way to the White House. It doesn't matter which side of the aisle our presidents come from, though some are worse than others. *Spooked* runs up through Obama.

Oh, yeah, and I thought Hollywood

was supposed to be the hot, molten lava-spewing bed of liberals, right? That's what whiny talk radio cries 24/7. Imagine my chagrin when a few of my favorite actors and movies are named in the book as having ties to intelligence agencies, along with directors and producers and the spooks who work with them.

Here are some examples from this book:

- The movie, *Argo*, which took many liberties with the truth, arguably ranks as the CIA's most successful propaganda coup in Hollywood. *Argo* was directed by and starred Ben Affleck, won three academy awards, and made over \$230 million.
- You think that the killing of Osama



bin Laden happened the way Obama claimed? Legendary investigative reporter Seymour Hersh has something to add to that story of mirrors.

- *New York Times* reporter Judith Miller repeatedly wrote or co-wrote pro-war front-page stories to manipulate public opinion to support the Iraqi invasion. Ultimately, these stories proved to be indefensible.

- The correspondence files of the late CIA spymaster Allen Dulles, stored at Princeton University, are stuffed full of chummy letters between Dulles and many of America's top media executives, editors, reporters, and broadcasters.
- A US Army report in early 2008 identified WikiLeaks as an "official

enemy and detailed a strategy on how to target the people behind it. Classified National Security Agency [NSA] documents leaked in 2013 by Edward Snowden, an NSA contractor, also revealed that the agency placed [Julian] Assange [founder of WikiLeaks] on a man-hunting list three years earlier, and had worked with British Intelligence to monitor visitors to the WikiLeaks website."

Does it get worse? Yes. Schou is like a "Live Wire" doing the "Bad Boy Boogie" (two of my favorite AC/DC songs) all over television. *Spooked* will either confirm what you already believe and/or add pages to what you think you might already know. It is definitely an eye-opener.

Speaking of openers, I did uncork a few while reading this most excellent book.

*Spooked*. Get it. Read it. See if it doesn't change your perception of things. Remember, information is power. Just ask the CIA.

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## — Movie —



### Hidden Figures

**Reviewer rating:** 5 Apples  
**Genre:** Biography/Drama  
**PG**

**Opened:** January 2017

**Cast:** Taraji P. Henson, Octavia Spencer, Janelle Monáe, Kevin Costner

**Director:** Theodore Melfi

When I heard that the film *Hidden Figures* is based on a true and untold story, I wondered how many liberties Hollywood had taken with the facts—they so often change a story to fit their movie-making needs. So I put on my imaginary investigative reporting badge and looked into the story behind the story. I happily discovered that this film is quite accurate in its storytelling. The filmmakers had a plethora of primary and secondary facts available to them, including the book *Hidden Figures: The American Dream and the Untold Story of the Black Women Mathematicians Who Helped Win*



1 Apple—Don't bother  
5 Apples—Don't miss

*the Space Race* by author and historian Margot Lee

Shetterly.

I have been fascinated with the space age since I was three years old, when I overheard my family discussing news that a monkey was going into space. So it should be no surprise that I saw this film twice and would watch it again in a nanosecond, not just because I love space, but because this is a truly fantastic and inspirational story.

It takes place at NASA in the 1960s, when the United States was in a highly competitive race with Russia to get a man into orbit. While most Americans know that, what we did not know, until now, is that a heroic group of gifted African-



American women mathematicians, known as "computers in skirts," were astronomically crucial to the success of the program.

While this film celebrates the entire group of African-American female mathematicians at NASA, it specifically follows three brilliant women, Katherine G. Johnson (Taraji P.

Henson), Dorothy Vaughan (Octavia Spencer), and Mary Jackson (Janelle Monáe), who were the mathematical brains behind the scenes that helped propel astronaut John Glenn into orbit.

At that time sexism and racial issues were running rampant. Women were expected to wear skirts and a simple pearl necklace. Segregated bathrooms existed within NASA's very own walls.

In one poignant scene Katherine's boss frustratingly confronts her regarding her whereabouts for 40 minutes every day. Katherine explains to him that she must run a half mile across campus (in heels, no less) just to relieve herself because there are no other «colored» bathrooms available to her.

*Hidden Figures* tells this story in an honorable, graceful, and, at times, playful and upbeat manner (cue the toe-tapping music, "Runnin'," by producer-musician Pharrell Williams, as Katherine dashes through the parking lots to use the restroom). You can't help but laugh and cry at the successes and challenges these trailblazing women experience. If you want to feel inspired and proud, then grab your popcorn, soda, and candy, and settle in for this feel-good movie about three humble American heroes who will never again be hidden figures.

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