

I'm There Right Now, Call Me: What Is Really Happening in David Lynch's *Lost Highway*

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When David Lynch's *Lost Highway* (1997) was released, Ebert said "there was no sense to be made of it," but time has proved his slight to be a genre; *Lost Highway* was the first of many puzzle films in the decade that followed. No small percentage of viewers claim to be visually fascinated and held in suspense by the film, though they cannot claim to understand what plot, story or reality is portrayed. Few films can claim such testament. Just what is the "reality" that underlies the viewing experience of *Lost Highway* ... and what film influences did Lynch employ?

I would argue that *Lost Highway* is a 135-minute joy ride inside the mind of a psychotic killer taking his last breaths on Death Row. Lynch has a penchant for significant clues early on in his films ... and backing the opening credits with David Bowie's "I'm Deranged" is no small one. What the viewer sees and hears during the first thirty seconds of the film may well be a prisoner smoking his last cigarette while the opening of an electronically-driven cell door throws the light of day into his cell. And that thirty seconds may also well be the only "reality" in the entire film, the rest being a montage of self-delusions, denied realities and barely suppressed, recurring memories that are, according to the killer, "how I remember them, not necessarily the way they happened." Twenty minutes into the film, when the viewer encounters a man who can be in two places at the same time, the viewer is ascertained that the film has abandoned reality. The killer's unexplained writhings, headaches and nosebleeds, the flashing and crackling and dimming lights throughout the film, all may well be the process of the killer's actual electrocution, a final reality that the killer refuses to allow to intrude into his dying thoughts. The film's protagonist may be Fred, a saxophone player as seen in the first act, or he may be Pete, an auto mechanic, as seen in the film's second act. Likely it is neither. At the end of it all, it is Dick Laurent that is pronounced dead.

Laurent views himself as a good man, the victim of circumstance, of conspiracy, of a healthy dose of manipulation via *femme fatale*. Most *film-noir* protagonists do. And so he must try to recall his memories, to know and to prove his innocence. For Laurent, amnesia is neither a satisfactory defense nor a satisfactory psychological defense mechanism. On the other hand, he is indeed guilty, and most likely as the result of the weak decisions he's made along the way. Most *film-noir* protagonists are. And so he must also suppress his memories, in order to self-deny his guilt. Laurent's dilemma, to reconcile what cannot be reconciled, to reconstruct the facts as they are into a memory that he can live with, only leads him even further into the abyss of psychosis, further detours him away from the highway back to sanity.

It is those muddled, repetitive memories, continually surfacing and submerging, that yield the viewer some notion as to what may have actually occurred. What is consistent throughout Laurent's memories are hints of his marginal ability to sexually satisfy or interest his lover. Early on in the film, his lover is limp and disinterested during the act, then pats him on the back and speaks to him in puerile tones to console him in his lack of adequate performance. Sheila is pleased that one night when "he was different." And Laurent seems to have done little to arouse his blonde in the desert into more civil behavior.

As the film progresses, Laurent's lover is increasingly portrayed as unfaithful, immersed in promiscuity, pornography and sado-masochism. She takes a number of lovers, she appears in an adult film, she strips and "performs" for a gangster with pleasure-filled eyes while at the muzzle of his gun, she watches and is aroused by snuff films and leather. But the greater reality here is that it is actually Laurent's mind, not his lover, that is becoming increasingly obsessed with these sexual preferences as the film progresses.

In the real world, these are Laurent's preferences and they evolve into the cure for his impotence. The only superior sexual performance Laurent delivers or recalls is triggered by watching insects roasting to death under light bulbs and the spider that is stalking them. This event was the first detour in his sexual persona, a detour that eventually leads to far darker, far more prurient stuff. It is he, not she, that has found arousal within pain and death. To admit this to himself would only bring him closer to realizing his own crime; instead, Laurent finds it much more convenient to imagine these obsessions upon his lover, making her the culpable party in the shortcomings of their relationship.

Meanwhile, the memories of docile and devoted Sheila are kept tangent, since those memories more truly represent the nature of his lover, a nature he must deny in his mind. Perhaps, in reality, Laurent's lover was actually unaware of his deviances, but more likely is that she eventually decides to tolerate them, to preserve the relationship and to attempt her find some sexual satisfaction within it. They must have "invited them into their house," as it is "not the custom for them to go where they are not wanted." Some portion of the videotaping, group sex and other deviances seen in *Lost Highway* may well have occurred in Laurent's bedroom with his reluctant but compliant lover in hand. To account for an actor (besides himself) in these sordid events, Laurent's reinterpretation injects unsavory characters such as Andy and Mr. Eddy. Eventually, the more unsavory Mr. Eddy conveniently takes on a second name ... Laurent's name ... and with it, Laurent's blame.

Laurent's decisions to partake of these ever-deepening sexual indulgences effect his unraveling. Laurent's id, with its libidinal and violent natures, begins to dominate his conscious mind, slipping him away from sanity. In his reinterpretation of reality, Laurent cannot mentally acknowledge this persona is part of him, but an actor must be there to account for the facts, so Laurent's mind accommodates with a "Mystery Man," who, by film's end, has evolved into Laurent's full-fledged partner-in-crime.

And there is indeed quite the crime. For when Laurent's lover continues one of her trysts *sans* Laurent, the stage is well set for the fulfillment of Laurent's deepest primal urges. The audience has seen quite a bit of stalking, a memory Laurent cannot suppress. Laurent stalks them to their tryst where he waits for his lover to leave, then kills the man. Whether that man is Andy, Eddy ... or someone the audience doesn't even know .. is not a matter of much importance. After Laurent sets the tryst cabin on fire to cover up his crime, he finds it leaves him uncontrollably aroused as never before. Laurent returns to his home, to his sleeping lover, and videotapes his dismemberment of her. It is punishment for her infidelity and, even more so, for his own sexual pleasure.

Laurent will have none of this truth in his own mind. He first imagines himself the cuckold, valiantly protecting his wife from some other stalker/voyeur. The scenario doesn't hold in his mind. Laurent then has to design a more unrealistic scenario, where his crimes are committed in the name of rescuing his lover from a gangster. This concoction, too, does not hold when the muddled memories of her infidelity and betrayal surface. The Mystery Man then takes Laurent on a tour of, a

confrontation with, a more realistic vision of events. Those revelations leave Laurent racing again down the highway, away from sanity and truth, attempting to morph once again into some tolerable scenario of memories. On that highway, at that moment of his execution, is Laurent's mind extinguished ... or is Laurent's mind doomed to a Buddhist afterlife, where it must travel ever further down this highway, ever more lost from the truth, through these psychotic cycles, for eternity? Not even David Lynch can say for sure, however his closing suggests that the viewer has only seen two full chapters in Laurent's story ... and that another, further down the highway, is preparing to begin.

There are viewers who think *Lost Highway* is one of cinema's greatest works, and that's a notion that perplexes many others. What cinema buffs see in *Lost Highway* is Lynch's creative melding of three genres of films; the surrealism of Luis Brnel, the suspense of Hitchcock and classic 1940s *film-noir* wrapped up into a single film that is non-linear and a puzzle film to boot. And Lynch's talent can't be denied when he accomplishes this feat by melding the plotlines and techniques from what are arguably the best films ever produced in each of those genres.

Compare a few of the key elements of Hitchcock's *Vertigo* to that of *Lost Highway*: a film split in half with duplicative stories, a doppelganger blonde/brunette, a flawed protagonist who is impotent but "made whole" again by chancing into his manhood, thereafter psychologically obsessed with his lover as he imagines her, thereby dooming himself to repeat all his mistakes a second time around.

Within ten minutes of the opening of Bunuel's surrealistic *Belle De Jour* (1967), the viewer realizes that Séverine is a woman who lives mostly in her own imagination and can only find her sexual pleasure within the confines of sado-masochism. To find that satisfaction, she immerses herself into a brothel. As *Belle De Jour* progresses, the viewer is increasingly perplexed as to how much of what is seen is reality and how much is merely in the makings of Séverine's mind. Both *Belle De Jour* and *Lost Highway* critically incorporate a delving into the subconscious and its sexual deviations and motivations, as well as the cinematic technique of simultaneously masking and revealing reality through the use of surrealism. Lynch is also drawing upon the tradition of Brnel's *That Obscure Object of Desire* (1977), where the director surrealistically interchanges two young actresses to represent the same woman.

The stock element of *film-noir* is a sexed-up, venomous, scolding, manipulative *femme fatale* that victimizes a morally and intellectually weaker male into intrigue and crime for her own gain. Laurent is first mildly victimized as a cuckold, but it is in the second half of *Lost Highway* that its *film-noir* nature fully blossoms, where Laurent is taken on by a gangster's moll as a lover only to patsy him into a murder and robbery. When Laurent finally comprehends his position, he asks "Why did you pick me?" Of course, in *film-noir*, the answer is always obvious: because you are the man who was morally weak enough to be my victim. His lover's specific reply to this total prostration could no better define the *film-noir* female: "You want me now more than ever, don't you?" There are a number of excellent films in this genre, *Double Indemnity* (1944) starring Fred McMurray and Barbara Stanwyck is one classic. For those who need to get acquainted with *film-noir* but prefer more modern films, *Palmetto* (1998) starring Woody Harrelson and Elisabeth Shue, is a decent choice. Set in steamy swamps (rather in a dark metropolis filled with sewers of crime), this flavor of *film-noir* is sometimes called *Florida/neo-noir*. *Palmetto's* major deviation from true *film-noir* is that it has a happy ending.

With *Lost Highway*, it also appears that Lynch is specifically tapping into *Detour* (1945), a short and very low-budget film that is considered among the strongest and truest to the form of *film-noir*. The thematic of *Detour* is a also a highway, a highway upon which the protagonist, a musician named Al Roberts, and his *fatale* Vera are bound, toward a plan of impersonation and murder to take an inheritance. As Roberts tells it, he's the victim of a lot of bad luck, including the death of the owner of the car he's now driving. So he's done what he must to avoid trouble, that being to leave a dead man in the desert and to take his identity. But as Roberts tells his tale of woe to the audience, it becomes less and less clear just how much of what Roberts tells is truth ... and just how much is the convenience of his memory. The essential elements of *film-noir* are clearly present in *Lost Highway*, especially a number of key ingredients Lynch extracted from *Detour*.

Lynch honed many of the same exact same plot devices and techniques he practiced in this film into nothing less than high art in his film of just four years later. Once you've successfully navigated the *Lost Highway*, bear left, drive hard and keep both hands on the wheel ... until you reach *Mulholland Drive*.

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La Sirène du Mississippi (Siren of the Mississippi, Mississippi Mermaid)

The latter two-thirds of *La Sirène du Mississippi* is a dream sequence. The sequence begins with the “race to the bank” scene at about the forty-minute mark. Most first viewings interpret the voiceover discussion about the missing money to have taken place *after* the drive, when in fact, it has already taken place *before* the drive. The chaotic driving, after Mahé confirms he has been fleeced, results in an accident and his hospitalization. Mahé’s hospital dreams are what is seen through the balance of the movie, the idea reinforced with the “tortured dream” scene. In his dreams, Mahé struggles to find some rational reconciliation between the affection he perceived and the betrayal she revealed. At the end of his dreams, of course, he only finds the reality of it, more false love and an even deeper betrayal. The truth of the matter is that both Marion and Richard have “gotten away clean,” their individual fates unknown, leaving Mahé behind, physically and emotionally shattered.

Truffaut was no stranger, of course, to the dream sequence device in the cinema of his day. In fact, it was just two years prior that Deneuve was made a star in Buñuel’s *Belle Du Jour*, where dream sequences famously mingle with reality to the point where they cannot be distinguished from one another. Here are some of the clues that Truffaut has left so the viewer may deduce that Mahé’s post-robbery experiences are but a single dream sequence:

- When Mahé meets the detective in Nice by accident, Mahé tactfully slips into the back of the restaurant, then bolts through several blocks of windows and alleyways, that dashes back to the country home in his red convertible and starts to pack. Thirty seconds later the detective appears with no sound of a car at all. How so did he find his way, and so fast, and without a car? In fact, what would be the chances of such an accidental meeting in the street at all?
- With Mahé and his factory suddenly hanging by the thinnest financial thread, Mahé decides to take, and can somehow afford, to take a vacation to France. In fact, Mahé is told he’ll get weekly reports from the factory, as though it will almost take care of itself ... though it now has no working capital for its payrolls or materials.
- Really, what are the chances that Mahé would happen to be in Nice, thousands of miles from home, and be sitting at just the right place and time to see a news show—about dance hall girls, no less—which features his thieving bride? As though she wouldn’t mind being on TV just after having absconded with 27,000,000 francs? In fact, with her picture plastered on hundreds of thousands of packs of cigarettes, you’d think she’d be on the other side of the continent somewhere laying very low indeed. And, with her picture all about, the local detective has to ask for a picture?
- Marion has just stolen 27,000,000 francs but she is dead broke, not enough for a ticket to Paris. Her partner could have had no idea what total monies she had taken, but out of all that money, she didn’t stash a dime for herself? And for that matter, why didn’t she just flee with ALL the money and leave her partner behind in Reunion?
- Marion and Richard push Julie overboard two days before arriving in Reunion, then months later, after the marriage and robbery, after Mahé’s hospital stay and beyond, Julie’s body suddenly turns up in the port of Djibouti (in North Africa). Where has this body been for months, what are the chances it would drift into port, how could it still be in any condition to identify at all, much less to identify as Julie Roussel?

- In the beginning, Mahé owns the factory, inherited from his parents. At the bank, only his permission is required for Julie to have access to the factory account. Jardine objects, but has no say-so. However, in the latter portion of the film, Mahé is portrayed as being only a *part* owner in the factory. The reality of completely owning a factory gone broke at his error is supplanted in the dream by part ownership of a factory kept running well by others. And that part ownership can be sold for monies that make it possible for his dream-life with Marion to continue.
- Julie's sister travels to Reunion, but for what? She could have been told everything by phone that is already known, and what more can be learned by her ... or anyone ... by her visit?
- Mahé suffers only from exhaustion, and is taking a sleeping cure, but he requires some kind of shots ... shots that cause him to dream.

Vanilla Sky

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For one discussion of Jungian connections, such as persona/mask and shadow archetypes, see:  
<http://aboutfilm.com/movies/v/vanillasky.htm>

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Vanilla Sky "secrets" from URL

<http://web.archive.org/web/20040606194217/cameroncroweonline.com/films/vanillasky/secrets.htm>

Vanilla Sky is a film that strives off of playing with your mind. Throughout the journey this film takes you on, there are many clues and references left along the way to either further explain the film or just give it more depth. I have compiled is a list of theories, clues or hidden messages throughout the film by readers of the site. Some of them are obvious, others aren't and many are a bit of a stretch.

Crowe says it best in the Vanilla Sky production notes: "We constructed the movie, visually and story-wise, to reveal more and more the closer you look at it. As deep as you want to go with it, my desire was for the movie to meet you there."

Crowe also referred to the "clues" as his version of the "Paul is Dead" rumor (the notorious Beatles hoax from the late-'60s, when fans became convinced through song lyrics, sonic tricks, and album art that Paul McCartney had died and was replaced by a look-alike). "Divorcing it from whether Paul was really dead or not, that was a really great parlor game: searching for clues, the excitement of different layers, some of them chilling, some of them really funny. It was a great model for us."

Theories

#1

The movie is just as its explained. David commits suicide, he is frozen and the splice occurs, etc. The sound you hear is David awakening in the future.

#2

Everything up to the car wreck was "real" and the rest of the entire film was ALL in David's head as he lie in a coma (until the end when he wakes up).

#3

The entire film is a dream as David struggles with his vanity, his sexual past, his ideal woman, etc. The only "real" scene in the entire film would be the last, as he wakes up.

#4

The movie is writer Brian Shelby's fictional story about his friend (David Aames). A story of the sour and the sweet. He plays the unsung hero to the playboy.

#5

The whole thing is a dream in that the depictions we see take place as reflections within a dream. However, the events are real until the splice, at which time they become fiction. Tech support states that David has been asleep 125 years. David's sessions seem to be reflections of his past. I think a fair interpretation is that the reflections have been tampered with by the subconscious to reflect his

love for Sophia and the regret of his carelessness with Julie. You are relying on the unreliable narrator as to the details like his love sort of being all around him before he meets her, his fears, dates and the music. Like retelling a story that you know ends badly, you may create clues to take the edge off or tip off your subconscious that this is a reflection, a memory, not reality.

#6 - Christian Metaphors - A Story of Divinity

David commits suicide, finally driven to it by the guilt over the death of Julie Gianni. As he is dying, his life is passing before his eyes. While his life is passing before his eyes, he is also being tempted to sell his soul to the devil for the chance to make things right (i.e. the dream like utopian scenes between Sophia and David).

- a. David is asked many times "Did you sign a Contract?"
- b. Lucid Dream, Lucifer?
- c. Both women at LE have red hair.
- d. Tilda Swinton has hot sauce behind her.
- e. More importantly, Tilda Swinton is exactly the kind of personality you would expect the devil to have at the time of one's death, vaguely sexy, assuring, calming, and persuasive...

The ideas of David's Christlike-ness are from the following ideas. He dies at 33, as did Christ.. His father wrote "THE BOOK"... The book was called Defending the Kingdom... The magazine is called Rise...

Secrets

When the film starts, a voice says "open your eyes" over and over.. first in Spanish (the title of the original film).. then in English. It's Sophia's voice, not Julie's. Julie's voice comes the second time, once David wakes up from his dream of deserted times square. What is odd is that he hasn't even met Sophia yet. Why is she in his dreams? Or does this support the theory that the entire movie is dream.

Film opens with the song "Everything in it's Right Place" by Radiohead. Chorus of the song is "Yesterday I woke up sucking on a lemon" - These words relate directly to Brian Shelby's sweet and sour speeches. Also, the 'Freewheelin' Bob Dylan' album cover can be seen in David's house, this later figures prominently in the film.

Two posters from the French New Wave are in David's bedroom. A bout de Souffle (Breathless) and Jules et Jim (Jules and Jim). Crowe hero, Francois Truffaut wrote "Breathless" and directed "Jules and Jim." These are significant later in the film when the "lucid dream" is revealed. In the opening of Almost Famous, after the characters have seen To Kill a Mockingbird, there is a marquee with Truffaut's Stolen Kisses on it. Both Breathless and Jules and Jim deal with self-destructive free-spirited characters whose personal relationships suffer and violently end because of their own needs to be "free". Jules and Jim ends with Jeanne Moreau driving Henri Serre off a bridge in a car the same way Julie did to David in Vanilla Sky.

In the first scene when David drives out of his garage...you look on the windshield of his car and the inspection or registration sticker says 02/30/01. The significance is that this is ok in a dream sequence. There's no Feb 30, right? Not only is that in the first scene on his Ferrari, but it is also on his Mustang throughout the whole movie, which supports that the whole thing, from beginning to end is one big dream/nightmare.

During the first dream sequence, when David gets out of his car, what is on the Times Square Jumbotron? The Twilight Zone! It's an episode called "Shadow Play" (original airdate: May 5, 1961) about a man (Dennis Weaver) found guilty of murder and sentenced to the electric chair. He's certain that the whole murder is a recurring dream...

To Kill a Mockingbird can also be seen at Times Square. You can also see "Excite Your Senses" and "Fatigue" numerous times scrolling by on the electronic billboards. You can also hear tires squealing and one frame of the bridge (right before David and Julie crash). Many other images can be seen from Courtney Love to Russell Crowe to Leave it to Beaver.

During the subliminal imagery at the 03:50 minute mark (Times Square Sequence), an image of Katie Holmes on a rubber tire is seen. The same picture was used on the cover of Rolling Stone in late '98/early '99.

You'll also find one single frame at the 03:55 mark which shows the fence that David and Julianna crash into. What does this mean? If you believe that David is recalling this dream to Dr. McCabe, then it's probably his subconscious playing tricks on him.

In Julianna's first scene in the movie and her cell phone rings. The cell phone rings to the tune of "Row Row Row Your Boat" which of course, contains the lyric, "life is but a dream".

At David's birthday party, he's asked how it's going. His response? "Livin' the dream, baby...livin' the dream".

When David's smashed guitar is initially shown at the 21 minute mark you can hear "that it was a gift from Danny Bramson". Bramson is a longtime friend of Cameron's and the producer of many of Crowe's soundtracks.

Also at the party, when Brian Shelby comes into the second apartment where David and Sofia are talking, you can see his t-shirt with the words "fantasy" in sparkly sequins. This supports the idea that the whole movie (until the last scene where David wakes up) is all but a dream.

They also have a drink which is a Jack Daniels & Coke... "sweet and sour"?

Look for one shot in prison where you get a full view of the chalk board. You'll notice many little things like DREAM spelled out backwards, #9, etc.

In the cell, Carl Jung's book, "Memories, Dreams, and Reflections" can be seen on the table between David and Russell's character. The book is all about Jung's personal dreams and how they helped him uncover his "shadow" and remove his persona or mask.

There are multiple occasions when the number (or time) 9:09 is displayed prominently. (David's watch, the chalkboard, a kid wearing a blue shirt that says #9). Crowe has stated in multiple interviews that this is an homage to the Beatles and their song Revolution #9. Of course, John Lennon has his own fascination with the #9 and you can read about that here.

If you look on David's prison garb, on his name tag it says "Frozen Guy" in really bad code that is easy to figure out. Also, his L.E. patient number on his cryo tank says PL515NT 4R51MS. If you replace the numbers with the corresponding letters of the alphabet it almost spells out "Pleasant Dreams". The computer screen at Beth Israel hospital during David's reconstruction also shows his patient number. Additionally, on the lower left, it spells out "don't wake him up"

When David is getting his mug shot taken, the slate spells out in simple code "When did the dream become a nightmare?"

At the club, Brian tells Sofia that the bathroom is behind the girl who looks like Bjork. Bjork pops up later during the sort of pop culture montage of music/movies/TV images when David is freaking out. When Noah Taylor's character compares life to a music video, Bjork's "Big Time Sensuality" is played. The video looks like it could've been shot in Times Square.

The board consists of six men and one woman. The team of doctors also appears to be six men and one woman. Both groups have control over part of David's life. The seven dwarfs, one in real life and one in his lucid dream.

The board members are referred to as the Seven Dwarfs - a clear reference to the story of Snow White who ate a poisoned apple and fell into a deep coma like sleep between life and death. The reason she had been tricked into this situation was because she was too beautiful, the "fairest one of all". Sounds like David Aames before the accident.

Brian Shelby jokes about being from Ohio, but just so happens that Dr. McCabe's is from Ohio. Could David see a little bit of Brian in his made up fellow?

In the funeral scene and on the roof, Sofia wears the same jacket of the actress she is considered to be parallel with in David's dream explanation.

There are two times when Sofia calls David a pleasure delayer, she says it so subtly that it's almost missed.

Dr. McCabe at one point tells David that yesterday he'd had a nightmare. David replies with "It's all a nightmare".

When David is at the police station and Tommy the lawyer comes to get him David begins to explain how Julie is alive etc when Tommy takes him firmly by both shoulders and says "David. WAKE UP." as soon as he does so a strange clanging bell sound can be heard and both characters look over to see what it is.

Songs for the film were chosen so that the lyrics constantly relay the emotion of the scene. When the characters aren't speaking, the lyrics take over and continue to carry the set emotion.....listen to them closely.

For example, the song that plays over David leaving Sophia's in the morning is Jeff Buckley's, "Last Goodbye," which that morning was there last one true goodbye. Yes, they see each other after this, but after the car wreck when both of their lives are forever changed. "Last Goodbye" also contains the lyrics: "Kiss me, please kiss me, but kiss me out of desire, babe not consolation" which follows David's plight rather well (as the next time he sees her is after the accident and he wants her affections but not sympathy for his disfigurement).

Bruce Springsteen's "The River" album (featured in the closing montage) also has some lyrical significance. One of the best lines from the song "The River", is: "Is a dream a lie if it don't come true, or is it something worse?"

Also, two R.E.M. songs are featured. Don't forget what R.E.M. stands for. Rapid eye movement. As in a state of sleep. It's when you dream.

You can hear the splice when the "lucid dream" begins.

The events that take place directly after the splice involve some of the "sweetest" scenes between David and Sofia (REM's "The Sweetness Follows"). This stands in contrast to the sour of Radiohead's "Everything Is In Its Right Place", which opens the film.

Right at the beginning of his Lucid Dream, David's conscience plays tricks on him. He immediately mistakes Sofia for Julie when Julie pops up and yells Boo! for a split second when really he's looking at Sofia.

To Kill a Mockingbird plays in the holding block on the TV screen in the security room in almost all of the scenes between David and Dr. McCabe. Mockingbird is one of Crowe's favorite movies and is later revealed as the "ideal father figure" for David Aames.

When David's face is being repaired, a computer image is shown on the screen. In the bottom right corner, it reads BETH ISRAEL HOSPITAL. Just one of the many religious hints found..... besides What if God Was One of Us obvious meaning when it is played.

When David encounters the Noah Taylor character in the bar he tells him that everyone in the room is there because of him. At Sofia's place on the night before the accident she says of his party "It must be strange to be in control of so many peoples lives. It seemed like everyone in that room was dependant on you in some way." Noah Taylor is also seen as an observer during David's facial surgery.

One of the doctors listed on the X-Ray images of David's skull is named H. Troma. Or better yet Head Troma?

At the club, Sofia wears a t-shirt that says St. Rose. Along with being the patron saint of Latin America and South America, St. Rose is the Patron Saint of Vanity! St. Rose used to pray: "Lord, increase my sufferings, and with them increase Your love in my heart."

When David and Sophia are laying together naked in bed Sophia asks, "Is this is a dream?" David replies, "absolutely."

The second time David wakes up (after seeing himself disfigured in the mirror), he makes two or three faces into the mirror. A smile and making a circle with his mouth. The lead character of Truffaut's *Breathless* did the same thing into a mirror more than once

During the splicing of subliminal images towards the end of the film, the cover of the Bruce Springsteen's album *The River* and Beth Orton's *Trailer Park* can be seen.

When David is in need of tech support, listen for the bell rings and voices of the monitoring scientists. There is also the repetition of David's patient account number (30319) multiple times throughout the film (during glitches).

In the elevator, at the end, when David says, "Someone died, it was me.", you can see a shot of the inside view of the car landing on it's side (from the crash scene).

At Davids three day wake there are photos of David with his date of birth and death and the inscription "David Aames. Living the dream."

Other Tidbits

The building that Cameron zooms in on at the beginning of the movie is the Dakota, Where John Lennon lived. The Dakota is the same building that was used for the film *Rosemary's Baby*, which had many very lucid type dream sequences. plus the whole contract with the devil plays a big part in that movie as well.

In the opening car scene between David and Brian, David reaches for music to play he mentions Barcelona, Radiohead and *Looper* (the last two which appear on the soundtrack).

During the Times Square scene, while David is running next to a building. To his right, there's a building with glass walls. If you look very carefully at the next sequence of frames, you can make out a line of people at the window watching the filming of the movie.

The line, "Rumors of my death have been mildly exaggerated," is a Mark Twain line slightly tweaked. Twain said greatly rather than mildly.

The smashed Gibson SG electric guitar is not a genuine Pete Townshend smashed guitar. It's a replica.

The other car David Aames drives is a Ferrari 250 GTO.

Brian Shelby jokes about being from Ohio. Vanilla Sky producer Paula Wagner is from Ohio.

When David's secretary asks him to choose a cover for a magazine-the girl on the cover is actress/supermodel Izabella Miko (*Coyote Ugly*). In fact, that exact picture is available in *Maxim* magazine (August 2000 issue #32).

One of the doctors sitting at the table when they give David his mask looks identical to the psychiatrist in *Abre Los Ojos*. He's sitting next to the doctor who states they can do something about David's arm.

Actors/musicians Mark Kozelek and John Fedevich (bassist Larry Fellows and drummer Ed Vallencourt from Stillwater) can be seen (and heard) in *Vanilla Sky*. When David Aames is in the bathroom at the club, They both walk in and Mark says "Fix your fuckin' face" as Ed walks "silently" behind him.

Right after David is made fun of in the bathroom, he comes upon Sofia while she is sitting and talking to a guy with blonde hair, who happens to be Tom Cruise's cousin, William Mapother. He also plays in the current movie *In The Bedroom*, as the abusive husband.

In the hallway at LE at the end of the movie, Alice Crowe (Cameron's mom) is the first face seen on the television monitors that are promoting LE's services.

Two paintings seen in the apartment of Cruise's *Vanilla Sky* character David Aames were painted by Canadian-born singer-songwriter Joni Mitchell. The "borrowed" paintings are called *Ice Offering* and *Edmonton*.

Tech Support (Noah Taylor) can clearly be seen standing in the corner of David's apartment when he's telling David about the three day memorial organized by Brian.

Contrary to popular belief, the voice at the end of the film that says, *Open Your Eyes*, is not Penelope Cruz. Listed in the credits as "The Future", the voice belongs to actress Laura Fraser.

References are made to both P.J. O'Rourke and Annie Leibovitz. Of course, O'Rourke is a famous political journalist for *Rolling Stone* while Leibovitz is a world famous photographer who has shot for many magazines including *Rolling Stone* and *Vanity Fair*. She did some of Cameron Crowe's early work in the 70's for *Rolling Stone* and even did the "Conversations with Cruise"- Crowe's *Vanity Fair* interview with Tom Cruise.

