

# Pre-reading Activities

## Aspects of our World – Surveillance

### Worksheet: CCTV in British novels

#### Tasks:

1. What do we learn from these literary extracts?
2. Can you think of other forms of “monitoring”, for example, organisations finding out more about us and our preferences?

#### Literary Extract 1: Ian Rankin, *Exit Music* (2007)

Inspector Rebus wants access to surveillance files to solve a murder near the centre of Edinburgh.

It was a quick run from the Parliament to the City Chambers. ...

... The lift arrived and they got in, descending two storeys below ground level to where a man was waiting. Rebus introduced him to Clarke as Graeme MacLeod, and MacLeod led them into the CMF Room, explaining that CMF stood for Central Monitoring Facility. Rebus had been there before but Clarke hadn't, and her eyes widened a little as she saw the array of closed-circuit monitors, dozens of them, three deep and with staff manning desks of computers in front of them.

MacLeod liked it when visitors were impressed, and needed no prompting to give his little speech. “Ten years the city's had CCTV,” he began. “Started with a dozen cameras in the centre, now we've got over a hundred and thirty, with more due to be introduced shortly. We maintain a direct link to the Police Control Centre at Bilston, and about twelve hundred arrests a year are down to things we spot in this stuffy wee room.”

Ian Rankin: *Exit Music*, Orion Paperback, London, 2008, beginning of chapter 9 (pp. 76, 77)

#### Literary Extract 2: Elizabeth George, *What Came Before He Shot Her* (2007)

Inspector Lynley tries to find out why eleven-year-old Joel killed Lynley's wife on the doorstep of their London home. Neighbourhood watch CCTV tapes show him and an unidentified older boy in the area.

A set of stairs marked the route to the exit farther along the platform, and above it – indeed, spaced at intervals along the entire length of the platform – hung London's ubiquitous CCTV cameras, documenting all action within the station.

Cal moved out of the way of the other commuters. He took something from his pocket. For a crazy sweat-inducing moment, Joel thought Cal meant him to do the deed right on the platform, in full view of the cameras. But instead, Cal pressed something soft into Joel's hand, saying, ‘Put dis on. Keep your head down good.’ It was a black knitted cap, similar to his own.

Joel saw the wisdom of this headgear. He pulled it down over his steel wool mop of ginger hair. [...] They moved along the platform and, when they got to the stairs, Joel could not resist a look upward, despite Cal's injunction to keep his head low. He saw there were additional cameras on the ceiling here, catching the image of anyone climbing towards the street. [...]

Cal said tersely, ‘Keep your head down, blood,’ but in unfortunate confusion, Joel did just the opposite.

Elizabeth George: *What Came Before He Shot Her*, Hodder & Stoughton, London 2007, (p. 588)