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DISTRIBUTION



**WHERE BIG DATA MEETS BIG BROTHER**

# BLACK CØDE

A Film by **Nicholas de Pencier**

# BLACK CØDE

a 90-minute documentary

**DIRECTOR** Nicholas DE PENCIER  
**PRODUCTION** Mercury Films



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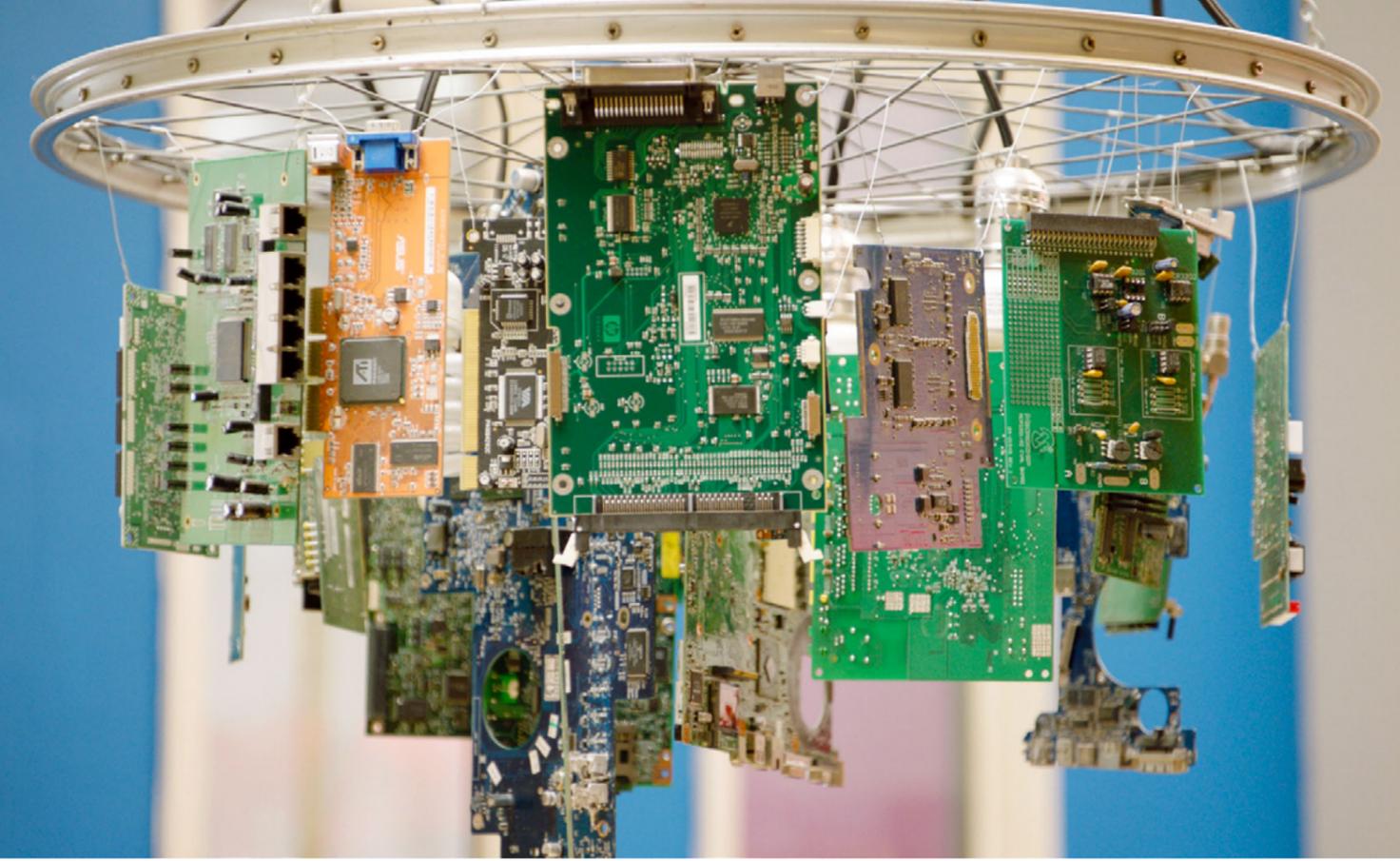
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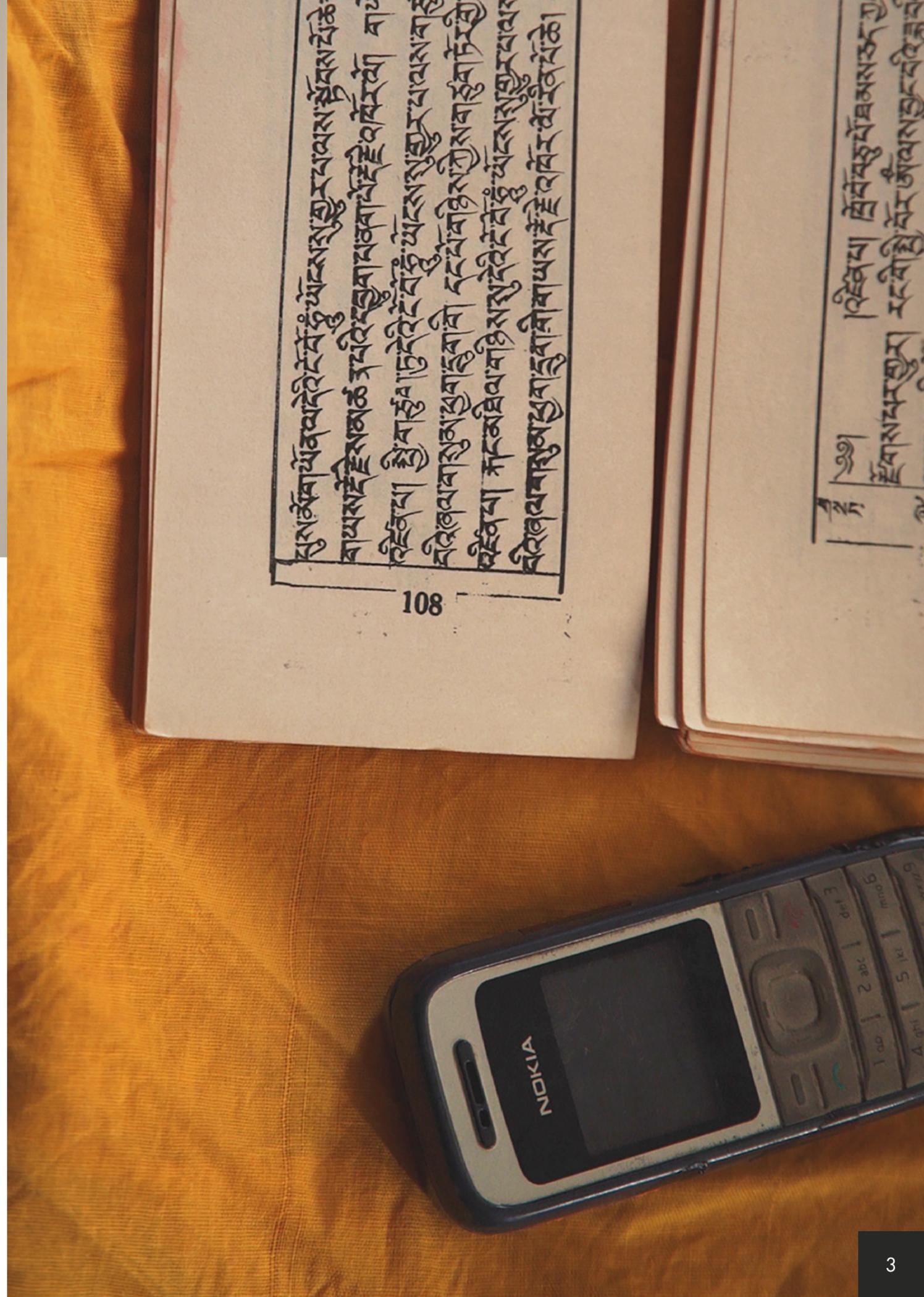
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## SYNOPSIS

**BLACK CODE** is a gripping account of how governments control and manipulate the internet in order to censor and monitor their citizens. With stories from exiled Tibetan monks circumventing China's surveillance apparatus, Syrian citizens tortured for Facebook posts, Brazilian activists using social media to distribute alternative news, and Pakistani online violence against women, we see firsthand the high-stakes consequences that our unprecedented level of digital communication can produce. As this battle for control of cyberspace is waged, our ideas of citizenship, privacy, and democracy will be challenged to the very core.

**"BLACK CODE is a terrifying exposé on government surveillance in the digital era."  
Scene Creek**

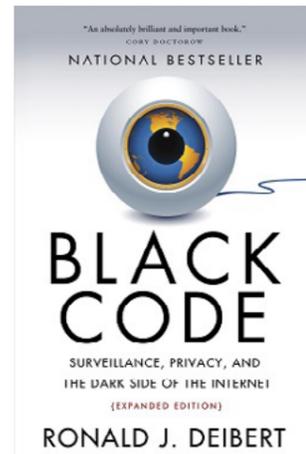


## BLACK CODE BY RON DEIBERT

In *Black Code*, Ronald J. Deibert, a leading expert on digital technology, security, and human rights, lifts the lid on cyberspace and shows what's at stake for Internet users and citizens.

As cyberspace develops in unprecedented ways, powerful agents are scrambling for control. Governments and corporations are in collusion and are setting the rules of the road behind closed doors.

Drawing on the first-hand experiences of one of the most important protagonists in the battle — the Citizen Lab and its global network of frontline researchers, who have spent more than a decade cracking cyber espionage rings and uncovering attacks on citizens and NGOs worldwide — *Black Code* takes readers on a fascinating journey into the battle for cyberspace.



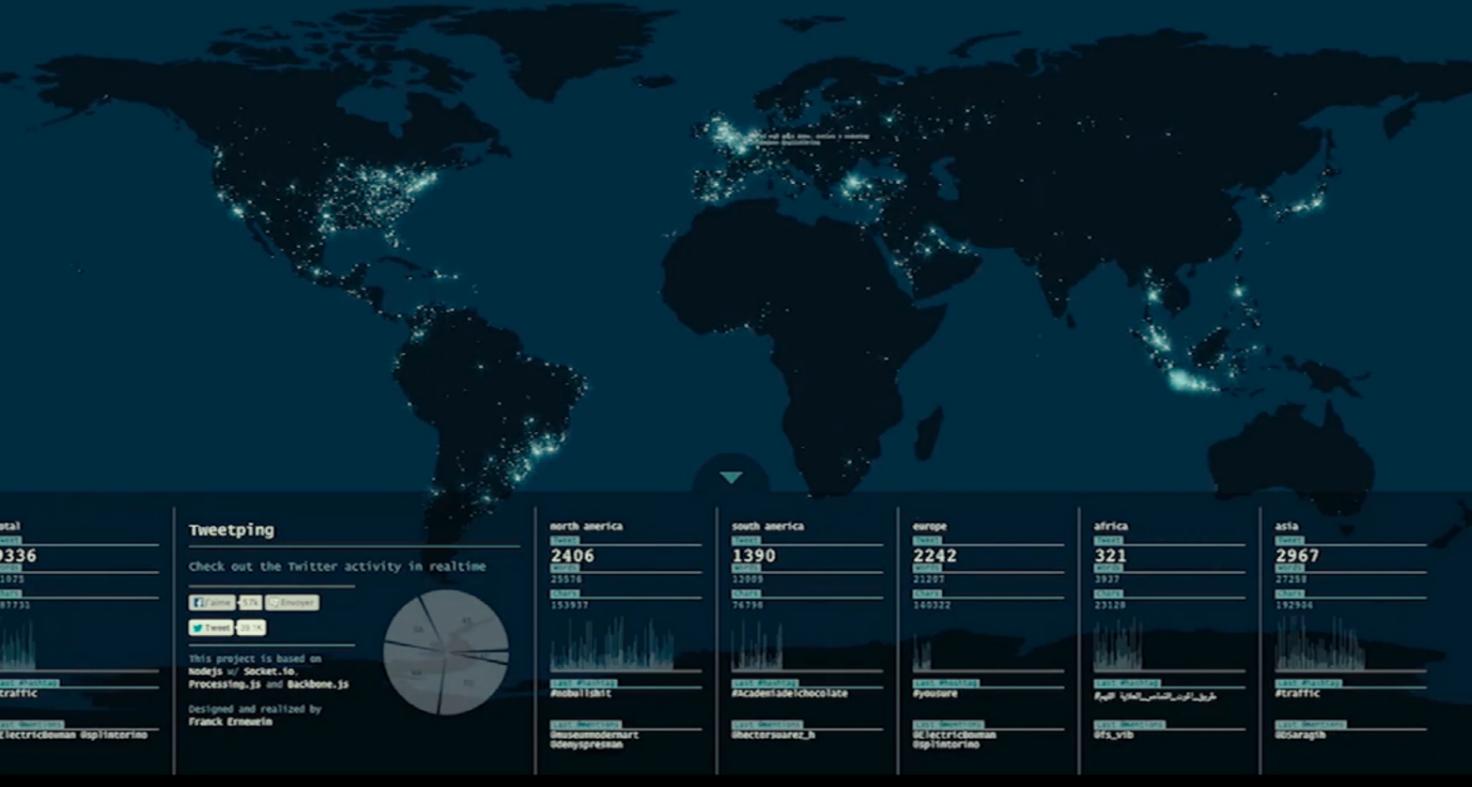
**“Black Code effortlessly chronicles threats ranging from individual privacy to national security... [highlighting] the shadowy, lucrative war online, behind closed doors and in the halls of power, which threatens to control, censor, and spy on us, or worse.”**  
**National Post**



## THE CITIZEN LAB

**The Citizen Lab** is an interdisciplinary laboratory based at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto, Canada focusing on advanced research and development at the intersection of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), human rights, and global security. Their research monitors, analyzes, and impacts the exercise of political power in cyberspace through a mixed methods approach that combines technical reconnaissance, field investigations, and data mining, analysis, and visualization. The Citizen Lab is best known for exposing “GhostNet”, a large cyber spy-ring running out of China that had hacked into high level political, economic and media locations in 103 countries around the world.

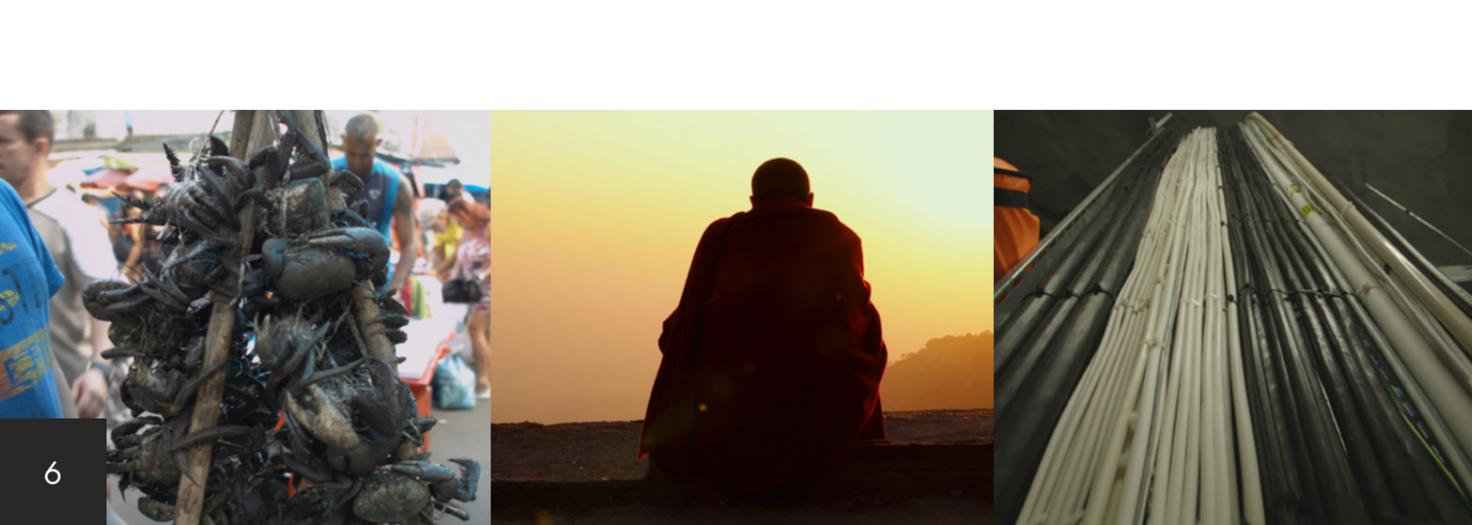




## FILMING LOCATIONS

STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN  
TORONTO, CANADA  
DHARAMSALA, INDIA  
ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL  
LONDON, ENGLAND  
SAN FRANCISCO, USA  
AMMAN, JORDAN



## BIOS

### RONALD J. DEIBERT

Ronald J. Deibert is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Citizen Lab at the Munk School of Global Affairs, University of Toronto. He is a former founder and principal investigator of the OpenNet Initiative (2003-2014) and a founder of Psiphon, a world leader in providing open access to the Internet. In 2013, Ron was appointed to the Order of Ontario and awarded the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal, for being “among the first to recognize and take measures to mitigate growing threats to communications rights, openness and security worldwide.”



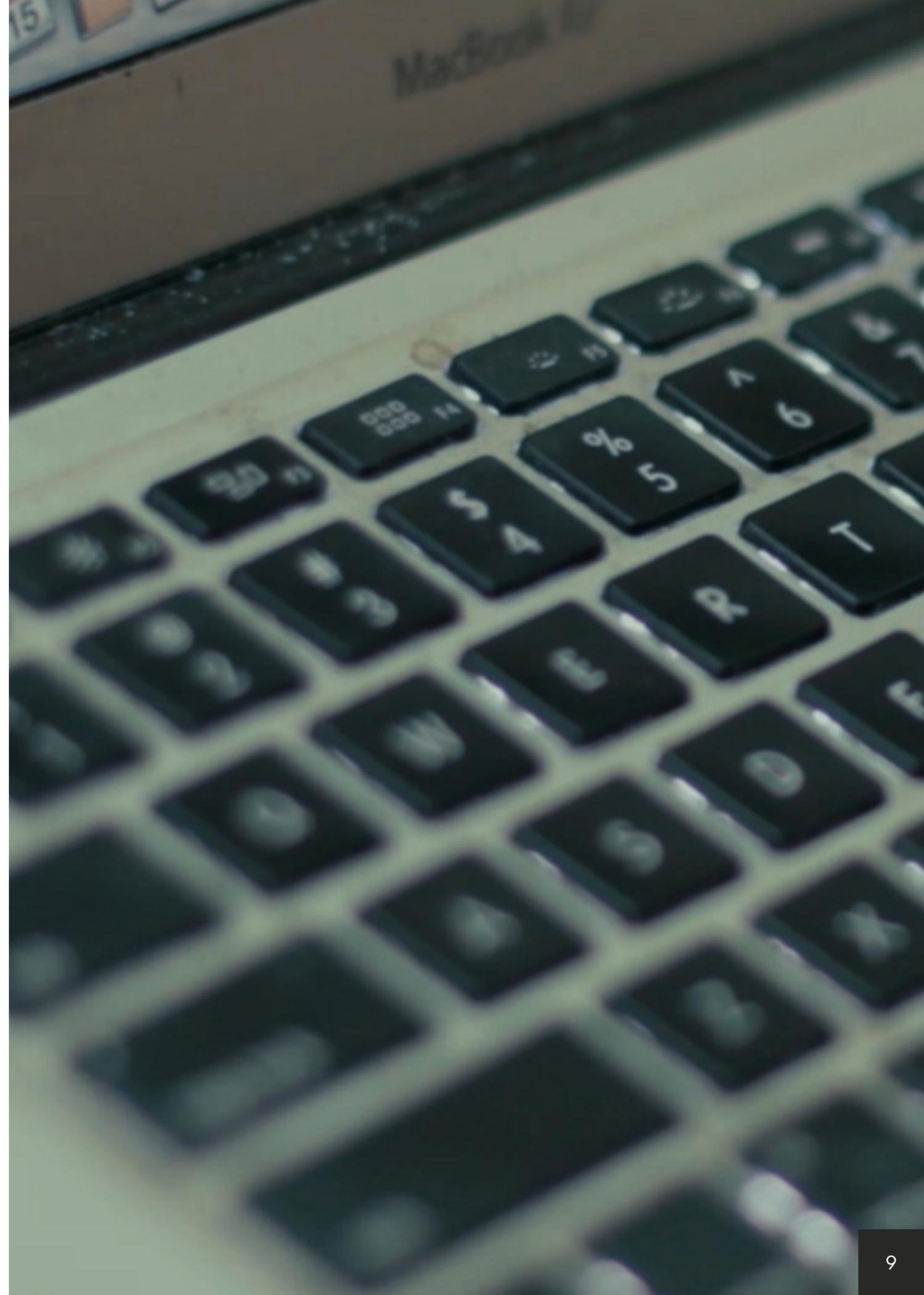
### NICHOLAS DE PENCIER

Nicholas de Pencier is a Director, Producer, and Director of Photography working in documentary, performing arts, and dramatic film. He is President of Mercury Films Inc., the Toronto-based production company he shares with his partner, Jennifer Baichwal. Among the films he produced are *Manufactured Landscapes*, which won the Genie Award for best Documentary, and *Watermark* – which he also photographed. *Watermark* premiered as a Special Presentation at the Toronto and Berlin film festivals, won the Toronto Film Critics Award for Best Canadian Film, and the CSA for Best Documentary. As a cinematographer, de Pencier regularly shoots factual TV series and documentaries for the CBC, PBS, Discovery, National Geographic and History. He is currently working on a feature documentary on the Tragically Hip’s iconic Man Machine Poem tour from the summer of 2016, and *Anthropocene*, a collaboration with Jennifer Baichwal and Edward Burtynsky which includes a feature documentary, video installation, 360VR and photogrammetry.



### ERIC PEDICELLI

Eric Pedicelli is a Toronto-based filmmaker and editor working across multiple genres and formats. After graduating from Communications and Liberal Arts at Concordia University, he founded Chop Shop Media, a full-service video production company specializing in both branded content and human rights films. Chop Shop Media’s clients have included: Global Affairs Canada, World Wildlife Fund, The Munk School of Global Affairs, Holt Renfrew, Royal Bank of Canada, and the Citizen Lab. As a freelance editor and director, Eric has cut feature documentaries and broadcast series, and shot in South America, Asia, and the Middle East.



## **BLACK CODE** by STEVE GRAVESTOCK, Toronto International Film Festival programmer

**Toronto-based documentary filmmaker and cinematographer Nicholas de Pencier (Four Wings and a Prayer, Watermark) examines the complex global impact that the internet has had on matters of free speech, privacy and activism.**

Nicholas de Pencier's expansive documentary *Black Code* examines the complex **impact** the internet has had on free speech and privacy. On the one hand, it has exponentially increased governments' abilities to spy on their citizens, and allowed businesses to do the same; on the other, the fact that the web is largely unpoliced has made it a godsend for protest movements, allowing them a channel to counteract government and corporate propaganda.

Remarkably, not many organizations have seriously considered the social and political ramifications of the web. One of the few that has is The Citizen Lab spearheaded by Ron Deibert at the University of Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs, whose work has ranged from assessments of the data released by Edward Snowden to uncovering Chinese hackers who had spied not only on other governments but on Chinese citizens, most notably Tibetans who had privately criticized the government.

While the implications of this kind of pervasive cyber-espionage are truly ominous (de Pencier evokes the shadow-realm aspects of the web with footage of the private internet server that once housed WikiLeaks, where a massive bank of computers eerily thrums and throbs), the film also turns up moments of ironic comedy: the aforementioned hackers neglected to password-protect the data they pilfered, allowing The Citizen Lab to access almost all of the stolen material and trace it to them.

On the other side of the ledger, de Pencier chronicles those who have made the web into a weapon of the powerless, including activists in Brazil who use YouTube to humiliate and expose the police, the government, and the right-wing media after a prominent activist is framed. **What emerges is a complex portrait, both scary and invigorating, of a phenomenon that we still don't truly comprehend but which has transformed the way we live – perhaps permanently.**

**STEVE GRAVESTOCK**



## CREW

<b>DIRECTOR</b>	Nicholas de Pencier
<b>PRODUCTION COMPANY</b>	Black Code Media Inc.
<b>EXECUTIVE PRODUCER</b>	Nicholas de Pencier, Daniel Iron
<b>PRODUCER</b>	Nicholas de Pencier
<b>CINEMATOGRAPHER</b>	Nicholas de Pencier
<b>EDITOR</b>	Eric Pedicelli
<b>SOUND</b>	Nicholas de Pencier, Phil Strong, Tattersall Sound and Picture
<b>ORIGINAL SCORE</b>	Phil Strong
<b>CAST</b>	Ronald Deibert
<b>CANADIAN DISTRIBUTOR</b>	Mongrel Media
<b>INTERNATIONAL SALES</b>	Upside Distribution

## FESTIVALS

**TORONTO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL** September 2016 - Toronto, ON

**CINEFEST SUDBURY** September 2016 - Sudbury, ON

**REFRAME FILM FESTIVAL** January 2017 - Peterborough, ON

**AVAILABLE LIGHT FILM FESTIVAL** February 2017 - Whitehorse

**OSLO DOCUMENTARY FILM FESTIVAL** February 2017 - Oslo, NO

**HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH FILM FESTIVAL** March 2017 - London, UK

**MOVIES THAT MATTER FILM FESTIVAL** March 2017 - The Hague, NL

**HUMAN RIGHTS WATCH FILM FESTIVAL** March 2017 - Toronto, ON

**HONG KONG INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL** April 2017 - Hong Kong

**DOCS AGAINST GRAVITY** May 2017 - Warsaw, Poland

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