



Protesting the Big Brother Lens, Little Brother Turns an Eye Blind

By JOHN MARKOFF

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 6 — Confronted with the unblinking eyes of surveillance cameras, Michael Naimark believes he can hide in plain sight with the aid of a \$1 laser pointer.

Mr. Naimark, a Silicon Valley artist and technologist, decided to try turning the tables on what he saw as the potential for Big Brother surveillance after the Sept. 11 attacks.

His is a Little Brother response: using inexpensive laser pointers to temporarily blind those omnipresent electronic eyes. He plans to post his 13-page, single-spaced treatise on the subject this week on his Web site, www.naimark.net.

"The question 'if a camera's aimed at me can I not be in the image?' became a haunting obsession," he said. "The answer is yes."

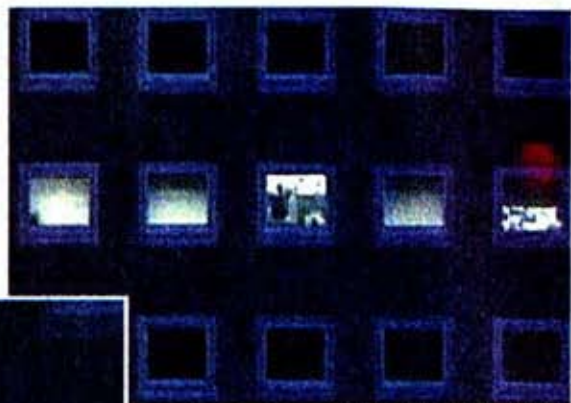
But in these security-conscious times, one person's civil

liberties can be another's shortsighted anarchy.

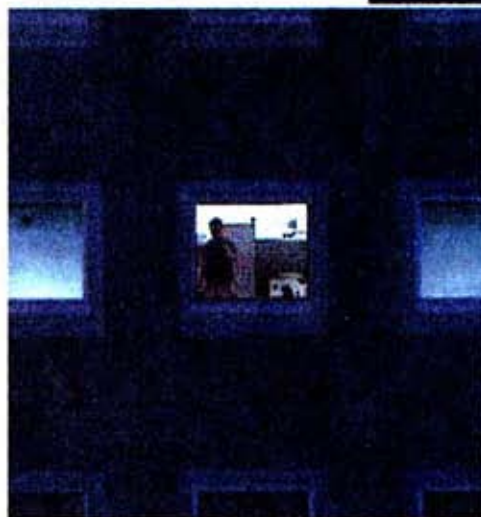
"It's possible that Harry Potter's invisibility cloak may not be viewed as a good thing for the community," said Kevin Kelly, an editor at Wired magazine. "We have laws prohibiting jamming police radar. It will be interesting to see if camera-jamming becomes illegal."

Nonetheless, Mr. Naimark's obsession is emblematic of a national debate that is growing as video cameras proliferate — a proliferation that results both from falling monitoring costs, made possible by the Internet, and increasing safety concerns in the face of crime and terrorism.

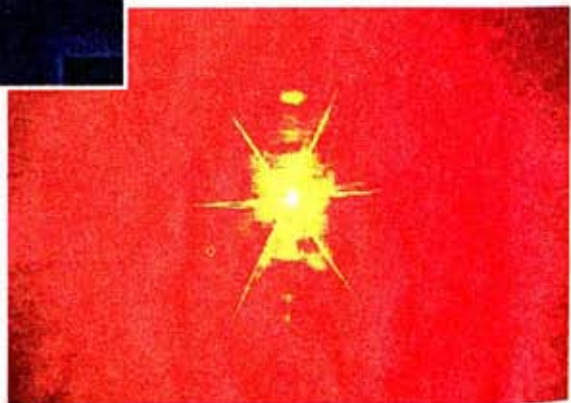
In his research, Mr. Naimark discovered that there was



Photographs by Michael Naimark



A common laser pointer pen, attached to a telescopic sight, as at the top left, can be used to blind video surveillance cameras temporarily. In a demonstration of the technique, a person in an apartment building window, above and left, used a laser to blind a video camera 200 meters away, as shown in the image below.



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