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WATCHES IN THE MOVIES

Thirty years ago, we wouldn't be having this conversation.

The art of film making in the early 1990s meant that story telling ranked far higher above the constant worry that film makers these days have that a prop might have been out of place, or even worse out of period.

My first experience of this was very early on in life (clearly, I was destined to be picky). It was after watching the fantastic film *Backbeat* about Liverpool's finest export during the early Hamburg days. Now whilst the script may have embellished a few historical truths, what was clearly incorrect was some of the equipment used by The Beatles during the film – and if I at 12 years old could tell that some of the microphones were from the 1980s, well I am pretty sure that some other people could too, but – these were those halcyon days before the internet – where once ignorance was bliss, now there would be threads appearing and probable apologies by the directors.

So, in 2023, details count more than ever, and in recent years there has been a concerted effort to make sure that nobody can pick up on the little things that the average movie goer would never actually pick up on, but somebody would notice.... probably on the internet.

In the recent *Oppenheimer* film, we saw what can only be described visual love affair between Christopher Nolan and Hamilton watches, all historically accurate pieces for the film and when worn in chronological order by (the soon to be Oscar winning) Cillian Murphy, Emily Blunt, and Matt Damon. Nolan is a particular chap, and in this case, it has worked incredibly well – at the point of writing this, he has been rumoured to be talking with the Broccoli family – and I for one would love to see what he does with the Bond watch, especially after the last 20 years of pretty much the same Omega Seamaster.



Hamilton watches, as seen in *Oppenheimer*

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Going back a little bit, let's look at a few watches that got it totally 100% right before the time of internet forums and continuity enthusiasts....

First of all, if any watch defines the understated magnificence of a military piece, it's the classic that is the Porsche Design Orfina Chronograph. As timeless as Tom Cruise's face appears to be, it was one of the stars of the 1986 film *Top Gun*, and again was used in the visually incredible 2022 *Maverick* incarnation. As a true aerophile and pilot, Cruise will have made sure that the PVD coated watch was totally correct, and it was – and still looks amazing to this day.



Porsche Design Orfina Chronograph, from *Top Gun: Maverick*

Panerai are one of those brands that you love or cannot stand... and for those of you that have met me, you will know that I have a small collection of the oversized military based watches, that do get worn regularly – as far as utility watches go, they don't get much simpler. *Daylight* was one of the first major times that one of the watches appeared on the silver screen with no less than Sylvester Stallone appearing alongside the PAM5218-201/A as pretty much co-stars in the film.

Panerai up until 1993 had not actually been available to the public, so this outing was really one of the first times the brand had been given major exposure, and subsequently went on to be a mainstay of the oversized watch world.



Panerai Luminor, from *Daylight*

What is clear, as has been indicated by such modern films as *Oppenheimer*, and even the *Barbie* film (check out Ryan Gosling's TAG Heuer collection) is that the watch world care about details, and because of that, film makers are paying more attention....



Heuer Carrera CHN 1158, as seen in *Barbie*