John is going to break off his engagement. He's thought about it for a while and he just can't take it any more, he wants to party, he wants to go out with his friends without her nagging him all the time. He doesn't think Jennifer is the right one for him and better they should find out now than after they get married and have kids. Wouldn't you agree? I agree, I nod my head up and down, and say silently to myself, 'leave her she's too good for you.' Of course no body has asked me, and my head bobbing goes thankfully unnoticed, what is not unnoticed is John's conversation about his impending disengagement to Jennifer, he's having it on his cell phone as he stands a few feet away from me in line for a movie. I don't know John, I don't know Jennifer, he's talking to a friend Cory who I assume is a guy, but I'm not sure. What I do know is just about every personal detail of John and Jennifer's relationship, and so do the 20 or so people also in ear shot. Well at least those who are in ear shot and not on the phone themselves.

We've all been there, in line for a movie, at the airport, in the grocery store, the frozen yogurt place, the video store as we hear one person try to pitch a movie rental to the other person on the phone. From time to time we are not even passive observes but we join in, 'oh he'll really like that film.' 'I tried the cookies and cream she'll really like it.' We live in a world where the private has become public and the most private has become prime time television. Case in point the recent rash of 'reality' based TV shows. The industry calls it VTV, short for Voyeur Television, and while we all may claim never to have watched Survivor or Big-Brother, just like we claim not to listening in on a cell phone call when it gets really juice, 23 million people did watch those shows, I've even overheard some of them talking about it on a cell phone.

And so in a year when the human genome was mapped and catalogued, when a nations went to war with one another, when peace was brokered and lost. In a year that saw the dawn of a new millennium, or will see it January first. In a time of the greatest economic prosperity the nation and perhaps the world has ever known. In an era where we have come to celebrate the achievements of the greatest generation, and have begun to pay close attention to the environment we are leaving our youngest generation. In a year when we landed a vehicle on mars, and landed a Jew on the democratic ticket. I've decided to talk tonight about what we are all talking about and that is each other.

For reasons I have only begun to understand, and that probably find themselves at the core of the human phsci, we are fascinated by watching, eavesdropping, and down right spying on the lives of other people. From the paporatzi that sped relentlessly to catch up with Princess Di, to VTV shows where we wait to see what Rudy will say next, to TV Talk Shows that reveal secrets and intimate truths in front of a live audience, to internet web cams that broadcast images FROM living rooms INTO living rooms, we have become a nation of voyures. Fascinated by the ordinary, drawn in by slug lines such as REAL, LIVE, UNCENSORED, HIDDEN CAMERA. We can't seem to get enough of each other, except of course when we have to actually interact with each other.