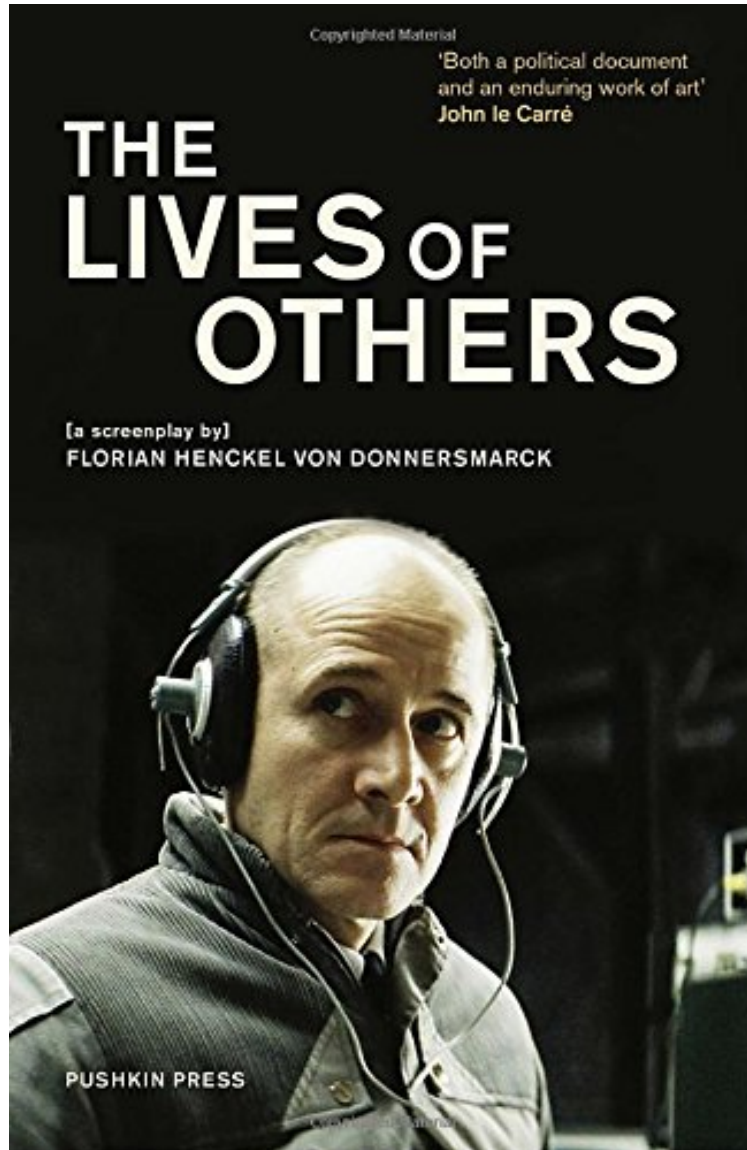


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The Lives of Others: A Screenplay

Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck
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Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck : The Lives of Others: A Screenplay before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lives of Others: A Screenplay:

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Screenplay not a novel. By Fedoradude Would've preferred an actual novel instead of the screenplay. (I should've paid more attention to what I was ordering.) But, it's an easy read to be sure.

Nothing is private. Nothing is sacred. In 1984 East Berlin, the Stasi Captain Gerd Wiesler is assigned to spy on the playwright Georg Dreyman. Wiesler and his team bug the apartment, set up surveillance equipment in an attic and begin reporting on the activities of Dreyman, who had previously escaped state scrutiny due to his pro-Communist views and international recognition. One day, however, Wiesler learns the real reason behind the surveillance: the Minister of Culture covets Dreyman's girlfriend, and is trying to eliminate his rival. Though Wiesler continues his surveillance, he struggles to reconcile his sense of professional duty with his personal integrity, as he finds himself becoming increasingly absorbed by the couples lives.

"Both a political document and an enduring work of art" John le Carr
About the Author Florian Henckel von
Donnersmarck is the award-winning director of *The Lives of Others* and *The Tourist*. Born in 1973, he grew up in New York City, Brussels, Frankfurt and West Berlin, he studied Russian literature in Leningrad (now St Petersburg) before obtaining an MA in Politics, Philosophy and economics from Oxford and a diploma in film direction from the University of Film and Television in Munich. *The Lives of Others* won the European Film Award for Best Film and Best Screenplay, the LA Film Critics' Association award, and the 2007 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

INT. STASI DETENTION CENTER
HOHENSCHNHAUSEN - MORNING A prisoner in civilian clothes is led down an apparently endless prison corridor with a linoleum floor, past dozens of cells. Title on screen: November 1984, BERLIN-
HOHENSCHNHAUSEN DETENTION CENTER OF THE MINISTRY OF STATE SECURITY Suddenly red warning lamps come on all along the corridor. GUARD? Stand still. Eyes to the floor. At the end of the corridor another prisoner in a prison uniform is led past along a corridor that crosses the first. When he has passed through, the red light goes out. GUARD (CONTD) Walk on. The guard leads the first prisoner further along the corridor until they stop outside the door of one of the many interrogation rooms. GUARD (CONTD) Address him as Captain! He knocks on the door. INT. HOHENSCHNHAUSEN, INTERROGATION ROOM - AT THE SAME TIME The interrogation room is decorated with white wallpaper, and sluggish daylight seeps through off-white curtains. The furniture - shelves and a desk - are made of pale laminated wood. A sickly plant without a single flower stands on the windowsill. Hanging on the walls are a photographic portrait of General Secretary Honecker and a faded landscape photograph showing an autumn forest path. GERD WIESLER, a gaunt man in his mid-forties wearing a plain uniform, stands by the window, hears the knocking and calls over to the door. WIESLER One moment. He walks to one of the shelves and opens a drawer containing a tape recorder. He switches it on, shuts the drawer and sits down. His movements are precise and minimal. WIESLER (CONTD) Enter. The guard brings the prisoner in, a slightly built man of about 30. He stands rather awkwardly in the room. Wiesler doesn't look up at him. He studies the prisoners files on the table. WIESLER (CONTD) Sit down. The prisoner does so. He sits down carefully on a chair upholstered with orange fabric. WIESLER (CONTD) (without looking up) Hands under your thighs, palms down. Confused, the prisoner obeys. Finally Wiesler looks up. WIESLER (CONTD) What do you have to tell us? 227? Ive done nothing. I know nothing... Ive done nothing. There must be some mistake. WIESLER? Youve done nothing, know nothing... You think we imprison innocent people on a whim? 227 No, I... WIESLER? If you think our humanistic state capable of such a thing, that alone would justify your arrest. The prisoner is speechless in the face of this dialectic. WIESLER (CONTD) Wed like to jog your memory, prisoner No. 227... On September 28th, Dieter Pirmasens, your friend and neighbor, fled to the West. We believe that he had help. PRISONER? I know nothing. He didnt even tell me he wanted to leave. I first heard about it at work. WIESLER? Please recount what you did on September 28th. PRISONER Its in my statement. WIESLER Tell me again. PRISONER? (as though speaking by rote) I was at Treptow Park memorial with my children, where I met my old friend Max Kirchner. We went to his place and listened to music until late. He has a telephone, you can call him to confirm this. Wiesler writes everything down. 227 (obstinately) Do you want to call him? I can give you the number. INT. STASI COLLEGE POTSDAM-EICHE LECTURE THEATER - MIDDAY 227 (on tape) ...call him? I can give you the number. A finger presses the pause button of a large reel-to-reel tape recorder fixed to the wall. Wieslers finger. He is standing by the board in a small seminar room. 15 young men and women are listening to him: his students. On the board are various technical terms used by the Ministry of State Security: RECONNOITRE, ENLIGHTEN, CONSPIRE, OPERATIONAL PERSONNEL CONTROL and OPERATIONAL PROCEDURE. Title: STASI COLLEGE POTSDAM-EICHE WIESLER? The enemies of our state are arrogant. Remember that. It takes patience. About 40 hours worth. Lets fast forward... He presses the fast-forward button. We can only imagine what suffering is being carried past by the swiftly moving tape. As the weird whirring sound continues CUT TO: INT. HOHENSCHNHAUSEN, REST ROOM - DAWN Wiesler lies sleeping on a pallet in a room that isnt much more luxurious than a prison cell, but which has pro forma, for example, a curtain. His uniform jacket hangs over a chair. He opens his eyes, gets up, puts his jacket on, leaves the room and closes the door. INT. HOHENSCHNHAUSEN, CORRIDOR - DAWN - DAY He walks down the corridor to the adjacent interrogation room. INT. HOHENSCHNHAUSEN, INTERROGATION ROOM CONTINUED Prisoner No. 227 has changed a great deal since the start of the interrogation. He is pale and his lips are dry. He can hardly sit upright. The guard has to support him by the shoulders. When Wiesler comes in, he gets up and walks out past Wiesler, handing him the key to the rest room.

(The whirring of the fast-forwarding tape stops. We hear the click of a play button.) 227?...please... I cant go on... I dont know any more... please let me sleep just a little... Wiesler sits down behind the table again. He looks at the transcripts that his deputy has written. 227 (CONTD)(raises his hands pleadingly, with the last of his strength)Please... let me sleep. Wiesler looks at him with a blank expression and raises his eyebrows. WIESLER?Hands under your thighs. The prisoner obeys, with great difficulty. WIESLER (CONTD) Tell me again what you did on September 28th. The prisoner drifts off to sleep. Wiesler gestures to the guard to wake him. The guard shakes him. 227 (giving a start) Please, please... just an hour, just a little... a little sleep. WIESLER?Tell me again what you did on that day. 227?I did nothing... nothing... WIESLER?What did you do that day?The prisoner begins to weep quietly. Wiesler remains unmoved. INT. STASI COLLEGE POTSDAM-EICHE, LECTURE THEATER - MIDDAYA young student, Benedikt LEHMANN, has become very uneasy. Now he can no longer contain himself: LEHMANN?Why keep him awake for so long? Its inhuman!He is immediately taken aback by his own boldness. Wiesler doesnt respond, but pencils a cross by the students name on the seating plan. We hear the exhausted weeping of Prisoner 227 echoing around the room. WIESLER?An innocent prisoner will become more angry by the hour, due to the injustice suffered. He will shout and rage. A guilty prisoner becomes more calm and quiet. Or he cries. He knows hes there for a reason. The best way to establish guilt or innocence is non-stop interrogation. INT. HOHENSCHNHAUSEN, INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHTWIESLER (unmoved)What did you do that day? 227?(with the very last of his strength)?I was at Treptow Park with... with my children... at the monument... There I met my old friend Max Kirchner and listened... to music until late... He has a telephone, you can call him to confirm this... INT. STASI COLLEGE POTSDAM-EICHE, LECTURE THEATER - MIDDAYWIESLER?Do you notice anything about his statement? LEHMANN (defiantly) Its the same as at the beginning. WIESLER?Exactly the same, word for word. Always keep a precise verbal record. People who tell the truth can reformulate things, and they do. A liar has prepared sentences, which he falls back on when under pressure. 227 is lying. We have two important indicators, and can increase the intensity. INT. HOHENSCHNHAUSEN, INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHTWIESLER?If you dont give names, well have to arrest your wife. 227 trembles as he weeps. WIESLER (CONTD) Jan and Nadja will be put into state care. Is that what you want? 227 goes on weeping. WIESLER (CONTD)?Who was the person who helped him flee? 227 (barely audibly) Glske... WIESLER (quickly) Again! Speak clearly! 227?Glske, Werner Glske. WIESLER?Werner Glske - where does he work? 227?Hes a policeman... In Kpenick... 227 starts shaking. Wiesler looks at him, interested. Like a biologist looking at a laboratory animal. He gestures to the guard to lead him away. More carrying than leading. WIESLER (to the prisoner) Now you can sleep. The prisoner looks at Wiesler with a startled glance that says, Really? For a brief moment Wiesler almost seems to react to the glance. As the door closes, CUT BACK TO: INT. STASI COLLEGE POTSDAM-EICHE, LECTURE THEATER - MIDDAYThe students are starting to get noisy, discussing the case amongst themselves. The tape runs on. WIESLER?Quiet! QUIET!!... Listen... Theres a rattling sound on the tape, hard to identify. WIESLER (CONTD)?Can anyone tell me what that is? No one seems to know. INT. HOHENSCHNHAUSEN, INTERROGATION ROOMWe see Wiesler sitting on the floor with white cloth gloves, removing the orange fabric that was stretched over the seat of the chair. He picks it up with a sterile pair of tongs and places it carefully in a labelled jar. WIESLER (V.O.)?Its the odor sample for the dogs. It must be collected at every interrogation. Never forget it! INT. STASI COLLEGE POTSDAM-EICHE AFTERNOONNow he finally turns off the tape and looks at the students. WIESLER?Your subjects are enemies of socialism. Never forget that. Wiesler looks at his watch. He hasnt lost his sense of time: the second hand reaches twelve; it turns 5.30 p.m., and at that moment the college bell rings. WIESLER (CONTD)Goodbye.