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CULTURE

# The 20 Best Documentaries on Amazon Prime to Stream Right Now

April 21, 2020

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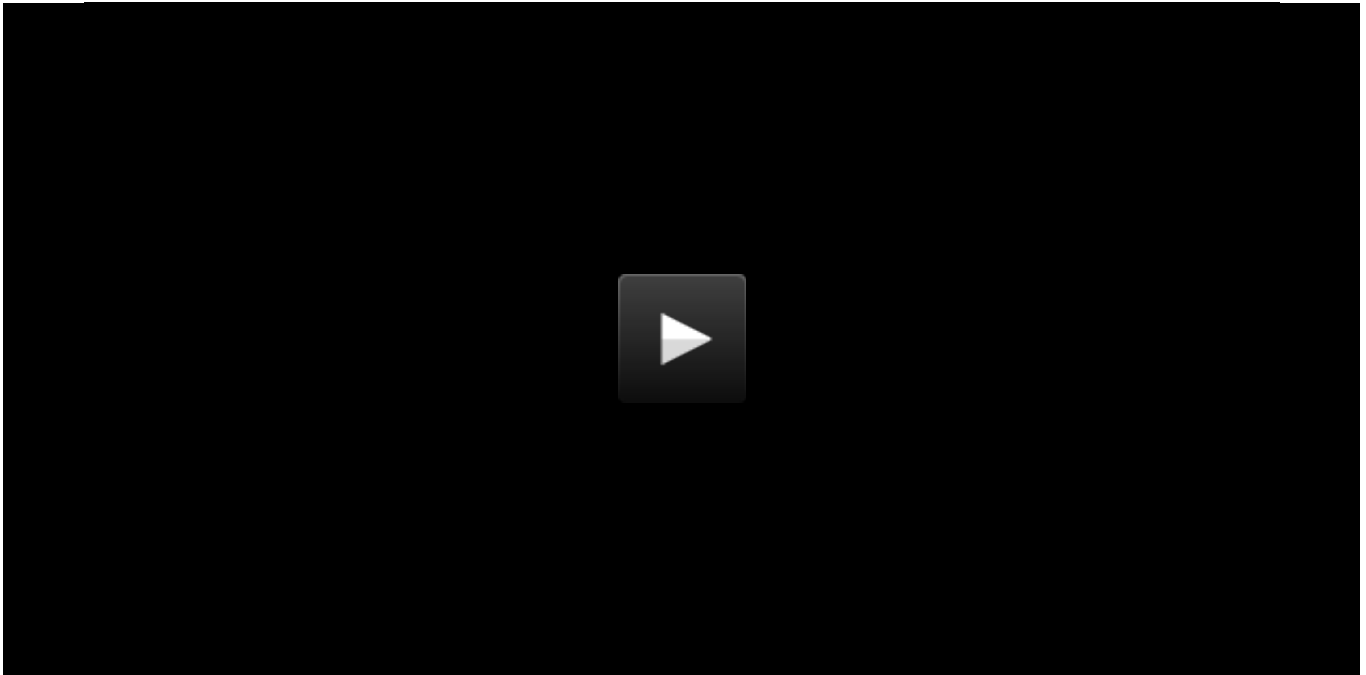
Work your way through the best documentary available right now on Amazon Prime, some of it being original content you can only find streaming here. From murder mysteries to investigative reporting and observational narratives, filmmakers have documented myriad topics across genres to keep you flipping from one move to the next.

## 'The Act of Killing'



A terrifying look at death squad leaders from Indonesia reenacting the ways in which they committed mass murders via the medium of cinema. When the government was overthrown by the military in the 60s, these death squad leaders helped the army execute millions in less than a year. This documentary covers one of them while he is filming his version of what occurred and how. Does he have the stomach to recreate and watch what he did?

## 'Gleason'



Former NFL player Steve Gleason was diagnosed with ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, at the age of 34, and given five years at most to live. He began journaling his experience for his then-unborn and that is included in this close-up look at his condition deteriorating, the medical advancements that enable him to live a full life and his work to ensure others suffering from the same predicament can be helped.

## 'Human Flow'



A stunner from Ai Weiwei, the global refugee crisis across several countries is documented, exploring individual stories of migration across land and sea, personal tragedies and an ongoing search for that basic need – shelter. Whether displaced by natural conditions or war, this is a deep dive into the massive displacement of people since World War II, the reasons they become refugees and how their conditions can be addressed.

## **'Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills'**



In the early 90s, the horrific murder of three eight-year-old boys by three teenagers in what was reportedly a satanic ritual took over the newsrooms everywhere. This documentary looks at the behind the scenes scenario of a real courtroom drama and the workings of the justice system in small-town Americana. Part of a trilogy, with sequels in 2000 and 2001 (also available on Amazon) following the rest of the case, the shocking twists and turns will keep you riveted.

## **'Bill Cunningham New York'**



Covering the life and work of *The New York Times* photographer, enjoy a humorous review of the talented gentleman that is now in front of the lens as the subject here. Known for his street and fashion shots, Cunningham documented the life of the city through his takes that were often candid yet detailed. For many, it was an honor to be his subject. His work is considered a study of culture and society, and him, the epitome of humility.

## 'One Child Nation'



Remember when China enforced a nationwide one-child policy in the '80s as an answer to their mounting population crisis? This film explores how that strict law affected families and the social structure with long-lasting repercussions and brought a series of human rights violations with it, such as forced abortions and abductions, sterilizations and abandoning of newborns. Includes the reports of victims, the filmmaker's own family, authorities and others.

## 'Ken Burns: The Central Park Five'



The wrongful imprisonment of five African American and Latino teenagers accused of raping a white woman in New York City's Central Park is the subject of this spotlight on a failing justice system and the young lives it swallowed in the hurry to point fingers at someone. After years in prison, their convictions were overturned when a serial rapist confessed that he committed the crime. Hear expert analysis, interviews and other documented evidence behind the case.

## 'Long Strange Trip'



Fans of the Grateful Dead? This is your pick. The rock 'n' roll legends ruled the world for three decades with their music and unique brand of individualism, refusing to 'play by the book' and giving their fans performances onstage and off that only had them coming back for more. This is as behind-the-scenes as it gets with interviews from band members, crew, family and an intimate look their life and work. This is their untold story.

## 'Cartel Land'



A different take on the drug problems along the American and Mexican borders, this is an on-the-ground insider view of the work of two vigilante groups on each side that is fighting the notorious drug cartels in their own way. El Doctor and Nailer take you into an unseen world in this Sundance winner, where the lines between right and wrong blur as each group delivers its own version of justice in an ongoing battle.

## 'Dear Zachary'



What began as a tribute to a murdered childhood friend eventually ends up a story of loss and tragedy in more ways than one. In just a little more than an hour, this documentary packs a punch with a child custody battle and murder-suicide that exposes the shortcomings of the Canadian legal system at the time. This true-life saga resulted in Zachary's bill being signed into law—you'll have to watch it to see why.

## 'I Am Not Your Negro'



This BAFTA winner narrated by actor Samuel L. Jackson takes you on a deep dive into race relations in America, connecting black history from the times of the Civil Rights Movement to Black Lives Matter. The filmmaker takes American novelist James Baldwin's incomplete work to apply it to present-day societal dynamics in a manner that is informational yet equally enticing and thought-provoking.

**'Lorena'**



Remember when this was all the news was about way back in the '90s? The case of Lorena and John Bobbitt was fodder for television for years after, going by this 2019 documentary that features interviews with the couple and reexamines how the scandal was reported. Lorena's move to dismember her then husband's penis as revenge for the years of sexual abuse suffered in her marriage brought the topic of domestic and marital sexual abuse into the mainstream.

## 'Sriracha'



For lovers of this spicy addition to any dinner table, and sometimes, every dish here's a peek into the origins of the condiment and a global journey on the love affair all foodies can relate to. A product with its own cult following and pop culture references to boot, sriracha sauce has been a staple of the American kitchen screen for ages so consider this a visual treat and homage to the single ingredient that brings people from all over the world, together.

## 'Art and Craft'



Watch a master at work. A master forger, that is. For years, expert forger Mark Landis used his impeccable skills to make replicas of some of the most renowned masterpieces in the world, donating them to art galleries, museums and other institutions before one man discovered his game and decided to go after him. Add to this Landis' schizophrenia and you'll be questioning yourself as to which art and/or craft you are rooting for.

## 'Unseen'



When a serial killer operates in plain sight and goes unnoticed long enough to result in eleven uncovered murders, it puts the legal and social justice system in a quandary. This happened as recent as 2009 in Cleveland, and the film includes interviews with some of the survivors that escaped the clutches of a sex offender living amongst them. A spotlight on how a marginalized society is failing its women.

## 'Sound City'



Another special interest documentary on rock 'n' roll but this time with a focus on a legendary venue where the magic was created by names such as Nirvana, Tom Petty, Fleetwood Mac and Metallica. The studio in California held a special place for many a rock music lover and the film brings together some of the stars that recorded here. A walk down memory lane spotlighting this mecca of music and the unique analog console that everyone recording here holds sacred

## 'Fight for Space'

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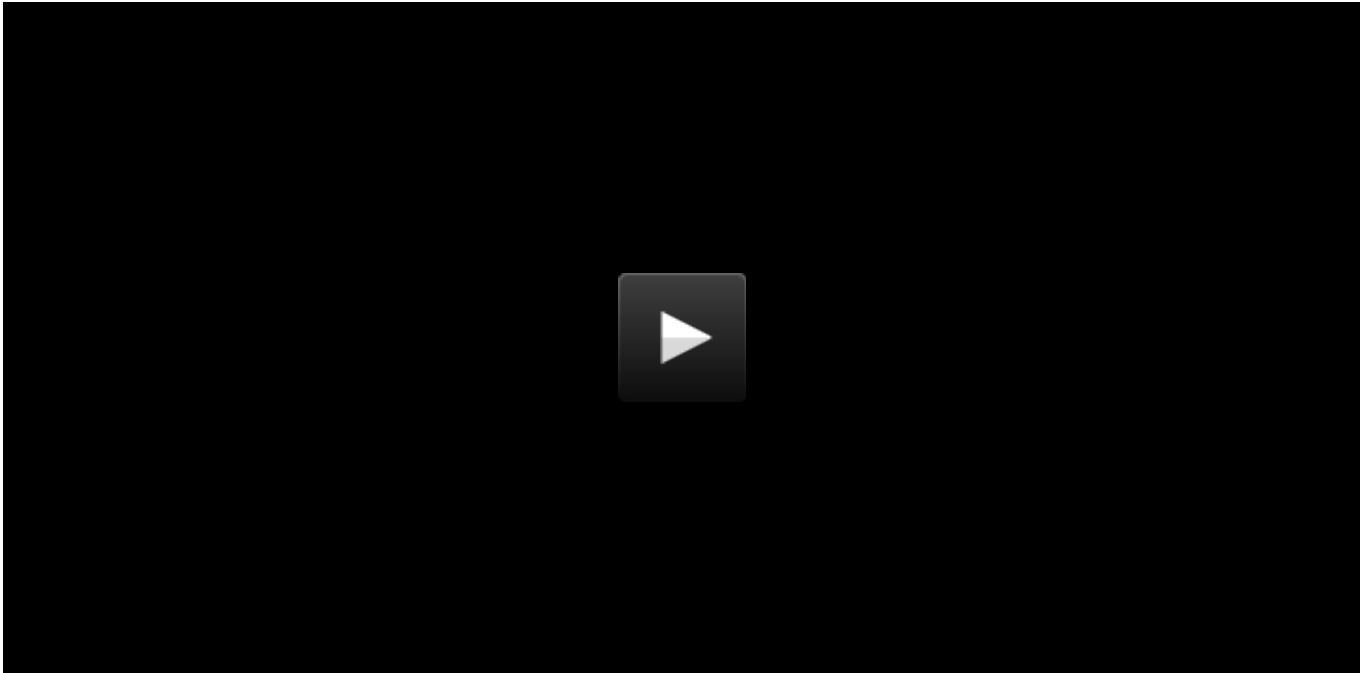
Neil DeGrasse Tyson and Bill Nye are among the experts featured on this inquiry into the why of space exploration and how public interest in the subject declined after a few highs in the '60s. Learn from astronauts, scientists and NASA officials as they shine light on space programs, their importance to the world and future benefits of continuing to focus on space exploration. If planetary science is your interest, this is your ticket to a closer look.

## **'The Invisible War'**



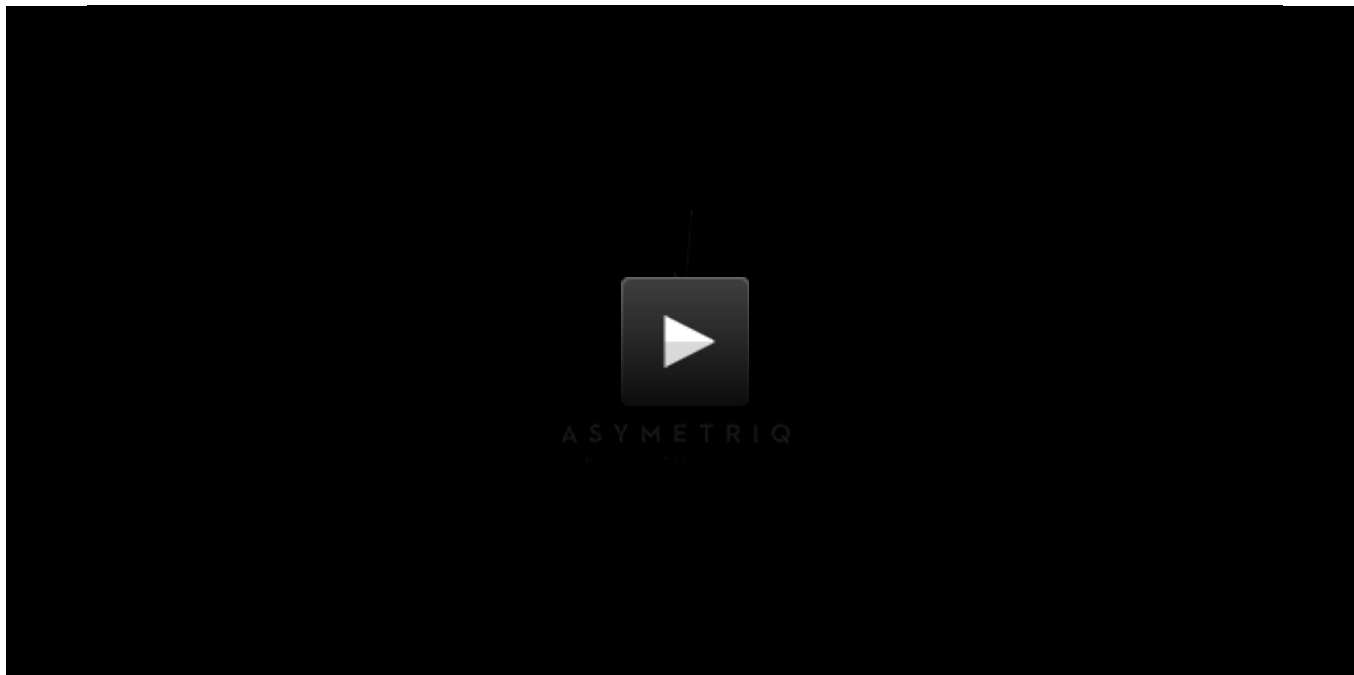
How do you fight what you cannot see? This investigative report drills right into the secret of the U.S. military – the many rape cases that are systematically hushed and female soldiers standing up against the injustice. Why is there a history of sexual assault against women in the armed forces and what is being done to better the situation forms the crux of a powerful inquisition into the shameful truth that is known to all yet remains unaddressed.

## **'Free Solo'**



Adrenaline rush guaranteed as you follow every breath and blink of solo free climber Alex Hannold as he makes his way up the 3,200-foot El Capitan Rock in Yosemite National Park - without any rope to break his fall. The documentary works its way to the final climb from ahead of time as he prepares for the feat, and the crew gears up to join him for the climb, fully aware of the possibility that one wrong move could mean the worst.

## 'Safety to Nome'



Every year, a select group of athletes are invited to participate in crossing a 1,000-mile journey through Alaska, in what is considered one of the toughest races to be attempted. The ultra-marathon is held in some of the most remote territory and the terrain is unforgiving as racers bike, walk or ski across the Tundra for days on end, trying to beat competitors amidst harsh weather and surrendering to the elements. Join them for the thrill, won't you?



**The 13 Best Crime Documentaries on Netflix**



**The 16 Best Documentaries on HBO to Stream Right Now**



**The 16 Best Crime Movies on Netflix**