

Watchlisted: You're Probably Already on a Government Extremism List

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by [John & Nisha Whitehead](#), [The Rutherford Institute](#)

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"In a closed society where everybody's guilty, the only crime is getting caught."

– Hunter S. Thompson

According to the FBI, you may be an anti-government extremist if you've:

- a) [purchased a Bible or other religious materials](#),
- b) used terms like "MAGA" and "Trump,"
- c) shopped at Dick's Sporting Goods, Cabela's, or Bass Pro Shops,
- d) purchased tickets to travel by bus, cars, or plane,
- e) all of the above.

In fact, if you selected any of those options in recent years, [you're probably already on a government watchlist](#).

That's how broadly the government's net is being cast in its pursuit of domestic extremists.

We're all fair game now, easy targets for inclusion on some FBI watch list or another.

When the FBI is asking banks and other financial institutions to carry out [dragnet searches of customer transactions](#)—warrantlessly and without probable cause—for “extremism” indicators broadly based on where you shop, what you read, and how you travel, we’re all in trouble.

Clearly, you don’t have to do anything illegal.

You don’t even have to challenge the government’s authority.

Frankly, you don’t even have to care about politics or know anything about your rights.

All you really need to do in order to be tagged as a suspicious character, flagged for surveillance, and eventually placed on a government watch list is live in the United States.

This is how easy it is to run afoul of the government’s many red flags.

In fact, all you need to do these days to end up on a government watch list or be subjected to heightened scrutiny is use certain trigger words (like cloud, pork and pirates), surf the internet, communicate using a cell phone, limp or stutter, drive a car, stay at a hotel, attend a political rally, express yourself on social media, appear mentally ill, serve in the military, disagree with a law enforcement official, call in sick to work, purchase materials at a hardware store, take flying or boating lessons, appear suspicious, appear confused or nervous, fidget or whistle or smell bad, be seen in public waving a toy gun or anything remotely resembling a gun (such as a water nozzle or a remote control or a walking cane), stare at a police officer, question government authority, or appear to be pro-gun or pro-freedom.

We’re all presumed guilty until proven innocent now.

It's just a matter of time before you find yourself wrongly accused, investigated and confronted by police based on a data-driven algorithm or risk assessment culled together by a computer program run by artificial intelligence.

For instance, a so-called typo in a geofence search warrant, which allows police to capture location data for a particular geographic area, resulted in [government officials being given access to information about who went where and with whom within a two-mile long stretch of San Francisco](#) that included churches, businesses, private homes, hotels, and restaurants.

Thanks to the 24/7 surveillance being carried out by the government's [sprawling spy network of fusion centers](#), we are all just sitting ducks, waiting to be tagged, flagged, targeted, monitored, manipulated, investigated, interrogated, heckled and [generally harassed](#) by agents of the American police state.

Without having ever knowingly committed a crime or been convicted of one, you and your fellow citizens have likely been assessed for behaviors the government might consider devious, dangerous or concerning; [assigned a threat score](#) based on your associations, activities and viewpoints; and [catalogued in a government database](#) according to how you should be approached by police and other government agencies based on your particular threat level.

Before long, every household in America will be flagged as a threat and assigned a threat score.

Nationwide, there are upwards of [123 real-time crime centers](#) (a.k.a. fusion centers), which allow local police agencies to upload and share massive amounts of surveillance data and intelligence with state and federal agencies culled from surveillance cameras, facial recognition technology, gunshot sensors, social media monitoring, drones and body cameras, and artificial intelligence-driven predictive

policing algorithms.

These data fusion centers, which effectively create an electronic prison—[a digital police state](#)—from which there is no escape.

Yet this crime prevention campaign is not so much about making America safer as it is about ensuring that the government has the wherewithal to muzzle anti-government discontent, penalize anyone expressing anti-government sentiments, and [preemptively nip in the bud](#) any attempts by the populace to challenge the government's authority or question its propaganda.

As J.D. Tuccille writes for *Reason*, “[A]t a time when government officials rage against ‘misinformation’ and ‘disinformation’ that is often just disagreement with whatever opinions are currently popular among the political class, [fusion centers frequently scrutinize peaceful dissenting speech](#).”

These fusion centers are the unacknowledged powerhouses behind the government's campaign to censor and retaliate against those who vocalize their disagreement and discontent with government policies.

It's a [setup ripe for abuse](#).

For instance, an investigative report by the Brennan Center found that “Over the last two decades, [leaked materials have shown fusion centers tracking protestors and casting peaceful activities as potential threats](#). Their targets have included racial justice and environmental advocates, right-wing activists, and third-party political candidates.”

One fusion center in Maine was found to have been “illegally collecting and sharing information about Maine [residents who weren't suspected of criminal activity](#). They included gun purchasers, people protesting the construction of a new power transmission line, the employees of a peacebuilding summer

camp for teenagers, and even people who travelled to New York City frequently.”

This is how the burden of proof has been reversed.

Although the Constitution requires the government to provide solid proof of criminal activity before it can deprive a citizen of life or liberty, the government has turned that fundamental assurance of due process on its head.

Each and every one of us is now seen as a potential suspect, terrorist and lawbreaker in the eyes of the government.

Consider some of the many ways in which “we the people” are now treated as criminals, found guilty of violating the police state’s abundance of laws, and preemptively stripped of basic due process rights.

Red flag gun confiscation laws: Gun control legislation, especially in the form of [red flag gun laws](#), allow the police to remove guns from people “suspected” of being threats. These laws, growing in popularity as a legislative means by which to seize guns from individuals viewed as a danger to themselves or others, will put a target on the back of every American whether or not they own a weapon.

Disinformation eradication campaigns. In recent years, the government has used the phrase “domestic terrorist” interchangeably with “anti-government,” “extremist” and “terrorist” to describe anyone who might fall somewhere on a very broad spectrum of viewpoints that could be considered “dangerous.” The ramifications are so far-reaching as to render almost every American an extremist in word, deed, thought or by association.

Government watch lists. The FBI, CIA, NSA and other government agencies have increasingly invested in corporate surveillance technologies that can mine constitutionally protected speech on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and

Instagram in order to identify potential extremists and predict who might engage in future acts of anti-government behavior. Where many Americans go wrong is in naively assuming that you have to be doing something illegal or harmful in order to be flagged and targeted for some form of intervention or detention.

Thought crimes programs. For years now, the government has used all of the weapons in its vast arsenal—surveillance, threat assessments, fusion centers, pre-crime programs, hate crime laws, militarized police, lockdowns, martial law, etc.—to target potential enemies of the state based on their ideologies, behaviors, affiliations and other characteristics that might be deemed suspicious or dangerous. It's not just what you say or do that is being monitored, but how you *think* that is being tracked and targeted. There's a whole spectrum of behaviors ranging from thought crimes and hate speech to whistleblowing that qualifies for persecution (and prosecution) by the Deep State. It's a slippery slope from censoring so-called illegitimate ideas to silencing truth.

Security checkpoints. By treating an entire populace as suspect, the government has justified wide-ranging security checkpoints that subject travelers to scans, searches, pat downs and other indignities by the TSA and VIPR raids on so-called "soft" targets like shopping malls and bus depots.

Surveillance and precrime programs. Facial recognition software aims to create a society in which every individual who steps out into public is tracked and recorded as they go about their daily business. Coupled with surveillance cameras that blanket the country, facial recognition technology allows the government and its corporate partners to warrantlessly identify and track someone's movements in real-time, whether or not they have committed a crime.

Mail surveillance. Just about every branch of the government—from the Postal Service to the Treasury Department

and every agency in between—now has its own surveillance sector, authorized to spy on the American people. For instance, the U.S. Postal Service, which has been photographing the exterior of every piece of paper mail for the past 20 years, is also spying on Americans' texts, emails and social media posts.

Constitution-free zones. Merely living within 100 miles inland of the border around the United States is now enough to make you a suspect, paving the way for Border Patrol agents to search people's homes, intimately probe their bodies, and rifle through their belongings, all without a warrant. Nearly 66% of Americans (2/3 of the U.S. population, 197.4 million people) now live within that 100-mile-deep, Constitution-free zone.

Vehicle kill switches. Sold to the public as a safety measure aimed at keeping drunk drivers off the roads, "vehicle kill switches" could quickly become a convenient tool in the hands of government agents to put the government in the driver's seat while rendering null and void the Constitution's requirements of privacy and its prohibitions against unreasonable searches and seizures. As such, it presumes every driver potentially guilty of breaking some law that would require the government to intervene and take over operation of the vehicle or shut it off altogether.

Biometric databases. "Guilt by association" has taken on new connotations in the technological age. The government's presumptions about our so-called guilt or innocence have extended down to our very cellular level with a diabolical campaign to create a nation of suspects predicated on a massive national DNA database.

Limitations on our right to move about freely. At every turn, we're tracked in by surveillance cameras that monitor our movements. For instance, license plate readers are mass surveillance tools that can photograph over 1,800 license tag

numbers per minute, take a picture of every passing license tag number and store the tag number and the date, time, and location of the picture in a searchable database, then share the data with law enforcement, fusion centers and private companies to track the movements of persons in their cars. With tens of thousands of these license plate readers now in operation throughout the country, police can track vehicles in real time.

The war on cash. Digital currency provides the government and its corporate partners with a mode of commerce that can easily be monitored, tracked, tabulated, mined for data, hacked, hijacked and confiscated when convenient. This push for a digital currency dovetails with the government's war on cash, which it has been subtly waging for some time now. In recent years, just the mere possession of significant amounts of cash could implicate you in suspicious activity and label you a criminal. Americans are having their bank accounts, homes, cars electronics and cash seized by police under the assumption that they have been associated with some criminal scheme.

These programs push us that much closer towards a suspect society where everyone is potentially guilty of some crime or another and must be preemptively rendered harmless.

In this way, the groundwork is being laid for a new kind of government where it won't matter if you're innocent or guilty, whether you're a threat to the nation, or even if you're a citizen.

What *will* matter is what the government—or whoever happens to be calling the shots at the time—thinks. And if the powers-that-be think you're a threat to the nation and should be locked up, then you'll be locked up with no access to the protections our Constitution provides.

In effect, you will disappear.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), our freedoms are already being made to disappear.

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We the Exploited: The U.S. Government Buys and Sells Its Citizens for Profit and Power

[We the Exploited: The U.S. Government Buys and Sells Its Citizens for Profit and Power](#)

by [John & Nisha Whitehead](#), [The Rutherford Institute](#)

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Americans have become easy prey for hackers, scammers, snitches, spies, and con artists.

But don't be fooled into thinking the government is protecting you.

To the contrary, the U.S. government is selling us (or rather, our data) to the highest bidders.

By the way, those highest bidders also include America's political class and the politicians aspiring to get elected or

re-elected. As the *Los Angeles Times* reports, “If you have been to a political rally, a town hall, or just fit a demographic a campaign is after, chances are good [your movements are being tracked with unnerving accuracy by data vendors on the payroll of campaigns.](#)”

Your [phones, televisions and digital devices are selling you out to politicians](#) who want your vote.

“Welcome to the new frontier of campaign tech – a loosely regulated world in which simply downloading a weather app or game, connecting to Wi-Fi at a coffee shop or powering up a home router can allow a data broker to monitor your movements with ease, then [compile the location information and sell it to a political candidate who can use it to surround you with messages,](#)” writes journalist Evan Halper.

In this way, “we the people” have been reduced to economic units to be bought, bartered and sold by all and sundry.

On a daily basis, Americans have been made to relinquish the most intimate details of who we are—our biological makeup, our genetic blueprints, and our biometrics (facial characteristics and structure, fingerprints, iris scans, etc.)—in order to [navigate an increasingly technologically-enabled world.](#)

Those intimate details, in turn, have become the building blocks of massive databases accessed by the government and its corporate partners in crime, [vulnerable to data breaches by hackers,](#) cyberattacks and espionage.

For years now, and with little real oversight or restrictions, the government has been compiling massive databases comprised of all manner of sensitive information on the citizenry.

Biographical information. Biometric information. Criminal backgrounds. Travel records.

There is [not a single person in the U.S. who is not in some](#)

[government database or another](#), and these databases are increasingly being shared between agencies, fusion centers, and the police.

The government has also, with little oversight and few guidelines, been adding to its massive trove of data on Americans by [buying commercially available information](#) (CAI) from third-party sources. As a report by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence revealed:

“[Commercially purchased data] can reveal sensitive and intimate information about the personal attributes, private behavior, social connections, and speech of U.S. persons and non-U.S. persons. [It can be misused to pry into private lives, ruin reputations, and cause emotional distress and threaten the safety of individuals.](#) Even subject to appropriate controls, CAI can increase the power of the government’s ability to peer into private lives to levels that may exceed our constitutional traditions or other social expectations.”

In other words, this is the diabolically sneaky way in which the government is attempting to sidestep the Fourth Amendment, which requires that government agents have probable cause and a warrant before spying on Americans or searching and seizing their private property.

It’s bad enough that the government is building massive databases comprised of *our* personal information without our knowledge or consent, but then they get hacked and we suffer for it.

Earlier this year, for instance, several federal agencies, state governments and universities were targeted in a [global cyberattack](#) that compromised the sensitive data of millions of Americans.

Did that stop the government’s quest to keep building these databases which compromise our privacy and security? Of course

not.

In fact, the government has also been selling our private information. According to *Vice*, Departments of Motor Vehicles in states around the country have been [selling drivers' personal information](#) "to thousands of businesses, including private investigators who spy on people for a profit."

Where there's a will, there's a way, and the government has become a master at finding loopholes that allow it to exploit the citizenry.

Thus, although Congress passed the Driver's Privacy Protection Act (DPPA) in 1994 to prevent the disclosure of personal information, it hasn't stopped state DMVs from [raking in millions by selling driver data](#) (names, dates of birth, [addresses, and the cars they own](#)) to third parties.

This is just a small part of *how* the government buys and sells its citizens to the highest bidders.

The *why* is always the same: for profit and power, of course.

Welcome to the age of surveillance capitalism.

Have you shopped at Whole Foods? Tested out target practice at a gun range? Sipped coffee at Starbucks while surfing the web? Visited an abortion clinic? Watched FOX News or MSNBC? Played Candy Crush on your phone? Walked through a mall? Walked past a government building?

That's [all it takes for your data to be hoovered up](#), sold and used to target you.

Incredibly, once you've been identified and tracked, data brokers can travel back in time, digitally speaking, to discover where you've been, who you've been with, what you've been doing, and what you've been reading, viewing, buying, etc.

Once you've been identified in this way, you can be tracked endlessly.

No one is spared.

In this regard, we are all equals: equally suffering the indignity of having every shred of privacy stripped away and the most intimate details of one's life turned into fodder for marketers and data profiteers.

This creepy new era of for-profit surveillance capitalism—in which we're being listened to, watched, tracked, followed, mapped, bought, sold and targeted—is made possible with our cooperation.

All those disclaimers you scroll through without reading them, the ones written in minute font, only to quickly click on the "Agree" button at the end so you can get to the next step—downloading software, opening up a social media account, adding a new app to your phone or computer—those signify your written consent to having your activities monitored, recorded and shared.

Think about it.

Every move you make is being monitored, mined for data, crunched, and tabulated in order to form a picture of who you are, what makes you tick, and how best to influence and/or control you.

With every smartphone we buy, every GPS device we install, every Twitter, Facebook, and Google account we open, every frequent buyer card we use for purchases—whether at the grocer's, the yogurt shop, the airlines or the department store—and every credit and debit card we use to pay for our transactions, we're helping Corporate America build a dossier for its government counterparts on who we know, what we think, how we spend our money, and how we spend our time.

The technology has advanced so far that marketers (political campaigns are among the worst offenders) [can actually build “digital fences” around your homes, workplaces, friends and family’s homes](#) and other places you visit in order to bombard you with specially crafted messages aimed at achieving a particular outcome.

If anyone else stalked us in this way—tailing us wherever we go, tapping into our calls, reading our correspondence, ferreting out our secrets, profiling and targeting us based on our interests and activities—we’d call the cops.

Unfortunately, the cops (equipped with [Stingray devices](#) and other Peeping Tom technologies) are also in on this particular scam.

It’s not just the surveillance and the buying and selling of your data that is worrisome.

The ramifications of a government—*any government*—having this much unregulated, unaccountable power to target, track, round up and detain its citizens is beyond chilling.

Imagine what a totalitarian regime such as Nazi Germany could have done with this kind of unadulterated power.

Imagine what the next police state to follow in Germany’s footsteps will do with this kind of power. Society is definitely rapidly moving in that direction.

We’ve made it so easy for the government to stalk us.

Government eyes see your every move: what you read, how much you spend, where you go, with whom you interact, when you wake up in the morning, what you’re watching on television and reading on the internet.

Every move you make is being monitored, mined for data, crunched, and tabulated in order to form a picture of who you are, what makes you tick, and how best to control you when and

if it becomes necessary to bring you in line.

Chances are, as the *Washington Post* has reported, you have already been assigned a [color-coded threat assessment score](#)—green, yellow or red—so police are forewarned about your potential inclination to be a troublemaker depending on whether you’ve had a career in the military, posted a comment perceived as threatening on Facebook, suffer from a particular medical condition, or know someone who knows someone who might have committed a crime.

In other words, you might already be flagged as potentially anti-government in a government database somewhere—[Main Core](#), for example—that identifies and tracks individuals (so they can be rounded up and detained in times of distress) who aren’t inclined to march in lockstep to the police state’s dictates.

The government has the know-how.

As *The Intercept* [reported](#), the FBI, CIA, NSA and other government agencies are increasingly investing in and relying on corporate surveillance technologies that can mine constitutionally protected speech on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in order to identify potential extremists and predict who might engage in future acts of anti-government behavior.

Surveillance, digital stalking and the data mining of the American people—weapons of compliance and control in the government’s hands, especially when the government can listen in on your phone calls, monitor your driving habits, track your movements, scrutinize your purchases and peer through the walls of your home—add up to a society in which there’s little room for indiscretions, imperfections, or acts of independence.

This is the creepy, calculating yet diabolical genius of the American police state: the very technology we hailed as

revolutionary and liberating has become our prison, jailer, probation officer, stalker, Big Brother and Father Knows Best all rolled into one.

It turns out that we are Soylent Green.

The 1973 film of the same name, starring Charlton Heston and Edward G. Robinson, is set in 2022 in an overpopulated, polluted, starving New York City whose inhabitants depend on synthetic foods manufactured by the Soylent Corporation for survival.

Heston plays a policeman investigating a murder, who discovers the grisly truth about the primary ingredient in the wafer, soylent green, which is the principal source of nourishment for a starved population. "It's people. Soylent Green is made out of people," declares Heston's character. "They're making our food out of people. Next thing they'll be breeding us like cattle for food."

Oh, how right he was.

Soylent Green is indeed people or, in our case, Soylent Green is our own personal data, repossessed, repackaged and used by corporations and the government to entrap us.

We, too, are being bred like cattle but not for food.

Rather, as I make clear in my book [*Battlefield America: The War on the American People*](#) and in its fictional counterpart [*The Erik Blair Diaries*](#), we're being bred, branded, bought and sold for our data.

As the insidious partnership between the U.S. government and Corporate America grows more invasive and more subtle with every passing day, there's virtually no way to opt out of these assaults on your digital privacy short of being a modern-day Luddite, completely disconnected from all technology.

What we desperately lack and urgently need is an Electronic Bill of Rights that protects “we the people” from predatory surveillance and data-mining business practices.

Without constitutional protections in place to guard against encroachments on our rights in the electronic realm, it won’t be long before we find ourselves, much like Edward G. Robinson’s character in *Soylent Green*, looking back on the past with longing, back to an age where we could speak to whom we wanted, buy what we wanted, think what we wanted without those thoughts, words and activities being tracked, processed and stored by corporate giants such as Google, sold to government agencies such as the NSA and CIA, and used against us by militarized police with their army of futuristic technologies.

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Evil Walks Among Us: Monsters with Human Faces Wreak Havoc on Our Freedoms

[Evil Walks Among Us: Monsters with Human Faces Wreak Havoc on Our Freedoms](#)

by [John & Nisha Whitehead](#), [The Rutherford Institute](#)

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“But these weren’t the kind of monsters that had tentacles and rotting skin, the kind a seven-year-old might be able to wrap his mind around—they were monsters with human faces, in crisp uniforms, marching in lockstep, so banal you don’t recognize them for what they are until it’s too late.”

– Ransom Riggs, *Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children*

Enough already.

Enough with the distractions. Enough with the partisan jousting.

Enough with the sniping and name-calling and mud-slinging that do nothing to make this country safer or freer or more just.

We have let the government’s evil-doing, its abuses, power grabs, brutality, meanness, inhumanity, immorality, greed, corruption, debauchery and tyranny go on for too long.

We are approaching a reckoning.

This is the point, as the poet W. B. Yeats warned, when things fall apart and [anarchy is loosed upon the world](#).

We have seen this convergence before in Hitler's Germany, in Stalin's Russia, in Mussolini's Italy, and in Mao's China: the rise of strongmen and demagogues, the ascendancy of profit-driven politics over deep-seated principles, the warring nationalism that seeks to divide and conquer, the callous disregard for basic human rights and dignity, and the silence of people who should know better.

Yet no matter how many times the world has been down this road before, we can't seem to avoid repeating the deadly mistakes of the past.

This is not just playing out on a national and international scale. It is wreaking havoc at the most immediate level, as well, creating rifts and polarities within families and friends, neighborhoods and communities that keep the populace warring among themselves and incapable of presenting a united front in the face of the government's goose-stepping despotism.

We labor today under the weight of countless tyrannies, large and small, disguised as "the better good," marketed as benevolence, enforced with armed police, and carried out by an elite class of government officials who are largely insulated from the ill effects of their actions.

For too long now, the American people have rationalized turning a blind eye to all manner of government wrongdoing—asset forfeiture schemes, corruption, surveillance, endless wars, SWAT team raids, militarized police, profit-driven private prisons, and so on—because they were the so-called lesser of two evils.

Yet the unavoidable truth is that the government—through its

acts of power grabs, brutality, meanness, inhumanity, immorality, greed, corruption, debauchery and tyranny—has become almost indistinguishable from the evil it claims to be fighting, whether that evil takes the form of [terrorism](#), torture, [drug trafficking](#), [sex trafficking](#), murder, violence, theft, pornography, [scientific experimentations](#) or some other diabolical means of inflicting pain, suffering and servitude on humanity.

At its core, this is not a debate about politics, or constitutionalism, or even tyranny disguised as law-and-order. This is a condemnation of the monsters with human faces who walk among us.

Many of them work for the U.S. government.

This is the premise of [John Carpenter's film *They Live*](#), which was released thirty-five years ago and remains unnervingly, chillingly appropriate for our modern age.

Best known for his horror film *Halloween*, which assumes that there is a form of evil so dark that it can't be killed, Carpenter's larger body of work is infused with a strong anti-authoritarian, anti-establishment, laconic bent that speaks to the filmmaker's concerns about the unraveling of our society, particularly our government.

Time and again, Carpenter portrays the government working against its own citizens, [a populace out of touch with reality](#), technology run amok, and a future more horrific than any horror film.

In *Escape from New York*, Carpenter presents fascism as the future of America.

In *The Thing*, a remake of the 1951 sci-fi classic of the same name, Carpenter presupposes that increasingly we are all becoming dehumanized.

In *Christine*, the film adaptation of Stephen King's novel about a demon-possessed car, technology exhibits a will and consciousness of its own and goes on a murderous rampage.

In *In the Mouth of Madness*, Carpenter notes that evil grows when people lose "the ability to know the difference between reality and fantasy."

And then there is Carpenter's *They Live*, in which two migrant workers discover that the world is not as it seems. In fact, the population is actually being controlled and exploited by aliens working in partnership with an oligarchic elite. All the while, the populace—blissfully unaware of the real agenda at work in their lives—has been lulled into complacency, indoctrinated into compliance, bombarded with media distractions, and hypnotized by subliminal messages beamed out of television and various electronic devices, billboards and the like.

It is only when homeless drifter John Nada (played to the hilt by the [late Roddy Piper](#)) discovers a pair of doctored sunglasses—Hoffman lenses—that Nada sees what lies beneath the elite's fabricated reality: control and bondage.

When viewed through the lens of truth, the elite, who appear human until stripped of their disguises, are shown to be monsters who have enslaved the citizenry in order to prey on them.

Likewise, [billboards blare out hidden, authoritative messages](#): a bikini-clad woman in one ad is actually ordering viewers to "MARRY AND REPRODUCE." Magazine racks scream "CONSUME" and "OBEY." A wad of dollar bills in a vendor's hand proclaims, "THIS IS YOUR GOD."

When viewed through Nada's Hoffman lenses, some of the other hidden messages being drummed into the people's subconscious include: NO INDEPENDENT THOUGHT, CONFORM, SUBMIT, STAY ASLEEP, BUY, WATCH TV, NO IMAGINATION, and DO NOT QUESTION AUTHORITY.

This indoctrination campaign engineered by the elite in *They Live* is painfully familiar to anyone who has studied the decline of American culture.

A citizenry that does not think for themselves, obeys without question, is submissive, does not challenge authority, does not think outside the box, and is content to sit back and be entertained is a citizenry that can be easily controlled.

In this way, the subtle message of *They Live* provides an apt analogy of our own distorted vision of life in the American police state, what philosopher Slavoj Žižek refers to as [dictatorship in democracy](#), “the invisible order which sustains your apparent freedom.”

Tune out the government’s attempts to distract, divert and befuddle us and tune into what’s really going on in this country, and you’ll run headlong into an unmistakable, unpalatable truth: what we are dealing with today is an authoritarian beast that has outgrown its chains and will not be restrained.

We’re being fed a series of carefully contrived fictions that bear no resemblance to reality.

Despite the fact that we are 17,600 times more likely to die from heart disease than from a terrorist attack; 11,000 times more likely to die from an airplane accident than from a terrorist plot involving an airplane; 1,048 times more likely to die from a car accident than a terrorist attack, and [8 times more likely to be killed by a police officer than by a terrorist](#) , we have handed over control of our lives to government officials who treat us as a means to an end—the source of money and power.

As the Bearded Man in *They Live* warns, “They are dismantling the sleeping middle class. More and more people are becoming poor. We are their cattle. We are being bred for slavery.”

We have bought into the illusion and refused to grasp the truth.

From the moment we are born until we die, we are indoctrinated into believing that those who rule us do it for our own good. The truth is far different.

The powers-that-be want us to feel threatened by forces beyond our control (terrorists, pandemics, mass shootings, etc.).

They want us afraid and dependent on the government and its militarized armies for our safety and well-being.

They want us distrustful of each other, divided by our prejudices, and at each other's throats.

We are little more than expendable resources to be used, abused and discarded.

In fact, a study conducted by Princeton and Northwestern University concluded that the [U.S. government does not represent the majority of American citizens](#). Instead, the study found that the government is ruled by the rich and powerful, or the so-called "economic elite." Moreover, the researchers concluded that policies enacted by this governmental elite nearly always favor special interests and lobbying groups.

In other words, we are being [ruled by an oligarchy](#) disguised as a democracy, and arguably on our way towards fascism—a form of government where private corporate interests rule, money calls the shots, and the people are seen as mere subjects to be controlled.

Rest assured that when and if fascism finally takes hold in America, the basic forms of government will remain: Fascism will appear to be friendly. The legislators will be in session. There will be elections, and the news media will continue to cover the entertainment and political trivia.

Consent of the governed, however, will no longer apply. Actual control will have finally passed to the oligarchic elite controlling the government behind the scenes.

Sound familiar?

Clearly, we are now ruled by an oligarchic elite of governmental and corporate interests.

We have moved into “corporatism” ([favored by Benito Mussolini](#)), which is a halfway point on the road to full-blown fascism.

Corporatism is where the few moneyed interests—not elected by the citizenry—rule over the many. In this way, it is not a democracy or a republican form of government, which is what the American government was established to be. It is a top-down form of government and one which has a terrifying history typified by the developments that occurred in totalitarian regimes of the past: police states where everyone is watched and spied on, rounded up for minor infractions by government agents, placed under police control, and placed in detention (a.k.a. concentration) camps.

For the final hammer of fascism to fall, it will require the most crucial ingredient: the majority of the people will have to agree that it’s not only expedient but necessary.

But why would a people agree to such an oppressive regime?

The answer is the same in every age: fear.

[Fear makes people stupid.](#)

Fear is the method most often used by politicians to increase the power of government. And, as most social commentators recognize, an atmosphere of fear permeates modern America: fear of terrorism, fear of the police, fear of our neighbors and so on.

The propaganda of fear has been used quite effectively by those who want to gain control, and it is transforming the populace into fearful, compliant, pacified zombies content to march in lockstep with the government's dictates.

This brings me back to *They Live*, in which the real zombies are not the aliens calling the shots but the populace who are content to remain controlled.

When all is said and done, the world of *They Live* is not so different from our own. As one of the characters points out, "The poor and the underclass are growing. Racial justice and human rights are nonexistent. They have created a repressive society, and we are their unwitting accomplices. Their intention to rule rests with the annihilation of consciousness. We have been lulled into a trance. They have made us indifferent to ourselves, to others. We are focused only on our own gain."

We, too, are focused only on our own pleasures, prejudices and gains. Our poor and underclasses are also growing. Injustice is growing. Inequality is growing. A concern for human rights is nearly nonexistent. We too have been lulled into a trance, indifferent to others.

Oblivious to what lies ahead, we've been manipulated into believing that if we continue to consume, obey, and have faith, things will work out. But that's never been true of emerging regimes. And by the time we feel the hammer coming down upon us, it will be too late.

So where does that leave us?

The characters who populate Carpenter's films provide some insight.

Underneath their machismo, they still believe in the ideals of liberty and equal opportunity. Their beliefs place them in constant opposition with the law and the establishment, but

they are nonetheless freedom fighters.

When, for example, John Nada destroys the alien hypno-transmitter in *They Live*, he delivers a wake-up call for freedom. As Nada memorably declares, “I have come here to chew bubblegum and kick ass. And I’m all out of bubblegum.”

In other words: we need to get active and take a stand for what’s really important.

Stop allowing yourselves to be easily distracted by pointless political spectacles and pay attention to what’s really going on in the country.

As I make clear in my book [*Battlefield America: The War on the American People*](#) and in its fictional counterpart [*The Erik Blair Diaries*](#), the real battle for control of this nation is taking place on roadsides, in police cars, on witness stands, over phone lines, in government offices, in corporate offices, in public school hallways and classrooms, in parks and city council meetings, and in towns and cities across this country.

All the trappings of the American police state are now in plain sight.

Wake up, America.

If they live (the tyrants, the oppressors, the invaders, the overlords), it is only because “we the people” sleep.

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We the Targeted: How the Government Weaponizes Surveillance to Silence Its Critics

[We the Targeted: How the Government Weaponizes Surveillance to Silence Its Critics](#)

by [John & Nisha Whitehead](#), [The Rutherford Institute](#)

August 29, 2023

“Once a government is committed to the principle of silencing the voice of opposition, it has only one way to go, and that is down the path of increasingly repressive measures, until it becomes [a source of terror to all its citizens](#) and creates a country where everyone lives in fear.”

– President Harry S. Truman

Ever since Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his groundbreaking “I Have a Dream” speech during the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom on Aug. 28, 1963, the Deep State has been hard at work turning King’s dream into a living nightmare.

The end result of the government’s efforts over the past 60 years is a country where nothing ever really changes, and everyone lives in fear.

Race wars are still being stoked by both the Right and the Left; the military-industrial complex is still waging profit-driven wars at taxpayer expense; the oligarchy is still calling the shots in the seats of government power; and the government is still [weaponizing surveillance](#) in order to

muzzle anti-government sentiment, harass activists, and terrorize Americans into compliance.

This last point is particularly disturbing.

Starting in the 1950s, the government relied on COINTELPRO, its domestic intelligence program, [to neutralize domestic political dissidents](#). Those [targeted by the FBI](#) under COINTELPRO for its intimidation, surveillance and smear campaigns included: Martin Luther King Jr., Malcom X, the Black Panther Party, John Lennon, Billie Holiday, Emma Goldman, Aretha Franklin, Charlie Chaplin, Ernest Hemingway, Felix Frankfurter, and hundreds more.

In more recent decades, the powers-that-be have expanded their reach to target anyone who opposes the police state, regardless of their political leanings.

Advances in technology have enabled the government to deploy a veritable arsenal of surveillance weapons in order to "[expose, disrupt, misdirect, discredit, or otherwise neutralize](#)" perceived threats to the government's power.

Surveillance cameras mounted on utility poles, traffic lights, businesses, and homes. License plate readers. Ring doorbells. GPS devices. Dash cameras. Drones. Store security cameras. Geofencing and geotracking. FitBits. Alexa. Internet-connected devices. [Geofencing dragnets](#). Fusion centers. Smart devices. Behavioral threat assessments. Terror watch lists. Facial recognition. Snitch tip lines. Biometric scanners. Pre-crime. DNA databases. Data mining. Precognitive technology. Contact tracing apps.

What these add up to is a world in which, on any given day, the average person is now [monitored, surveilled, spied on and tracked in more than 20 different ways](#) by both government and corporate eyes and ears.

Consider just a small sampling of the ways in which the

government is weaponizing its 360 degree surveillance technologies to flag you as a threat to national security, whether or not you've done anything wrong.

Flagging you as a danger based on your feelings. Customs and Border Protection is reportedly using an [artificial intelligence surveillance program that can detect “sentiment and emotion”](#) in social media posts in order to identify travelers who may be “a threat to public safety, national security, or lawful trade and travel.”

Flagging you as a danger based on your phone and movements. Cell phones have become de facto snitches, offering up a steady stream of digital location data on users' movements and travels. For instance, the FBI was able to use geofence data to identify more than 5,000 mobile devices (and their owners) in a 4-acre area around the Capitol on January 6. This latest surveillance tactic could land you in jail for being in the “wrong place and time.” Police are also using [cell-site simulators to carry out mass surveillance of protests](#) without the need for a warrant. Moreover, federal agents can now employ a number of hacking methods in order to gain access to your computer activities and “see” whatever you're seeing on your monitor. Malicious hacking software can also be used to remotely activate cameras and microphones, offering another means of glimpsing into the personal business of a target.

Flagging you as a danger based on your DNA. [DNA technology in the hands of government officials completes our transition to a Surveillance State](#). If you have the misfortune to leave your DNA traces anywhere a crime has been committed, you've already got a file somewhere in some state or federal database—albeit it may be a file without a name. By accessing your DNA, the [government will soon know everything else about you that they don't already know](#): your family chart, your ancestry, what you look like, your health history, your inclination to follow orders or chart your own course, etc. After all, a DNA print reveals everything about [“who we are, where we come](#)

[from, and who we will be.](#)” It can also be used to [predict the physical appearance](#) of potential suspects. It’s only a matter of time before the police state’s pursuit of criminals expands into [genetic profiling](#) and a [preemptive hunt for criminals of the future](#).

Flagging you as a danger based on your face. Facial recognition software aims to create a society in which every individual who steps out into public is tracked and recorded as they go about their daily business. Coupled with surveillance cameras that blanket the country, facial recognition technology allows the government and its corporate partners to identify and track someone’s movements in real-time. One particularly controversial software program created by Clearview AI has been [used by police, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security to collect photos on social media sites](#) for inclusion in a massive facial recognition database. Similarly, biometric software, which relies on one’s unique identifiers (fingerprints, irises, voice prints), is becoming the [standard for navigating security lines, as well as bypassing digital locks and gaining access to phones, computers, office buildings](#), etc. In fact, greater numbers of travelers are opting into programs that rely on their biometrics in order to avoid long waits at airport security. Scientists are also developing lasers that can [identify and surveil individuals based on their heartbeats, scent and microbiome](#).

Flagging you as a danger based on your behavior. Rapid advances in [behavioral surveillance](#) are not only making it possible for individuals to be monitored and tracked based on their patterns of movement or behavior, including gait recognition (the way one walks), but have given rise to whole [industries that revolve around predicting one’s behavior](#) based on data and surveillance patterns and are also shaping the behaviors of whole populations. One smart “anti-riot” surveillance system purports to [predict mass riots and](#)

[unauthorized public events](#) by using artificial intelligence to analyze social media, news sources, surveillance video feeds and public transportation data.

Flagging you as a danger based on your spending and consumer activities. With every smartphone we buy, every GPS device we install, every Twitter, Facebook, and Google account we open, every frequent buyer card we use for purchases—whether at the grocer's, the yogurt shop, the airlines or the department store—and every credit and debit card we use to pay for our transactions, we're helping Corporate America build a dossier for its government counterparts on who we know, what we think, how we spend our money, and how we spend our time. Consumer surveillance, by which your activities and data in the physical and online realms are tracked and shared with advertisers, has become [a \\$300 billion industry that routinely harvests your data for profit](#). Corporations such as Target have not only been tracking and assessing the behavior of their customers, particularly their purchasing patterns, for years, but the retailer has also funded major surveillance in cities across the country and developed behavioral surveillance [algorithms that can determine whether someone's mannerisms might fit the profile of a thief](#).

Flagging you as a danger based on your public activities. Private corporations in conjunction with police agencies throughout the country have created [a web of surveillance that encompasses all major cities](#) in order to monitor large groups of people seamlessly, as in the case of protests and rallies. They are also engaging in extensive online surveillance, looking for any hints of "[large public events, social unrest, gang communications, and criminally predicated individuals](#)." Defense contractors have been at the forefront of this [lucrative market](#). Fusion centers, [\\$330 million-a-year, information-sharing hubs](#) for federal, state and law enforcement agencies, [monitor and report such "suspicious" behavior as people buying pallets of bottled water,](#)

photographing government buildings, and applying for a pilot's license as "suspicious activity."

Flagging you as a danger based on your social media activities. Every move you make, especially on social media, is monitored, mined for data, crunched, and tabulated in order to form a picture of who you are, what makes you tick, and how best to control you when and if it becomes necessary to bring you in line. As *The Intercept* [reported](#), the FBI, CIA, NSA and other government agencies are increasingly investing in and relying on corporate surveillance technologies that can mine constitutionally protected speech on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in order to identify potential extremists and predict who might engage in future acts of anti-government behavior. This obsession with social media as a form of surveillance will have some [frightening consequences in coming years](#). As Helen A.S. Popkin, writing for *NBC News*, observed, "We may very well face a future where [algorithms bust people en masse for referencing illegal 'Game of Thrones' downloads](#)... the new software has the potential to roll, Terminator-style, targeting every social media user with a shameful confession or questionable sense of humor."

Flagging you as a danger based on your social network. Not content to merely spy on individuals through their online activity, government agencies are now using [surveillance technology to track one's social network](#), the people you might connect with by phone, text message, email or through social message, in order to ferret out possible criminals. An FBI document obtained by *Rolling Stone* speaks to the ease with which agents are [able to access address book data from Facebook's WhatsApp and Apple's iMessage services](#) from the accounts of targeted individuals *and* individuals not under investigation who might have a targeted individual within their network. What this creates is a "guilt by association" society in which we are all as guilty as the most culpable

person in our address book.

Flagging you as a danger based on your car. License plate readers are mass surveillance tools that can photograph over 1,800 license tag numbers per minute, take a picture of every passing license tag number and store the tag number and the date, time, and location of the picture in a searchable database, then share the data with law enforcement, fusion centers and private companies to track the movements of persons in their cars. With tens of thousands of these license plate readers now in operation throughout the country, affixed to overpasses, cop cars and throughout business sectors and residential neighborhoods, it allows police to track vehicles and run the plates through law enforcement databases for abducted children, stolen cars, missing people and wanted fugitives. Of course, the technology is not infallible: there have been numerous incidents in which [police have mistakenly relied on license plate data](#) to capture out suspects only to end up detaining innocent people at gunpoint.

Flagging you as a danger based on your political views. The Church Committee, the Senate task force charged with investigating COINTELPRO abuses in 1975, concluded that the government had carried out “secret surveillance of citizens on the basis of their political beliefs, even when those beliefs posed no threat of violence or illegal acts on behalf of a hostile foreign power.” The report continued: “Groups and individuals have been harassed and disrupted because of their political views and their lifestyles... Intelligence agencies have served the political and personal objectives of presidents and other high officials.” Nothing has changed since then.

Flagging you as a danger based on your correspondence. Just about every branch of the government—from the Postal Service to the Treasury Department and every agency in between—[now has its own surveillance sector](#), authorized to spy on the American people. For instance, the U.S. Postal Service, which has

been [photographing the exterior of every piece of paper mail](#) for the past 20 years, is also spying on Americans' texts, emails and social media posts. Headed up by the Postal Service's law enforcement division, the [Internet Covert Operations Program](#) (iCOP) is reportedly [using facial recognition technology, combined with fake online identities](#), to ferret out potential troublemakers with "inflammatory" posts. The agency claims the online surveillance, which falls outside its conventional job scope of processing and delivering paper mail, is necessary to help postal workers avoid "[potentially volatile situations](#)."

Now the government wants us to believe that we have nothing to fear from these mass spying programs as long as we've done nothing wrong.

Don't believe it.

As Matthew Feeney warns in the *New York Times*, "In the past, Communists, civil rights leaders, feminists, Quakers, folk singers, war protesters and others have been on the receiving end of law enforcement surveillance. [No one knows who the next target will be](#)."

The government's definition of a "bad" guy is extraordinarily broad, and it results in the warrantless surveillance of innocent, law-abiding Americans on a staggering scale.

Moreover, there is a repressive, suppressive effect to surveillance that not only acts as a potentially small deterrent on crime but serves to monitor and chill lawful First Amendment activity, and that is the whole point.

Weaponized surveillance is re-engineering a society structured around the aesthetic of fear.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), the police state wants us silent, servile and

compliant.

They definitely do not want us to engage in First Amendment activities that challenge the government's power, reveal the government's corruption, expose the government's lies, and encourage the citizenry to push back against the government's many injustices.

And they certainly do not want us to remember that we have rights, let alone attempting to exercise those rights peaceably and lawfully, whether it's protesting police brutality and racism, challenging COVID-19 mandates, questioning election outcomes, or listening to alternate viewpoints—even conspiratorial ones—in order to form our own opinions about the true nature of government.

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We're All Suspects in a DNA Lineup, Waiting to be Matched With a Crime

[We're All Suspects in a DNA Lineup, Waiting to be Matched With a Crime](#)

by [John & Nisha Whitehead](#), [The Rutherford Institute](#)

August 21, 2023

"Make no mistake about it...your DNA can be taken and entered into a national DNA database if you are ever arrested, rightly or wrongly, and for whatever reason... [I doubt that the proud men who wrote the charter of our liberties would have been so eager to open their mouths for royal inspection.](#)"

—Justice Antonin Scalia dissenting in [Maryland v. King](#)

Be warned: the [DNA detectives are on the prowl.](#)

Whatever skeletons may be lurking on your family tree or in your closet, whatever crimes you may have committed, whatever associations you may have with those on the government's most wanted lists: the police state is determined to ferret them out.

In an age of overcriminalization, round-the-clock surveillance, and a police state eager to flex its muscles in a show of power, we are all guilty of some transgression or other.

No longer can we consider ourselves innocent until proven guilty.

Now we are all suspects in a DNA lineup waiting to be matched up with a crime.

Suspect State, meet the [Genetic Panopticon.](#)

[DNA technology in the hands of government officials will complete our transition to a Surveillance State](#) in which prison walls are disguised within the seemingly benevolent trappings of technological and scientific progress, national security and the need to guard against terrorists, pandemics, civil unrest, etc.

By accessing your DNA, the [government will soon know everything else about you that they don't already know](#): your family chart, your ancestry, what you look like, your health

history, your inclination to follow orders or chart your own course, etc.

It's getting harder to hide, even if you think you've got nothing to hide.

Armed with unprecedented access to DNA databases amassed by the FBI and ancestry website, as well as hospital [newborn screening programs](#), police are using [forensic genealogy](#), which allows police to match up an unknown suspect's crime scene DNA with that of any family members in a genealogy database, [to solve cold cases](#) that have remained unsolved for decades.

As reported by *The Intercept*, forensic genetic genealogists are "[combing through the genetic information of hundreds of thousands of innocent people](#) in search of a perpetrator."

By submitting your DNA to a genealogical database such as Ancestry and 23andMe, you're giving the police access to the [genetic makeup, relationships and health profiles of every relative](#)—past, present and future—in your family, whether or not *you* or *they* ever agreed to be part of such a database.

Indeed, relying on a loophole in a commercial database called GEDmatch, genetic genealogists are able to [sidestep privacy rules](#) that allow people to opt out of sharing their genetic information with police. The end result? Police are now able to identify and target those very individuals who explicitly asked to keep their DNA results private.

In this way, merely choosing to exercise your right to privacy makes you a suspect and puts you in the police state's crosshairs.

It no longer even matters if you're among the tens of [millions of people who have added their DNA to ancestry databases](#). As Brian Resnick [reports](#), public DNA databases have grown so massive that they can be used to find you even if you've never shared your own DNA.

That simple transaction—a spit sample or a cheek swab in exchange for getting to learn everything about one’s ancestral makeup, where one came from, and who is part of one’s extended family—is [the price of entry into the Suspect State](#) for all of us.

After all, a DNA print reveals everything about “[who we are, where we come from, and who we will be](#).” It can also be used to [predict the physical appearance](#) of potential suspects.

It’s what police like to refer to a “[modern fingerprint](#).”

Whereas fingerprint technology created a watershed moment for police in their ability to “crack” a case, DNA technology is now being hailed by law enforcement agencies as the [magic bullet in crime solving](#), especially when it helps them crack cold cases of serial murders and rapists.

After all, who wouldn’t want to get psychopaths and serial rapists off the streets and safely behind bars, right?

At least, that’s the [argument being used by law enforcement](#) to support their unrestricted access to these genealogy databases, and they’ve got the [success stories](#) to prove it.

For instance, a 68-year-old Pennsylvania man was arrested and charged with the brutal rape and murder of a young woman almost 50 years earlier. Relying on genealogical research suggesting that the killer had ancestors who hailed from a small town in Italy, [investigators narrowed their findings down to one man](#) whose DNA, obtained from a discarded coffee cup, matched the killer’s.

In another cold case investigation, a 76-year-old man was arrested for two decades-old murders after his [DNA was collected from a breathalyzer during an unrelated traffic stop](#).

Yet it’s not just psychopaths and serial rapists who are

getting [caught up in the investigative dragnet](#). In the police state's pursuit of criminals, anyone who comes up as a possible DNA match—including distant family members—suddenly becomes part of [a circle of suspects that must be tracked, investigated and ruled out](#).

In this way, “guilt by association” has taken on new connotations in a technological age in which one is [just a DNA sample away](#) from being considered a person of interest in a police investigation. As Jessica Cussins warns in *Psychology Today*, “The fundamental fight—that data from potentially innocent people should not be used to connect them to unrelated crimes—[has been lost](#).”

Until recently, the government was required to at least observe some basic restrictions on when, where and how it could access someone's DNA. That was turned on its head by various U.S. Supreme Court rulings that heralded the loss of privacy on a cellular level.

For instance, the [U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Maryland v. King*](#) that taking DNA samples from a suspect doesn't violate the Fourth Amendment. The Court's subsequent decision to let stand the [Maryland Court of Appeals' ruling in *Raynor v. Maryland*](#), which essentially determined that individuals do not have a right to privacy when it comes to their DNA, made Americans even more vulnerable to the government accessing, analyzing and storing their DNA without their knowledge or permission.

It's all been downhill since then.

Indeed, the government has been relentless in its efforts to get hold of our DNA, either through mandatory programs carried out in connection with law enforcement and corporate America, by warrantlessly accessing our familial [DNA shared with genealogical services](#) such as [Ancestry](#) and [23andMe](#), or through the collection of our “shed” or “touch” DNA.

Get ready, folks, because the government has [embarked on a diabolical campaign to create a nation of suspects predicated on a massive national DNA database](#).

This has been helped along by Congress (which adopted legislation allowing police to collect and test DNA immediately following arrests), President Trump (who signed [the Rapid DNA Act](#) into law), the courts (which have [ruled](#) that police can routinely take DNA samples from people who are arrested but not yet convicted of a crime), and local police agencies (which are chomping at the bit to acquire this new crime-fighting gadget).

For example, Rapid DNA machines—portable, about the size of a desktop printer, highly unregulated, [far from fool-proof](#), and so fast that they can produce DNA profiles in less than two hours—allow police to go on fishing expeditions for any hint of *possible* misconduct using DNA samples.

Journalist Heather Murphy explains: “As police agencies build out their local DNA databases, they are collecting DNA not only from people who have been charged with major crimes but also, increasingly, [from people who are merely deemed suspicious, permanently linking their genetic identities to criminal databases](#).”

All 50 states now maintain their own DNA government databases, although the protocols for collection differ from state to state. Increasingly, many of the data from local databanks are being uploaded to CODIS, the FBI’s massive DNA database, which has become a de facto way to identify and track the American people from birth to death.

Even hospitals have gotten in on the game by taking and storing newborn babies’ DNA, often without their parents’ knowledge or consent. It’s part of the [government’s mandatory genetic screening of newborns](#). In many states, the DNA is stored indefinitely. There’s already a move underway to carry

out [whole genome sequencing on newborns](#), ostensibly to help diagnose rare diseases earlier and improve health later in life, which constitutes an ethical minefield all by itself.

What this means for those being born today is inclusion in a government database that contains intimate information about who they are, their ancestry, and what awaits them in the future, [including their inclinations to be followers, leaders or troublemakers](#).

For example, police in New Jersey [accessed the DNA from a nine-year-old blood sample of a newborn baby](#) in order to identify the child's father as a suspect in a decades-old sexual assault.

The ramifications of this kind of DNA profiling are [far-reaching](#).

At a minimum, these DNA databases do away with any semblance of [privacy](#) or [anonymity](#).

These genetic databases and genomic technology also make us that much more vulnerable to creeps and [cyberstalkers](#), [genetic profiling](#), and those who would [weaponize](#) the technology against us.

Unfortunately, the debate over genetic privacy—and when one's DNA becomes a [public commodity](#) outside the protection of the Fourth Amendment's prohibition on warrantless searches and seizures—continues to lag far behind the government and Corporate America's encroachments on our rights.

Moreover, while much of the public debate, legislative efforts and legal challenges in recent years have focused on the protocols surrounding when police can legally collect a suspect's DNA (with or without a search warrant and whether upon arrest or conviction), the question of how to handle “shed” or “touch” DNA has largely slipped through without much debate or opposition.

As scientist Leslie A. Pray [notes](#):

We all shed DNA, leaving traces of our identity practically everywhere we go... In fact, the garbage you leave for curbside pickup is a potential gold mine of this sort of material. All of this shed or so-called abandoned DNA is free for the taking by local police investigators hoping to crack unsolvable cases... shed DNA is also free for inclusion in a secret universal DNA databank.

What this means is that if you have the misfortune to leave your DNA traces anywhere a crime has been committed, you've already got a file somewhere in some state or federal database—albeit it may be a file without a name.

As the dissenting opinion to the Maryland Court of Appeals' shed DNA ruling in *Raynor* rightly warned, "[A person can no longer vote, participate in a jury, or obtain a driver's license, without opening up his genetic material for state collection](#) and codification."

It's just a matter of time before government agents will know everywhere we've been and how long we were at each place by following our shed DNA. After all, scientists can already [track salmon across hundreds of square miles of streams and rivers](#) using DNA.

Today, helped along by robotics and automation, DNA processing, analysis and reporting takes far less time and can bring forth all manner of information, right down to a person's eye color and relatives. Incredibly, one company [specializes in creating "mug shots" for police based on DNA samples](#) from unknown "suspects" which are then compared to individuals with similar genetic profiles.

Of course, none of these technologies are [infallible](#).

DNA evidence can be wrong, either through human

error, [tampering](#), or even outright [fabrication](#), and it happens [more often](#) than we are told.

What this amounts to is a scenario in which we have little to no defense against charges of wrongdoing, especially when “convicted” by technology, and even less protection against the government sweeping up our DNA in much the same way it sweeps up our phone calls, emails and text messages.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), it’s only a matter of time before the police state’s pursuit of criminals from the past expands into [genetic profiling](#) and a [preemptive hunt for criminals of the future](#).

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Technocensorship: The Government’s War on So-Called Dangerous Ideas

[Technocensorship: The Government’s War on So-Called Dangerous Ideas](#)

by [John & Nisha Whitehead](#), [The Rutherford Institute](#)

August 1, 2023

"There is more than one way to burn a book. And the world is full of people running about with lit matches."

–Ray Bradbury

What we are witnessing is the modern-day equivalent of book burning which involves doing away with dangerous ideas—legitimate or not—and the people who espouse them. Seventy years after Ray Bradbury's novel *Fahrenheit 451* depicted a fictional world in which books are burned in order to suppress dissenting ideas, while televised entertainment is used to anesthetize the populace and render them easily pacified, distracted and controlled, we find ourselves navigating an eerily similar reality.

Welcome to the age of technocensorship.

On paper—under the First Amendment, at least—we are technically free to speak.

In reality, however, we are now only as free to speak as a government official—or corporate entities such as Facebook, Google or YouTube—may allow.

Case in point: internal documents released by the House Judiciary Select Subcommittee on Weaponization of the Federal Government confirmed what we have long suspected: that [the government has been working in tandem with social media companies to censor speech](#).

By "censor," we're referring to concerted efforts by the government to muzzle, silence and altogether eradicate any speech that runs afoul of the government's own approved narrative.

This is political correctness taken to its most chilling and oppressive extreme.

The revelations that Facebook worked in concert with the Biden

administration to censor content related to COVID-19, [including humorous jokes](#), credible information and so-called disinformation, followed on the heels of a ruling by a federal court in Louisiana that [prohibits executive branch officials from communicating with social media companies about controversial content](#) in their online forums.

Likening the government's heavy-handed attempts to pressure social media companies to suppress content critical of COVID vaccines or the election to "an almost dystopian scenario," Judge Terry Doughty warned that "[the United States Government seems to have assumed a role similar to an Orwellian 'Ministry of Truth.'](#)"

This is the very definition of technofascism.

Clothed in tyrannical self-righteousness, technofascism is powered by technological behemoths (both corporate and governmental) working in tandem to achieve a common goal.

The government is not protecting us from "dangerous" disinformation campaigns. It is laying the groundwork to insulate us from "dangerous" ideas that might cause us to think for ourselves and, in so doing, challenge the power elite's stranglehold over our lives.

Thus far, the tech giants have been able to sidestep the First Amendment by virtue of their non-governmental status, but it's a dubious distinction at best when they are marching in lockstep with the government's dictates.

As Philip Hamburger and Jenin Younes write for *The Wall Street Journal*: "The First Amendment prohibits the government from 'abridging the freedom of speech.' Supreme Court doctrine makes clear that [government can't constitutionally evade the amendment by working through private companies.](#)"

Nothing good can come from allowing the government to sidestep the Constitution.

The steady, pervasive censorship creep that is being inflicted on us by corporate tech giants with the blessing of the powers-that-be threatens to bring about a restructuring of reality straight out of Orwell's *1984*, where the Ministry of Truth polices speech and ensures that facts conform to whatever version of reality the government propagandists embrace.

Orwell intended *1984* as a warning. Instead, it is being used as a dystopian instruction manual for socially engineering a populace that is compliant, conformist and obedient to Big Brother.

This is the slippery slope that leads to the end of free speech as we once knew it.

In a world increasingly automated and filtered through the lens of artificial intelligence, we are finding ourselves at the mercy of inflexible algorithms that dictate the boundaries of our liberties.

Once artificial intelligence becomes a [fully integrated part of the government bureaucracy](#), there will be little recourse: we will all be subject to the intransigent judgments of techno-rulers.

This is how it starts.

First, the censors went after so-called extremists spouting so-called "hate speech."

Then they went after so-called extremists spouting so-called ["disinformation" about stolen elections, the Holocaust, and Hunter Biden](#).

By the time so-called extremists found themselves in the crosshairs for spouting so-called "misinformation" about the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccines, the censors had [developed a system and strategy for silencing the nonconformists](#).

Eventually, depending on how the government and its corporate allies define what constitutes “extremism, “we the people” might *all* be considered guilty of some thought crime or other.

Whatever we tolerate now—whatever we turn a blind eye to—whatever we rationalize when it is inflicted on others, whether in the name of securing racial justice or defending democracy or combatting fascism, will eventually come back to imprison us, one and all.

Watch and learn.

We should all be alarmed when any individual or group—prominent or not—is censored, silenced and made to disappear from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Instagram for voicing ideas that are deemed politically incorrect, hateful, dangerous or conspiratorial.

Given what we know about the government’s tendency to define its own reality and attach its own labels to behavior and speech that challenges its authority, this should be [cause for alarm across the entire political spectrum](#).

Here’s the point: you don’t have to like or agree with anyone who has been muzzled or made to disappear online because of their views, but to ignore the long-term ramifications of such censorship is dangerously naïve, because whatever powers you allow the government and its corporate operatives to claim now *will* eventually be used against you by tyrants of your own making.

As Glenn Greenwald [writes](#) for *The Intercept*:

The glaring fallacy that always lies at the heart of pro-censorship sentiments is the gullible, delusional belief that censorship powers will be deployed only to suppress views one dislikes, but never one’s own views... Facebook is not some benevolent, kind, compassionate parent or a subversive, radical actor who is going to police our discourse in order

to protect the weak and marginalized or serve as a noble check on mischief by the powerful. They are almost always going to do exactly the opposite: protect the powerful from those who seek to undermine elite institutions and reject their orthodoxies. Tech giants, like all corporations, are required by law to have one overriding objective: maximizing shareholder value. They are always going to use their power to appease those they perceive wield the greatest political and economic power.

Be warned: it's a slippery slope from censoring so-called illegitimate ideas to silencing truth.

Eventually, as George Orwell predicted, telling the truth will become a revolutionary act.

If the government can control speech, it can control thought and, in turn, it can control the minds of the citizenry.

It's happening already.

With every passing day, we're being moved further down the road towards a totalitarian society characterized by government censorship, violence, corruption, hypocrisy and intolerance, all packaged for our supposed benefit in the Orwellian doublespeak of national security, tolerance and so-called "government speech."

Little by little, Americans are being conditioned to accept routine incursions on their freedoms.

This is how oppression becomes systemic, what is referred to as creeping normality, or a death by a thousand cuts.

It's a concept invoked by Pulitzer Prize-winning scientist Jared Diamond to describe how major changes, if implemented slowly in small stages over time, can be accepted as normal without the shock and resistance that might greet a sudden upheaval.

Diamond's concerns related to Easter Island's now-vanished civilization and the societal decline and environmental degradation that contributed to it, but it's a powerful analogy for the steady erosion of our freedoms and decline of our country *right under our noses*.

As Diamond explains, "In just a few centuries, the people of Easter Island wiped out their forest, drove their plants and animals to extinction, and saw their complex society spiral into chaos and cannibalism... [Why didn't they look around, realize what they were doing, and stop before it was too late?](#) What were they thinking when they cut down the last palm tree?"

His answer: "I suspect that the [disaster happened not with a bang but with a whimper.](#)"

Much like America's own colonists, Easter Island's early colonists discovered a new world—"a pristine paradise"—teeming with life. Yet almost 2000 years after its first settlers arrived, Easter Island was reduced to a barren graveyard by a populace so focused on their immediate needs that they failed to preserve paradise for future generations.

The same could be said of the America today: it, too, is being reduced to a barren graveyard by a populace so focused on their immediate needs that they are failing to preserve freedom for future generations.

In Easter Island's case, as Diamond [speculates](#):

The forest...vanished slowly, over decades. Perhaps war interrupted the moving teams; perhaps by the time the carvers had finished their work, the last rope snapped. In the meantime, any islander who tried to warn about the dangers of progressive deforestation would have been overridden by vested interests of carvers, bureaucrats, and chiefs, whose jobs depended on continued deforestation... The changes in forest cover from year to year would have been hard to

detect... Only older people, recollecting their childhoods decades earlier, could have recognized a difference. Gradually trees became fewer, smaller, and less important. By the time the last fruit-bearing adult palm tree was cut, palms had long since ceased to be of economic significance. That left only smaller and smaller palm saplings to clear each year, along with other bushes and treelets. No one would have noticed the felling of the last small palm."

Sound painfully familiar yet?

We've already torn down the rich forest of liberties established by our founders. It has vanished slowly, over the decades. The erosion of our freedoms has happened so incrementally, no one seems to have noticed. Only the older generations, remembering what true freedom was like, recognize the difference. Gradually, the freedoms enjoyed by the citizenry have become fewer, smaller and less important. By the time the last freedom falls, no one will know the difference.

This is how tyranny rises and freedom falls: with a thousand cuts, each one justified or ignored or shrugged over as inconsequential enough by itself to bother, but they add up.

Each cut, each attempt to undermine our freedoms, each loss of some critical right—to think freely, to assemble, to speak without fear of being shamed or censored, to raise our children as we see fit, to worship or not worship as our conscience dictates, to eat what we want and love who we want, to live as we want—they add up to an immeasurable failure on the part of each and every one of us to stop the descent down that slippery slope.

As I make clear in my book Battlefield America: The War on the American People and in its fictional counterpart The Erik Blair Diaries, we are on that downward slope now.

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Mental Health Round-Ups: The Next Phase of the Government's War on Thought Crimes

[Mental Health Round-Ups: The Next Phase of the Government's War on Thought Crimes](#)

by [John & Nisha Whitehead](#), [The Rutherford Institute](#)

July 18, 2023

"There are no dangerous thoughts; [thinking itself is a dangerous activity](#)."

—Hannah Arendt

Get ready for the next phase of the government's war on thought crimes: mental health round-ups and involuntary detentions.

Under the guise of public health and safety, the government could use mental health care as a pretext for targeting and locking up dissidents, activists and anyone unfortunate enough to be placed on a government watch list.

If we don't nip this in the bud, and soon, this will become yet [another pretext by which government officials can violate the First and Fourth Amendments at will.](#)

This is how it begins.

In communities across the nation, police are being [empowered to forcibly detain individuals they believe might be mentally ill,](#) based [solely on their own judgment,](#) even if those individuals pose no danger to others.

In New York City, for example, you could find yourself forcibly hospitalized for suspected mental illness if you carry "[firmly held beliefs not congruent with cultural ideas,](#)" exhibit a "willingness to engage in meaningful discussion," have "excessive fears of specific stimuli," or refuse "voluntary treatment recommendations."

While these programs are ostensibly aimed at getting the homeless off the streets, when combined with advances in mass surveillance technologies, artificial intelligence-powered programs that [can track people by their biometrics and behavior,](#) mental health sensor data (tracked by wearable data and monitored by government agencies such as HARPA), threat assessments, behavioral sensing warnings, precrime initiatives, red flag gun laws, and mental health first-aid programs aimed at training gatekeepers to identify who might pose a threat to public safety, they could well signal a tipping point in the government's efforts to penalize those engaging in so-called "thought crimes."

As the AP reports, federal officials are already looking into how to add "'[identifiable patient data,](#)' such as mental health, substance use and behavioral health information from group homes, shelters, jails, detox facilities and schools," to its surveillance toolkit.

Make no mistake: these are the building blocks for an American gulag no less sinister than that of the gulags of the Cold

War-era Soviet Union.

The word “gulag” refers to a labor or concentration camp where prisoners (oftentimes political prisoners or so-called “enemies of the state,” real or imagined) were imprisoned as punishment for their crimes against the state.

The gulag, according to historian Anne Applebaum, used as a form of “administrative exile—which required no trial and no sentencing procedure—was an [ideal punishment not only for troublemakers as such, but also for political opponents of the regime.](#)”

Totalitarian regimes such as the Soviet Union also declared dissidents mentally ill and consigned political prisoners to prisons disguised as psychiatric hospitals, where they could be isolated from the rest of society, their ideas discredited, and subjected to electric shocks, drugs and various medical procedures to break them physically and mentally.

In addition to declaring political dissidents mentally unsound, government officials in the Cold War-era Soviet Union also made use of an administrative process for dealing with individuals who were considered a bad influence on others or troublemakers. Author George Kennan describes a process in which:

The obnoxious person may not be guilty of any crime . . . but if, in the opinion of the local authorities, his presence in a particular place is “prejudicial to public order” or “incompatible with public tranquility,” he may be arrested without warrant, may be held from two weeks to two years in prison, and may then be removed by force to any other place within the limits of the empire and there be [put under police surveillance for a period of from one to ten years.](#)

Warrantless seizures, surveillance, indefinite detention, isolation, exile... sound familiar?

It should.

The age-old practice by which despotic regimes eliminate their critics or potential adversaries by making them disappear—or forcing them to flee—or exiling them literally or figuratively or virtually from their fellow citizens—is happening with increasing frequency in America.

Now, through the use of [red flag laws](#), [behavioral threat assessments](#), and [pre-crime policing prevention programs](#), the groundwork is being laid that would allow the government to weaponize the label of mental illness as a means of exiling those whistleblowers, dissidents and freedom fighters who refuse to march in lockstep with its dictates.

That the government is using the charge of mental illness as the means by which to immobilize (and disarm) its critics is diabolical. With one stroke of a magistrate's pen, these individuals are declared mentally ill, locked away against their will, and stripped of their constitutional rights.

These developments are merely the realization of various U.S. government initiatives dating back to 2009, including one dubbed [Operation Vigilant Eagle](#) which calls for surveillance of military veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, characterizing them as extremists and potential domestic terrorist threats because they may be “disgruntled, disillusioned or suffering from the psychological effects of war.”

Coupled with the report on “[Rightwing Extremism: Current Economic and Political Climate Fueling Resurgence in Radicalization and Recruitment](#)” issued by the Department of Homeland Security (curiously enough, a Soviet term), which broadly defines rightwing extremists as individuals and groups “that are mainly antigovernment, rejecting federal authority in favor of state or local authority, or rejecting government authority entirely,” these tactics bode ill for anyone seen as

opposing the government.

Thus, what began as a blueprint under the Bush administration has since become an operation manual for exiling those who challenge the government's authority.

An important point to consider, however, is that the government is not merely targeting individuals who are voicing their discontent so much as it is locking up individuals trained in military warfare who are voicing feelings of discontent.

Under the guise of mental health treatment and with the complicity of government psychiatrists and law enforcement officials, these veterans are increasingly being portrayed as ticking time bombs in need of intervention.

For instance, the Justice Department launched a [pilot program](#) aimed at training SWAT teams to deal with confrontations involving highly trained and often heavily armed combat veterans.

One tactic being used to deal with so-called "[mentally ill suspects who also happen to be trained in modern warfare](#)" is through the use of civil commitment laws, found in all states and employed throughout American history to not only silence but cause dissidents to disappear.

For example, NSA officials attempted to label [former employee Russ Tice](#), who was willing to testify in Congress about the NSA's warrantless wiretapping program, as "mentally unbalanced" based upon two psychiatric evaluations ordered by his superiors.

[NYPD Officer Adrian Schoolcraft](#) had his home raided, and he was handcuffed to a gurney and taken into emergency custody for an alleged psychiatric episode. It was later discovered by way of an internal investigation that his superiors were retaliating against him for reporting police misconduct.

Schoolcraft spent six days in the mental facility, and as a further indignity, was presented with a bill for \$7,185 upon his release.

[Marine Brandon Raub](#)—a 9/11 truther—was arrested and detained in a psychiatric ward under Virginia's civil commitment law based on posts he had made on his Facebook page that were critical of the government.

Each state has its own set of civil, or involuntary, commitment laws. These laws are extensions of [two legal principles](#): *parens patriae* *Parens patriae* (Latin for “parent of the country”), which allows the government to intervene on behalf of citizens who cannot act in their own best interest, and police power, which requires a state to protect the interests of its citizens.

The fusion of these two principles, coupled with a shift towards a dangerousness standard, has resulted in a Nanny State mindset carried out with the militant force of the Police State.

The problem, of course, is that the diagnosis of mental illness, while a legitimate concern for some Americans, has over time become a convenient means by which the government and its corporate partners can penalize certain “unacceptable” social behaviors.

In fact, in recent years, we have witnessed the pathologizing of individuals who resist authority as suffering from oppositional defiant disorder (ODD), defined as “a pattern of disobedient, hostile, and defiant behavior toward authority figures.” Under such a definition, every activist of note throughout our history—from Mahatma Gandhi to Martin Luther King Jr.—could be classified as suffering from an ODD mental disorder.

Of course, this is all part of a larger trend in American governance whereby dissent is criminalized and pathologized,

and dissenters are censored, silenced, declared unfit for society, labelled dangerous or extremist, or turned into outcasts and exiled.

[Red flag gun laws](#) (which authorize government officials to seize guns from individuals viewed as a danger to themselves or others), are a perfect example of this mindset at work and the ramifications of where this could lead.

As *The Washington Post* reports, these red flag gun laws “allow a family member, roommate, beau, law enforcement officer or any type of medical professional to file a petition [with a court] asking that a person’s home be temporarily cleared of firearms. [It doesn’t require a mental-health diagnosis or an arrest.](#)”

With these red flag gun laws, the stated intention is to [disarm individuals who are potential threats](#).

While in theory it appears perfectly reasonable to want to disarm individuals who are clearly suicidal and/or pose an “[immediate danger](#)” to themselves or others, where the problem arises is when you put the power to determine who is a *potential* danger in the hands of government agencies, the courts and the police.

Remember, this is the same government that uses the words “anti-government,” “extremist” and “terrorist” [interchangeably](#).

This is the same government whose agents are spinning a sticky spider-web of [threat assessments](#), behavioral sensing warnings, flagged “words,” and “suspicious” activity reports using automated eyes and ears, social media, [behavior sensing software](#), and citizen spies to identify *potential* threats.

This is the same government that keeps re-upping the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which allows the military to detain American citizens with no access to friends, family or

the courts if the government believes them to be a threat.

This is the same government that has a growing list—shared with fusion centers and law enforcement agencies—of ideologies, behaviors, affiliations and other characteristics that could flag someone as suspicious and result in their being labeled *potential* enemies of the state.

For instance, if you believe in and exercise your rights under the Constitution (namely, your right to speak freely, worship freely, associate with like-minded individuals who share your political views, criticize the government, own a weapon, demand a warrant before being questioned or searched, or any other activity viewed as potentially anti-government, racist, bigoted, anarchic or sovereign), you could be [at the top of the government's terrorism watch list](#).

Moreover, as a *New York Times* editorial warns, you may be an anti-government extremist (a.k.a. [domestic terrorist](#)) in the eyes of the police if you are afraid that the [government is plotting to confiscate your firearms](#), if you believe the [economy is about to collapse](#) and the [government will soon declare martial law](#), or if you display an unusual number of [political and/or ideological bumper stickers](#) on your car.

Let that sink in a moment.

Now consider the ramifications of giving police that kind of authority in order to preemptively neutralize a *potential* threat, and you'll understand why some might view these mental health round-ups with trepidation.

No matter how well-meaning the politicians make these encroachments on our rights appear, in the right (or wrong) hands, benevolent plans can easily be put to malevolent purposes.

Even the most well-intentioned government law or program can be—and has been—perverted, corrupted and used to advance

illegitimate purposes once profit and power are added to the equation.

The war on terror, the war on drugs, the war on illegal immigration, the war on COVID-19: all of these programs started out as legitimate responses to pressing concerns and have since become weapons of compliance and control in the government's hands. For instance, the very same mass surveillance technologies that were supposedly so necessary to fight the spread of COVID-19 are now being [used to stifle dissent, persecute activists](#), harass marginalized communities, and link people's health information to other surveillance and law enforcement tools.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), we are moving fast down that slippery slope to an authoritarian society in which the only opinions, ideas and speech expressed are the ones permitted by the government and its corporate cohorts.

We stand at a crossroads.

As author Erich Fromm warned, "At this point in history, the capacity to doubt, to criticize and to disobey may be all that stands between a future for mankind and the end of civilization."

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FBI Make-Work Entrapment Schemes: Creating Criminals in Order to Arrest Them

[FBI Make-Work Entrapment Schemes: Creating Criminals in Order to Arrest Them](#)

by [John & Nisha Whitehead](#), [The Rutherford Institute](#)

June 20, 2023

“Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster.”

– Friedrich Nietzsche

We’re not dealing with a government that exists to serve its people, protect their liberties and ensure their happiness.

Rather, we are the unfortunate victims of the diabolical machinations of a make-works program carried out on an epic scale whose only purpose is to keep the powers-that-be permanently (and profitably) employed.

Case in point: the FBI.

The government’s henchmen have become the embodiment of how power, once acquired, can be so easily corrupted and abused. Indeed, far from being tough on crime, FBI agents are also among the nation’s most notorious lawbreakers.

Whether the FBI is planting undercover agents in churches, synagogues and mosques; issuing fake emergency letters to gain access to Americans’ phone records; using [intimidation tactics](#) to silence Americans who are critical of the

government, or persuading impressionable individuals to [plot acts of terror](#) and then [entrapping them](#), the overall impression of the nation's secret police force is that of a well-dressed thug, flexing its muscles and doing the boss' dirty work.

Clearly, this is not a government agency that appears to understand, let alone respect, the limits of the Constitution.

Indeed, this same government agency has a [pattern and practice of entrapment](#) that involves targeting vulnerable individuals, feeding them with the propaganda, know-how and weapons intended to turn them into terrorists, and then arresting them as part of an elaborately orchestrated counterterrorism sting.

Basically, it works like this: in order to justify their crime-fighting superpowers, the FBI manufactures criminals by targeting vulnerable individuals and feeding them anti-government propaganda; then, undercover agents and informants equip the targeted individuals with the training and resources to challenge what they've been indoctrinated into believing is government corruption; and finally, the FBI arrests the targeted individuals for engaging in anti-government, terrorist activities.

This is what passes for the government's perverse idea of being tough on crime.

For example, undercover FBI agents pretending to be associated with ISIS have been [accused of seeking out online and befriending a 16-year-old with brain development issues](#), persuading him to secretly send them small cash donations in the form of gift cards, and then the moment Mateo Ventura, turned 18, arresting him for providing financial support to an Islamic terrorist group.

If convicted, the teenager could spend up to 10 years in prison.

Yet as *The Intercept* [explains](#), “the only ‘terrorist’ he is accused of ever being in contact with was an undercover FBI agent who befriended him online as a 16-year-old... This law enforcement tactic has been criticized by national security researchers who have scrutinized the FBI’s role in manufacturing terrorism cases using vulnerable people who would have been unable to commit crimes without prolonged government assistance and encouragement... the Ventura case may indicate that [authorities are still open to conjuring terrorists where none existed.](#)”

In another incident, the FBI used an undercover agent/informant to seek out and groom an impressionable young man, cultivating his friendship, gaining his sympathy, stoking his outrage over injustices perpetrated by the U.S. government, then enlisting his help to blow up the Herald Square subway station. Despite the fact that Shahawar Matin Siraj ultimately refused to plant a bomb at the train station, he was arrested for conspiring to do so at the urging of his FBI informant and used to bolster the government’s track record in foiling terrorist plots. Of course, no mention was made of the part the government played in [fabricating the plot](#), recruiting a would-be bomber, and setting him up to take the fall.

These are Machiavellian tactics with far-reaching consequences for every segment of the population, no matter what one’s political leanings, but it is especially dangerous for anyone whose views could in any way be characterized as anti-government.

As Rozina Ali writes for *The New York Times Magazine*, “The government’s approach to counterterrorism erodes constitutional protections for everyone, by blurring the lines between speech and action and by broadening the scope of who is classified as a threat.”

For instance, it was reported that the FBI had been [secretly](#)

[carrying out an entrapment scheme](#) in which it used a front company, ANOM, to sell purportedly hack-proof phones to organized crime syndicates and then used those phones to spy on them as they planned illegal drug shipments, plotted robberies and put out contracts for killings using those boobytrapped phones.

All told, the FBI intercepted [27 million messages](#) over the course of 18 months.

What this means is that the FBI was *also* illegally spying on individuals using those encrypted phones who *may not* have been involved in any criminal activity whatsoever.

Even [reading a newspaper article is now enough to get you flagged](#) for surveillance by the FBI. The agency served a subpoena on *USA Today* / Gannett to provide the internet addresses and mobile phone information for everyone who read a news story online on a particular day and time about the deadly shooting of FBI agents.

This is the danger of allowing the government to carry out widespread surveillance, sting and entrapment operations using dubious tactics that sidestep the rule of law: “we the people” become suspects and potential criminals, while government agents, empowered to fight crime using all means at their disposal, become indistinguishable from the corrupt forces they seek to vanquish.

To go after terrorists, they become terrorists.

To go after drug smugglers, they become drug smugglers.

To go after thieves, they become thieves.

For instance, when the FBI raided a California business that was suspected of letting drug dealers anonymously stash guns, drugs and cash in its private vaults, agents seized the contents of *all* the safety deposit boxes and [filed forfeiture](#)

[motions](#) to keep the contents, which include millions of dollars' worth of valuables owned by [individuals not accused of any crime](#) whatsoever.

It's hard to say whether we're dealing with a [kleptocracy](#) (a government ruled by thieves), a [kakistocracy](#) (a government run by unprincipled career politicians, corporations and thieves that panders to the worst vices in our nature and has little regard for the rights of American citizens), or if we've gone straight to an [idiocracy](#).

This certainly isn't a constitutional democracy, however.

Some days, it feels like the FBI is running its own crime syndicate complete with mob rule and mafia-style justice.

In addition to creating certain crimes in order to then "solve" them, the FBI also gives certain informants [permission to break the law](#), "including everything from buying and selling illegal drugs to bribing government officials and plotting robberies," in exchange for their cooperation on other fronts.

USA Today estimates that agents have authorized criminals to engage in as many as [15 crimes a day](#) (5600 crimes a year). Some of these informants are getting paid astronomical sums: one particularly unsavory fellow, later arrested for attempting to run over a police officer, was actually [paid \\$85,000](#) for his help laying the trap for an entrapment scheme.

In a stunning development reported by *The Washington Post*, a probe into [misconduct by an FBI](#) agent resulted in the release of at least a dozen convicted drug dealers from prison.

In addition to procedural misconduct, trespassing, enabling criminal activity, and damaging private property, the FBI's laundry list of crimes against the American people includes surveillance, disinformation, blackmail, entrapment, intimidation tactics, and harassment.

For example, the Associated Press lodged a complaint with the Dept. of Justice after learning that FBI agents [created a fake AP news story](#) and emailed it, along with a clickable link, to a bomb threat suspect in order to implant tracking technology onto his computer and identify his location. Lambasting the agency, AP attorney Karen Kaiser railed, “The FBI may have intended this false story as a trap for only one person. However, the individual could easily have reposted this story to social networks, distributing to thousands of people, under our name, what was essentially [a piece of government disinformation](#).”

Then again, to those familiar with [COINTELPRO](#), an FBI program created to “disrupt, misdirect, discredit, and neutralize” groups and individuals the government considers politically objectionable, it should come as no surprise that the agency has mastered the art of government disinformation.

The FBI has been particularly criticized in the wake of the 9/11 terrorist attacks for targeting vulnerable individuals and not only luring them into fake terror plots but actually equipping them with the organization, money, weapons and motivation to carry out the plots—entrapment—and then jailing them for their so-called terrorist plotting. This is what the FBI characterizes as “[forward leaning-preventative-prosecutions](#).”

The FBI has also repeatedly sought to [expand its invasive hacking powers](#) to allow agents to hack into any computer, anywhere in the world.

Suffice it to say that when and if a true history of the FBI is ever written, it will not only track the rise of the American police state but it will also chart the decline of freedom in America: how a nation that once abided by the rule of law and held the government accountable for its actions has steadily devolved into a police state where justice is one-sided, a corporate elite runs the show, representative

government is a mockery, police are extensions of the military, surveillance is rampant, privacy is extinct, and the law is little more than a tool for the government to browbeat the people into compliance.

This is how tyranny rises and freedom falls.

The powers-that-be are not acting in our best interests.

Almost every tyranny being perpetrated by the U.S. government against the citizenry—purportedly to keep us safe and the nation secure—has come about as a result of some threat manufactured in one way or another by our own government.

Think about it.

Cyberwarfare. Terrorism. Bio-chemical attacks. The nuclear arms race. Surveillance. The drug wars. Domestic extremism. The COVID-19 pandemic.

In almost every instance, the U.S. government (often spearheaded by the FBI) has in its typical Machiavellian fashion sown the seeds of terror domestically and internationally in order to expand its own totalitarian powers.

Consider that this very same government has taken every bit of technology sold to us as being in our best interests—GPS devices, surveillance, nonlethal weapons, etc.—and used it against us, to track, control and trap us.

Are you getting the picture yet?

The U.S. government isn't *protecting* us from threats to our freedoms.

The U.S. government is *creating* the threats to our freedoms. It is, as I make clear in my book [*Battlefield America: The War on the American People*](#) and in its fictional counterpart [*The Erik Blair Diaries*](#), the source of the threats to our freedoms.

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Circus Politics Are Intended to Distract Us. Don't Be Distracted.

[Circus Politics Are Intended to Distract Us. Don't Be Distracted.](#)

by [John & Nisha Whitehead](#), [The Rutherford Institute](#)

March 22, 2023

"There is nothing more dangerous than a government of the many controlled by the few."

—Lawrence Lessig, Harvard law professor

It is easy to be distracted right now by the bread and circus politics that have dominated the news headlines lately, but don't be distracted.

Don't be fooled, not even a little.

We're being subjected to the oldest con game in the books, the magician's sleight of hand that keeps you focused on the shell game in front of you while your wallet is being picked clean by ruffians in your midst.

This is how tyranny rises and freedom falls.

What characterizes American government today is not so much dysfunctional politics as it is ruthlessly contrived governance carried out behind the entertaining, distracting and disingenuous curtain of political theater. And what political theater it is, diabolically Shakespearean at times, full of sound and fury, yet in the end, signifying nothing.

We are being ruled by a government of scoundrels, spies, thugs, thieves, gangsters, ruffians, rapists, extortionists, bounty hunters, battle-ready warriors and cold-blooded killers who communicate using a language of force and oppression.

The U.S. government now poses the greatest threat to our freedoms.

More than terrorism, more than domestic extremism, more than gun violence and organized crime, even more than the perceived threat posed by any single politician, the U.S. government remains a greater menace to the life, liberty and property of its citizens than any of the so-called dangers from which the government claims to protect us.

No matter who has occupied the White House in recent years, the Deep State has succeeded in keeping the citizenry divided and at each other's throats.

After all, as long as we're busy fighting each other, we'll never manage to present a unified front against tyranny in any form.

Unfortunately, what we are facing is tyranny in every form.

The facts speak for themselves.

We're being robbed blind by a government of thieves. Americans no longer have any real protection against government agents empowered to seize private property at will. For instance, police agencies under the guise of asset forfeiture laws are

taking Americans' personal property based on little more than a suspicion of criminal activity and keeping it for their own profit and gain. In one case, [police seized more than \\$17,000 in cash from two sisters who were trying to start a dog breeding business](#). Despite finding no evidence of wrongdoing, police held onto the money for months. Homeowners are losing their homes over unpaid property taxes ([as little as \\$2300 owed](#)) that amount to a fraction of what they have invested in their homes. And then there's the Drug Enforcement Agency, which has been searching train and airline passengers and [pocketing their cash](#), without ever charging them with a crime.

We're being taken advantage of by a government of scoundrels, idiots and cowards. Journalist H.L. Mencken calculated that "Congress consists of one-third, more or less, scoundrels; two-thirds, more or less, idiots; and three-thirds, more or less, poltroons." By and large, [Americans seem to agree](#). When you've got government representatives who spend a large chunk of their work hours [fundraising](#), being feted by lobbyists, shuffling through a [lucrative revolving door](#) between public service and lobbying, and making themselves available to anyone with enough money to secure [access to a congressional office](#), you're in the clutches of a [corrupt](#) oligarchy. Mind you, these same elected officials [rarely read the legislation](#) they're enacting, nor do they seem capable of enacting much legislation that actually helps the plight of the American citizen. More often than not, the legislation lands the citizenry in worse straits.

We're being locked up by a government of greedy jailers. We have become a [carceral state](#), spending [three times more on our prisons](#) than on our schools and imprisoning close to a [quarter of the world's prisoners](#), despite the fact that crime is at an all-time low and the U.S. makes up only 5% of the world's population. The rise of overcriminalization and profit-driven private prisons provides even greater incentives for locking

up American citizens for such non-violent “crimes” as having an [overgrown lawn](#). As the *Boston Review* points out, “America’s contemporary system of policing, courts, imprisonment, and parole ... [makes money](#) through asset forfeiture, lucrative public contracts from private service providers, and by directly extracting revenue and unpaid labor from populations of color and the poor. In states and municipalities throughout the country, the criminal justice system defrays costs by forcing prisoners and their families to pay for punishment. It also allows private service providers to charge outrageous fees for everyday needs such as telephone calls. As a result people facing even minor criminal charges can easily find themselves trapped in a self-perpetuating cycle of debt, criminalization, and incarceration.”

We’re being spied on by a government of Peeping Toms. The government, along with its corporate partners, is watching [everything](#) you do, reading everything you write, listening to everything you say, and monitoring everything you spend. Omnipresent surveillance is paving the way for government programs that profile citizens, document their behavior and attempt to predict what they might do in the future, whether it’s what they might buy, what politician they might support, or [what kinds of crimes they might commit](#). The impact of this far-reaching surveillance, according to *Psychology Today*, is “[reduced trust, increased conformity, and even diminished civic participation](#).” As technology analyst Jillian C. York concludes, “Mass surveillance without due process—whether undertaken by the government of Bahrain, Russia, the US, or anywhere in between—threatens to stifle and smother that dissent, leaving in its wake a [populace cowed by fear](#).”

We’re being ravaged by a government of ruffians, rapists and killers. It’s not just the police [shootings of unarmed citizens](#) that are worrisome. It’s the [SWAT team raids gone wrong—more than 80,000 annually](#)—that are leaving innocent

citizens wounded, children terrorized and family pets killed. It's the [roadside strip searches](#)—in some cases, cavity searches of men and women alike carried out in full view of the public—in pursuit of drugs that are never found. It's the potentially lethal—and unwarranted—[use of so-called “nonlethal” weapons such as tasers on children](#) for “[mouthing off to a police officer](#). For trying to [run from the principal's office](#). For, at the age of 12, [getting into a fight with another girl](#).”

We're being forced to surrender our freedoms—and those of our children—to a government of extortionists, money launderers and professional pirates. The American people have repeatedly been sold a bill of goods about how the government needs more money, more expansive powers, and more secrecy (secret courts, secret budgets, secret military campaigns, secret surveillance) in order to keep us safe. Under the guise of fighting its wars on terror, drugs and now domestic extremism, the government has spent billions in taxpayer dollars on endless wars that have *not* ended terrorism but merely sown the seeds of blowback, surveillance programs that have caught *few* terrorists while subjecting all Americans to a surveillance society, and militarized police that have *done little* to decrease crime while turning communities into warzones. Not surprisingly, the primary ones to benefit from these government exercises in legal money laundering have been the corporations, lobbyists and politicians who inflict them on a trusting public.

We're being held at gunpoint by a government of soldiers: a standing army. As if it weren't enough that the American military empire stretches around the globe (and continues to leech much-needed resources from the American economy), the U.S. government is creating its own standing army of militarized police and teams of weaponized, federal bureaucrats. These [civilian employees are being armed to the hilt](#) with guns, ammunition and military-style equipment;

authorized to make arrests; and trained in military tactics. Among the agencies being supplied with night-vision equipment, body armor, hollow-point bullets, shotguns, drones, assault rifles and LP gas cannons are the Smithsonian, U.S. Mint, Health and Human Services, IRS, FDA, Small Business Administration, Social Security Administration, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Education Department, Energy Department, Bureau of Engraving and Printing and an assortment of public universities. There are now reportedly more bureaucratic (non-military) government civilians armed with high-tech, deadly weapons than U.S. Marines. That doesn't even begin to touch on the government's arsenal, the transformation of local police into extensions of the military, and the speed with which the nation could be locked down under martial law depending on the circumstances.

Whatever else it may be—a danger, a menace, a threat—the U.S. government is certainly no friend to freedom.

To our detriment, the criminal class that Mark Twain mockingly [referred to as Congress](#) has since expanded to include every government agency that feeds off the carcass of our once-constitutional republic.

The government and its cohorts have conspired to ensure that the only real recourse the American people have to hold the government accountable or express their displeasure with the government is through voting, which is no real recourse at all.

Consider it: the penalties for civil disobedience, whistleblowing and rebellion are severe. If you refuse to pay taxes for government programs you believe to be immoral or illegal, you will go to jail. If you attempt to overthrow the government—or any agency thereof—because you believe it has overstepped its reach, you will go to jail. If you attempt to blow the whistle on government misconduct, you will go to jail. In some circumstances, if you even attempt to approach

your elected representative to voice your discontent, you can be arrested and jailed.

You cannot have a republican form of government—nor a democratic one, for that matter—when the government views itself as superior to the citizenry, when it no longer operates for the benefit of the people, when the people are no longer able to peacefully reform their government, when government officials cease to act like public servants, when elected officials no longer represent the will of the people, when the government routinely violates the rights of the people and perpetrates more violence against the citizenry than the criminal class, when government spending is unaccountable and unaccounted for, when the judiciary act as courts of order rather than justice, and when the government is no longer bound by the laws of the Constitution.

We no longer have a government “of the people, by the people and for the people.”

Rather, what we have is a [government of wolves](#).

For too long, the American people have obeyed the government’s dictates, no matter how unjust.

We have paid its taxes, penalties and fines, no matter how outrageous. We have tolerated its indignities, insults and abuses, no matter how egregious. We have turned a blind eye to its indiscretions and incompetence, no matter how imprudent. We have held our silence in the face of its lawlessness, licentiousness and corruption, no matter how illicit.

How long we will continue to suffer depends on how much we’re willing to give up for the sake of freedom.

For the moment, the American people seem content to sit back and watch the reality TV programming that passes for politics today. It’s the modern-day equivalent of bread and circuses, a carefully calibrated exercise in how to manipulate, polarize,

propagandize and control a population.

As French philosopher Etienne de La Boétie observed half a millennium ago:

“Plays, farces, spectacles, gladiators, strange beasts, medals, pictures, and other such opiates, these were for ancient peoples the bait toward slavery, the price of their liberty, the instruments of tyranny. By these practices and enticements the ancient dictators so successfully lulled their subjects under the yoke, that the stupefied peoples, fascinated by the pastimes and vain pleasures flashed before their eyes, learned subservience as naively, but not so creditably, as little children learn to read by looking at bright picture books.”

The bait towards slavery. The price of liberty. The instruments of tyranny.

Yes, that sounds about right.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), “We the people” have learned only too well how to be slaves.

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The Right to Be Let Alone: When the Government Wants to Know All Your Business

[The Right to Be Let Alone: When the Government Wants to Know All Your Business](#)

by [John & Nisha Whitehead](#), [The Rutherford Institute](#)

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“Experience teaches us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the government’s purposes are beneficent.”

—Supreme Court Justice Louis D. Brandeis

There was a time when the census was just a head count.

That is no longer the case.

The [American Community Survey](#) (ACS), sent to about 3.5 million homes every year, is the byproduct of a government that believes it has the right to know all of your personal business.

If you haven’t already received an ACS, it’s just a matter of time.

A far cry from the traditional census, which is limited to ascertaining the number of persons living in each dwelling, their ages and ethnicities, the ownership of the dwelling and telephone numbers, the ACS contains some of the most detailed and intrusive questions ever put forth in a census questionnaire.

At 28 pages (with an additional 16-page instruction packet),

these questions concern matters that the government simply has no business knowing, including questions relating to respondents' bathing habits, home utility costs, fertility, marital history, work commute, mortgage, and health insurance, among other highly personal and private matters.

For instance, the ACS asks how many persons live in your home, along with their names and detailed information about them such as their relationship to you, marital status, race and their physical, mental and emotional problems, etc. The survey also asks how many bedrooms and bathrooms you have in your house, along with the fuel used to heat your home, the cost of electricity, what type of mortgage you have and monthly mortgage payments, property taxes and so on.

And then the survey drills down even deeper.

The survey demands to know how many days you were sick last year, how many automobiles you own and the number of miles driven, whether you have trouble getting up the stairs, and what time you leave for work every morning, along with highly detailed inquiries about your financial affairs. And the survey demands that you violate the privacy of others by supplying the names and addresses of your friends, relatives and employer.

The questionnaire also demands that you give other information on the people in your home, such as their educational levels, how many years of school were completed, what languages they speak and when they last worked at a job, among other things.

Individuals who receive the ACS must complete it or be subject to monetary penalties.

Although no reports have surfaced of individuals actually being penalized for refusing to answer the survey, the potential fines that can be levied for refusing to participate in the ACS are staggering. For every question not answered, there is a \$100 fine. And for every intentionally false

response to a question, the fine is \$500. Therefore, if a person representing a two-person household refused to fill out any questions or simply answered nonsensically, the total fines could range from upwards of \$10,000 and \$50,000 for noncompliance.

While some of the ACS' questions may seem fairly routine, the real danger is in not knowing why the information is needed, how it will be used by the government or with whom it will be shared.

In an age when the government has significant technological resources at its disposal to not only carry out warrantless surveillance on American citizens but also to harvest and mine that data for its own dubious purposes, whether it be crime-mapping or profiling based on whatever criteria the government wants to use to target and segregate the populace, the potential for abuse is grave.

As such, the ACS qualifies as a government program whose purpose, while sold to the public as routine and benign, raises significant constitutional concerns.

[The Rutherford Institute](#) has received hundreds of inquiries from individuals who have received the ACS and are not comfortable sharing such private, intimate details with the government or are unsettled by the aggressive tactics utilized by Census Bureau agents seeking to compel responses to ACS questions.

The following Q&A is provided as a [resource](#) to those who want to better understand their rights in respect to the ACS.

Q: What kind of questions are contained in the ACS?

A: The ACS contains questions that go far beyond typical census questions about the number of individuals within the household and their age, race, and sex. The survey combines intrusive questions with highly detailed inquiries about your

financial affairs. Furthermore, the questionnaire also demands that recipients provide information about their family and other people in their home, such as their educational levels, how many years of school were completed, what languages they speak, when they last worked at a job, and when occupants of your home are away from the house.

Q: How will this information be used?

A: The Census Bureau states that information from this survey is used to assist a wide variety of entities, from federal, state and local governments to private corporations, nonprofit organizations, researchers and public advocacy groups. The Bureau lists 35 different categories of questions on its website and offers an explanation on how the information is to be used. For 12 of those categories, the information is used to assist private corporations. For another 22, the information is used to aid advocacy groups, and in nine of those cases, the Census Bureau states that the responses will be used by advocacy groups to “advocate for policies that benefit their groups,” including advocacy based on age, race, sex, and marital status. Thus, information obtained through the ACS is not simply used to inform government policy in a neutral manner, but is also being provided to private actors for the purpose of promoting corporate and/or political agendas.

One concern raised by the Brookings Institute is the use of ACS information by law enforcement for “crime mapping,” a surveillance tool used to predict crime and preemptively target certain neighborhoods for policing. It is “most effective” when “analysts can see the relationship between various types of criminal incidents (e.g., homicides, drug dealing) and neighborhood characteristics (risk factors such as poverty, population density, and vacant housing), pinpoint where crimes are most likely to occur (hot spots), and focus police resources accordingly.” The Brookings Institute notes that because the ACS provides data every year, rather than

every ten years, crime mapping is more effective and cheaper.

Q: Are my responses kept confidential?

A: While the Census Bureau claims that an individual's information will be kept strictly confidential, it does require a recipient to put their name on the survey, ostensibly for the purpose of asking follow-up questions in the event of missing or incomplete answers. This means your answers could be linked to you even if it is forbidden by law to share your individual responses.

Q: Am I required by law to fully complete the American Community Survey?

A: Federal law makes it mandatory to answer all questions on the ACS. A refusal to answer any question on the ACS or giving an intentionally false answer is a federal offense. The Census Bureau also maintains that responding to the ACS is mandatory and that recipients are legally obligated to answer all questions.

Q: Is there a penalty for refusing to answer American Community Survey questions?

A: The law requiring answers to the ACS also provides that a person who fails to answer "shall be fined not more than \$100." The actual fine for a refusal to complete the ACS could be much greater because a failure to respond to certain ACS questions could be considered a separate offense subject to the \$100 fine.

Q: Has the government prosecuted persons for refusing to answer the American Community Survey?

A: While The Rutherford Institute has been made aware of Census Bureau agents engaging in harassing tactics and threatening behavior, to date, we are unaware of the Census Bureau having levied any financial penalties for non-

compliance with the ACS. However, a refusal to answer the survey violates the letter of the law and a prosecution might be brought if the government decides to adopt a policy to do so.

Q: How does the Census Bureau typically ensure that people complete the survey?

A: Those who do not answer the ACS risk repeated overtures—by mail, by phone and in person—from Census Bureau employees seeking to compel a response. Typically, the Census Bureau will telephone those who do not respond to the survey and may visit their homes to coerce the targets to respond.

The Census Bureau boasts a 97% response rate to the survey via these methods, but critics argue this constitutes harassment. One recipient who did complete the survey but whose answers were misplaced by the Census Bureau wrote about his experience. First, a Census Bureau employee left a note at his apartment asking him to contact her. When he did, the employee asked him to allow her into his home. When he refused, the employee “turned up twice unannounced at my apartment, demanding entry, and warning me of the fines I would face if I didn’t cooperate.” Only after he filed a complaint with the Census Bureau did the agency realize he had actually completed the survey, thus ending its attempts to enter his home.

Q: Is this an unconstitutional invasion of privacy?

A: There are significant and legitimate questions concerning the authority of the government to require, under threat of prosecution and penalty, that persons answer questions posed by the ACS. The ACS is not part of the enumeration required by Article I of the Constitution, and that constitutional provision only applies to a census for purposes of counting the number of people in each state. As noted, the ACS seeks much more information than the number of persons in a household.

In other contexts, the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that citizens have no obligation to answer questions posed by the government and are free to refuse to do so. This same principle could apply to questions posed by ACS agents. However, because the government has not brought a prosecution for a refusal to respond to the ACS, the question of a person's right to refuse has not yet been decided by a court.

Q: What are my options for objecting to the ACS survey as an intrusion on my Fourth Amendment rights?

A: If you receive notice that you have been targeted to respond to the ACS and you desire to assert your right of privacy, you can voice those objections and your intent not to respond to the ACS by writing a letter to the Census Bureau. The Rutherford Institute has [developed a form letter](#) that you may use in standing up against the government's attempt to force you to disclose personal information.

If you are contacted by Census Bureau employees, either by telephone or in person, demanding your response, you can assert your rights by politely, but firmly, informing the employee that you believe the ACS is an improper invasion of your privacy, that you do not intend to respond and that they should not attempt to contact you again. Be sure to document any interactions you have with Bureau representatives for your own files.

If you believe you are being unduly harassed by a Census Bureau employee, either by telephone or in person, it is in your best interest to carefully document the time, place and manner of the incidents and file a complaint with the U.S. Census Bureau.

Remember, nothing is ever as simple or as straightforward as the government claims.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik](#)

[Blair Diaries](#), any attempt by the government to encroach upon the citizenry's privacy rights or establish a system by which the populace can be targeted, tracked and singled out must be met with extreme caution.

While government agents can approach, speak to and even question citizens without violating the Fourth Amendment, Americans should jealously guard what Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis referred to as the constitutional "right to be let alone."

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