

2014 Will Bring More Social Collapse

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2014 is upon us. For a person who graduated from Georgia Tech in 1961, a year in which the class ring showed the same date right side up or upside down, the 21st century was a science fiction concept associated with Stanley Kubrick's 1968 film, "2001: A Space Odyssey." To us George Orwell's 1984 seemed so far in the future we would never get there. Now it is 30 years in the past.

Did we get there in Orwell's sense? In terms of surveillance technology, we are far beyond Orwell's imagination. In terms of the unaccountability of government, we exceptional and indispensable people now live a 1984 existence. In his alternative to the Queen's Christmas speech, Edward Snowden made the point that a person born in the 21st century will never experience privacy. For new generations the word privacy will refer to something mythical, like a unicorn.

Many Americans might never notice or care. I remember when telephone calls were considered to be private. In the 1940s and 1950s the telephone company could not always provide private lines. There were "party lines" in which two or more customers shared the same telephone line. It was considered extremely rude and inappropriate to listen in on someone's calls and to monopolize the line with long duration conversations.

The privacy of telephone conversations was also epitomized by telephone booths, which stood on street corners, in a variety of public places, and in "filling stations" where an attendant would pump gasoline into your car's fuel tank, check the water in the radiator, the oil in the engine, the air in the tires, and clean the windshield. A dollar's worth would purchase 3 gallons, and \$5 would fill the tank.

Even in the 1980s and for part of the 1990s there were lines of telephones on airport waiting room walls, each separated from the other by sound absorbing panels. Whether the panels absorbed the sounds of the conversation or not, they conveyed the idea that calls were private.

The notion that telephone calls are private left Americans' consciousness prior to the NSA listening in. If memory serves, it was sometime in the 1990s when I entered the men's room of an airport and observed a row of men speaking on their cell phones in the midst of the tinkling sound of urine hitting water and noises of flushing toilets. The thought hit hard that privacy had lost its value.

I remember when I arrived at Merton College, Oxford, for the first term of 1964. I was advised never to telephone anyone whom I had not met, as it would be an affront to invade the privacy of a person to whom I was unknown. The telephone was reserved for friends and acquaintances, a civility that contrasts with American telemarketing.

The efficiency of the Royal Mail service protected the privacy of the telephone. What one did in those days in England was to write a letter requesting a meeting or an appointment. It was possible to send a letter via the Royal Mail to London in the morning and to receive a reply in the afternoon. Previously it had been possible to send a letter in the morning and to receive a morning reply, and to send another in the afternoon and receive an afternoon reply.

When one flies today, unless one stops up one's ears with something, one hears one's seat mate's conversations prior to takeoff and immediately upon landing. Literally, everyone is talking nonstop. One wonders how the economy functioned at such a high level of incomes and success prior to cell phones. I can remember being able to travel both domestically and internationally on important business without having to telephone anyone. What has happened to America that no one can any longer go anywhere without constant talking?

If you sit at an airport gate awaiting a flight, you might think you are listening to a porn film. The overhead visuals are usually Fox "News" going on about the need for a new war, but the cell phone audio might be young women describing their latest sexual affair.

Americans, or many of them, are such exhibitionists that they do not mind being spied upon or recorded. It gives them importance. According to Wikipedia, Paris Hilton, a multimillionaire heiress, posted her sexual escapades online, and Facebook had to block users from posting nude photos of themselves. Sometime between my time and now people ceased to read 1984. They have no conception that a loss of privacy is a loss of self. They don't understand that a loss of privacy means that they can be intimidated, blackmailed, framed, and viewed in the buff. Little wonder they submitted to porno-scanners.

The loss of privacy is a serious matter. The privacy of the family used to be paramount. Today it is routinely invaded by neighbors, police, Child Protective Services (sic), school administrators, and just about anyone else.

Consider this: A mother of six and nine year old kids sat in a lawn chair next to her house watching her kids ride scooters in the driveway and cul-de-sac on which they live.

Normally, this would be an idyllic picture. But not in America. A neighbor, who apparently did not see the watching mother, called the police to report that two young children were outside playing without adult supervision. Note that the next door neighbor, a woman, did not bother to go next door to speak with the mother of the children and express her concern that they children were not being monitored while they played.

The neighbor called the police.

<http://news.yahoo.com/blogs/sideshow/mom-sues-polices-she-arrested-letting-her-kids-134628018.html>

"We're here for you," the cops told the mother, who was carried off in handcuffs and spent the next 18 hours in a cell in prison clothes.

The news report doesn't say what happened to the children, whether the father appeared and insisted on custody of his offspring or whether the cops turned the kids over to Child Protective Services.

This shows you what Americans are really like. Neither the neighbor nor the police had a lick of sense. The only idea that they had was to punish someone. This is why America has the highest incarceration rate and the highest total number of prison inmates in the entire world. Washington can go on and on about “authoritarian” regimes in Russia and China, but both countries have far lower prison populations than “freedom and democracy” America.

I was unaware that laws now exist requiring the supervision of children at play. Children vary in their need for supervision. In my day supervision was up to the mother’s judgment. Older children were often tasked with supervising the younger. It was one way that children were taught responsibility and developed their own judgment.

When I was five years old, I walked to the neighborhood school by myself. Today my mother would be arrested for child endangerment.

In America punishment falls more heavily on the innocent, the young, and the poor than it does on the banksters who are living on the Federal Reserve’s subsidy known as Quantitative Easing and who have escaped criminal liability for the fraudulent financial instruments that they sold to the world. Single mothers, depressed by the lack of commitment of the fathers of their children, are locked away for using drugs to block out their depression. Their children are seized by a Gestapo institution, Child Protective Services, and end up in foster care where many are abused.

According to numerous press reports, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 year-old children who play cowboys and indians or cops and robbers during recess and raise a pointed finger while saying “bang-bang” are arrested and carried off to jail in handcuffs as threats to their classmates. In my day every male child and the females who were “Tom boys” would have been taken to jail. Playground fights were normal, but no police were ever called. Handcuffing a child would not have been tolerated.

From the earliest age, boys were taught never to hit a girl. In those days there were no reports of police beating up teenage girls and women or body slamming the elderly. To comprehend the degeneration of the American police into psychopaths and sociopaths, go online and observe the video of Lee Oswald in police custody in 1963. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4FDDuRSgzFk>

Oswald was believed to have assassinated President John F. Kennedy and murdered a Dallas police officer only a few hours previously to the film. Yet he had not been beaten, his nose wasn’t broken, and his lips were not a bloody mess. Now go online and pick from the vast number of police brutality videos from our present time and observe the swollen and bleeding faces of teenage girls accused of sassing overbearing police officers.

In America today people with power are no longer accountable. This means citizens have become subjects, an indication of social collapse.

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