

George Orwell's 1984 Has Become a Blueprint for Our Dystopian Reality

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"If you want a picture of the future, imagine a boot stamping on a human face—for ever."—George Orwell, 1984

Tread cautiously: the fiction of George Orwell (Jun. 25, 1903-Jan. 21, 1950) has become [an operation manual for the omnipresent, modern-day surveillance state](#).

It's been more than 70 years since Orwell—dying, beset by fever and bloody coughing fits, and [driven to warn against the rise of a society in which rampant abuse of power and mass manipulation are the norm](#)—depicted the ominous rise of ubiquitous technology, fascism and totalitarianism in 1984.

Who could have predicted that so many years after Orwell typed the final words to his dystopian novel, "He loved Big Brother," we would come to love Big Brother.

"To the future or to the past, to a time when thought is free, when men are different from one another and do not live alone— to a time when truth exists and what is done cannot be undone: From the age of uniformity, from the age of solitude, from the age of Big Brother, from the age of doublethink — greetings!"—George Orwell

1984 portrays a global society of total control in which people are not allowed to have thoughts that in any way disagree with the corporate state. There is no personal freedom, and advanced technology has become the driving force behind a surveillance-driven society. Snitches and cameras are everywhere. People are subject to the Thought Police, who deal with anyone guilty of thought crimes. The government, or "Party," is headed by Big Brother who appears on posters everywhere with the words: "Big Brother is watching you."

We have arrived, way ahead of schedule, into the dystopian future dreamed up by not only Orwell but also such fiction writers as Aldous Huxley, Margaret Atwood and Philip K. Dick.

"If liberty means anything at all, it means the right to tell people what they do not want to hear."—George Orwell

Much like Orwell's Big Brother in *1984*, the government and its corporate spies now watch our every move. Much like Huxley's *A Brave New World*, we are churning out a society of watchers who "have their liberties taken away from them, but ... rather enjoy it, because they [are] distracted from any desire to rebel by propaganda or brainwashing." Much like Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale*, the populace is now taught to "know their place and their duties, to understand that they have no real rights but will be protected up to a point if they conform, and to think so poorly of themselves that [they will accept their assigned fate and not rebel or run away.](#)"

And in keeping with Philip K. Dick's darkly prophetic vision of a dystopian police state—which became the basis for [Steven Spielberg's futuristic thriller *Minority Report*](#)—we are now trapped in a world in which the government is all-seeing, all-knowing and all-powerful, and if you dare to step out of line, dark-clad police SWAT teams and pre-crime units will crack a few skulls to bring the populace under control.

What once seemed futuristic no longer occupies the realm of science fiction.

Incredibly, as the various nascent technologies employed and shared by the government and corporations alike—facial recognition, iris scanners, massive databases, behavior prediction software, and so on—are incorporated into a complex, interwoven cyber network aimed at tracking our movements, predicting our thoughts and controlling our behavior, the [dystopian visions of past writers is fast becoming our reality.](#)

Our world is [characterized by widespread surveillance, behavior prediction technologies, data mining, fusion centers, driverless cars, voice-controlled homes](#), facial recognition systems, cybugs and drones, and predictive policing (pre-crime) aimed at capturing would-be criminals before they can do any damage.

Surveillance cameras are everywhere. [Government agents listen in on our telephone calls and read our emails.](#) Political correctness—a philosophy that discourages diversity—has become a guiding principle of modern society.

"People sleep peaceably in their beds at night only because rough men stand ready to do violence on their behalf."—George Orwell

The courts have [shredded the Fourth Amendment's protections](#) against unreasonable searches and seizures. In fact, SWAT teams battering down doors without search warrants and FBI agents acting as a secret police that investigate dissenting citizens are common occurrences in contemporary America. And bodily privacy and integrity have been utterly eviscerated by a prevailing view that Americans have no rights over what happens to their bodies during an encounter with government officials, who are allowed to search, seize, strip, scan, spy on, probe, pat down, taser, and arrest any individual at any time and for the slightest provocation.

*"The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which."—George Orwell, *Animal Farm**

We are increasingly ruled by multi-corporations wedded to the police state.

What many fail to realize is that the government is not operating alone. It cannot. The

government requires an accomplice. Thus, the increasingly complex security needs of the massive federal government, especially in the areas of defense, surveillance and data management, have been met within the corporate sector, which has shown itself to be a powerful ally that both depends on and feeds the growth of governmental overreach.

In fact, Big Tech wedded to Big Government has become Big Brother, and we are now ruled by the Corporate Elite whose tentacles have spread worldwide. The government now has at its disposal technological arsenals so sophisticated and invasive as to render any constitutional protections null and void. Spearheaded by the NSA, which has shown itself to care little to nothing for constitutional limits or privacy, the “security/industrial complex”—a marriage of government, military and corporate interests aimed at keeping Americans under constant surveillance—has come to dominate the government and our lives.

Money, power, control. There is no shortage of motives fueling the convergence of mega-corporations and government. But who is paying the price? The American people, of course.

Orwell understood what many Americans are still struggling to come to terms with: that there is no such thing as a government organized for the good of the people. Even the best intentions among those in government inevitably give way to the desire to maintain power and control over the citizenry at all costs.

“The further a society drifts from truth the more it will hate those who speak it.” — George Orwell

Even our ability to speak and think freely is being regulated.

In totalitarian regimes—a.k.a. police states—where conformity and compliance are enforced at the end of a loaded gun, the government dictates what words can and cannot be used. In countries where the police state hides behind a benevolent mask and disguises itself as tolerance, the citizens censor themselves, policing their words and thoughts to conform to the dictates of the mass mind.

Dystopian literature shows what happens when the populace is transformed into mindless automatons.

In [Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*](#), reading is banned and 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.

In [Huxley's *Brave New World*](#), serious literature, scientific thinking and experimentation are banned as subversive, while critical thinking is discouraged through the use of conditioning, social taboos and inferior education. Likewise, expressions of individuality, independence and morality are viewed as vulgar and abnormal.

In my debut novel [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), the dystopian future that George Orwell predicted for 1984 has finally arrived, 100 years late and ten times as brutal. In this post-apocalyptic world where everyone marches to the beat of the same drummer and words like “freedom” are taboo, Erik Blair—Orwell’s descendant and unwitting heir to his legacy—isn’t volunteering to be anyone’s hero. Unfortunately, life doesn’t always go according to plan. To save all that he loves, Orwell will have to travel between his future self and the past.

And in [Orwell's 1984](#), Big Brother does away with all undesirable and unnecessary words

and meanings, even going so far as to routinely rewrite history and punish “thoughtcrimes.” Orwell’s Big Brother relies on Newspeak to eliminate undesirable words, strip such words as remained of unorthodox meanings and make independent, non-government-approved thought altogether unnecessary.

Where we stand now is at the juncture of OldSpeak (where words have meanings, and ideas can be dangerous) and Newspeak (where only that which is “safe” and “accepted” by the majority is permitted). The power elite has made their intentions clear: they will pursue and prosecute any and all words, thoughts and expressions that challenge their authority.

This is the final link in the police state chain.

“Until they became conscious they will never rebel, and until after they have rebelled they cannot become conscious.”—George Orwell

Having been reduced to a cowering citizenry—mute in the face of elected officials who refuse to represent us, helpless in the face of police brutality, powerless in the face of militarized tactics and technology that treat us like enemy combatants on a battlefield, and naked in the face of government surveillance that sees and hears all—we have nowhere left to go.

We have, so to speak, gone from being a nation where privacy is king to one where nothing is safe from the prying eyes of government.

“Big Brother is Watching You.”—George Orwell

Wherever you go and whatever you do, you are now being watched, especially if you leave behind an electronic footprint. When you use your cell phone, you leave a record of when the call was placed, who you called, how long it lasted and even where you were at the time. When you use your ATM card, you leave a record of where and when you used the card. There is even a video camera at most locations equipped with facial recognition software. When you use a cell phone or drive a car enabled with GPS, you can be tracked by satellite. Such information is shared with government agents, including local police. And all of this once-private information about your consumer habits, your whereabouts and your activities is now being fed to the government.

The government has nearly inexhaustible resources when it comes to tracking our movements, from electronic wiretapping devices, traffic cameras and biometrics to radio-frequency identification cards, satellites and Internet surveillance.

In such a climate, everyone is a suspect. And you’re guilty until you can prove yourself innocent. To underscore this shift in how the government now views its citizens, the FBI uses its wide-ranging authority to investigate individuals or groups, regardless of whether they are suspected of criminal activity.

“Nothing was your own except the few cubic centimetres inside your skull.” — George Orwell

Here’s what a lot of people fail to understand, however: it’s not just what you say or do that is being monitored, but how you *think* that is being tracked and targeted. We’ve already seen this play out on the state and federal level with hate crime legislation that cracks down on so-called “hateful” thoughts and expression, encourages self-censoring and reduces free

debate on various subject matter.

Say hello to [the new Thought Police](#).

Total Internet surveillance by the Corporate State, as omnipresent as God, is used by the government to predict and, more importantly, control the populace, and it's not as far-fetched as you might think. For example, the NSA has been working on an artificial intelligence system designed to anticipate your every move. [Aquaint](#) (the acronym stands for Advanced QuesTion Answering for INTelligence) has been designed to detect patterns and predict behavior.

No information is sacred or spared.

Everything from cell phone recordings and logs, to emails, to text messages, to personal information posted on social networking sites, to credit card statements, to library circulation records, to credit card histories, etc., is collected by the NSA and shared freely with its agents in crime: the CIA, FBI and DHS.

What we are witnessing, in the so-called name of security and efficiency, is the creation of a new class system comprised of the watched (average Americans such as you and me) and the watchers (government bureaucrats, technicians and private corporations).

Clearly, the age of privacy in America is at an end.

So where does that leave us?

We now find ourselves in the unenviable position of being monitored, managed and controlled by our technology, which answers not to us but to our government and corporate rulers. This is the fact-is-stranger-than-fiction lesson that is being pounded into us on a daily basis.

It won't be long before we find ourselves 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.

To be an individual today, to not conform, to have even a shred of privacy, and to live beyond the reach of the government's roaming eyes and technological spies, one must not only be a rebel but rebel.

Even when you rebel and take your stand, there is rarely a happy ending awaiting you. You are rendered an outlaw. Just look at what happened to Julian Assange.

So how do you survive in the American surveillance state?

We're running out of options.

Whether you're dealing with fact or fiction, as I make clear in [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in my new novel [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), we'll soon have to choose between self-indulgence (the bread-and-circus distractions offered up by the news media, politicians, sports conglomerates, entertainment industry, etc.) and self-preservation

in the form of renewed vigilance about threats to our freedoms and active engagement in self-governance.

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