

Monsters with Human Faces: The Tyranny of the Police State Disguised as Law-and-Order

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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 are definitely in desperate need of a populace that can stand united against the government's authoritarian tendencies.

Surely we can manage to find some common ground in the midst of the destructive, disrupting, diverting, discordant babble being beamed down at us by the powers-that-be? After all, there are certain [self-evident truths](#)—about the source of our freedoms, about the

purpose of government, about how we expect to be treated by those we appoint to serve us in government offices, about what to do when the government abuses our rights and our trust, etc.—that we should be able to agree on, no matter how we might differ politically.

Disagree all you want about healthcare, abortion and immigration—hot-button issues that are guaranteed to stir up the masses, secure campaign contributions and turn political discourse into a circus free-for-all—but never forget that our power as a citizenry comes from our ability to agree and stand united on certain principles that should be non-negotiable.

For instance, for the first time in the nation's history, [it is expected that the federal deficit will surpass \\$1 trillion this year](#), not to mention the [national debt which is approaching \\$23 trillion](#). There's also [\\$21 trillion in government spending that cannot be accounted for](#) or explained. For those in need of a quick reminder: "[A budget deficit is the difference between what the federal government spends and what it takes in](#)." The national debt is the result of the federal government borrowing money to cover years and years of budget deficits." Right now, the U.S. government is operating in the negative on every front: it's spending far more than what it makes (and takes from the American taxpayers) and it is borrowing heavily ([from foreign governments and Social Security](#)) to keep the government operating and keep [funding its endless wars abroad](#). Meanwhile, the nation's sorely neglected infrastructure—railroads, water pipelines, ports, dams, bridges, airports and roads—is [rapidly deteriorating](#).

Yet no matter how we might differ about how the government allocates its spending, *surely we can agree that the government's irresponsible spending, which has saddled us with insurmountable debt, is pushing the country to the edge of financial and physical ruin.*

That's just one example of many that shows the extent to which the agents of the American police state are shredding the constitutional fabric of the nation, eclipsing the rights of the American people, and perverting basic standards of decency.

Let me give you a few more.

Having been co-opted by greedy defense contractors, corrupt politicians and incompetent government officials, America's expanding military empire is bleeding the country dry at a rate of more than [\\$15 billion a month](#) (or \$20 million an hour)—and that's just what the government spends on foreign wars. The U.S. military empire's determination to police the rest of the world has resulted in more than [1.3 million U.S. troops being stationed at roughly 1000 military bases in over 150 countries](#) around the world. That doesn't include the number of [private contractors pulling in hefty salaries](#) at taxpayer expense. In Afghanistan, for example, [private contractors outnumber U.S. troops three to one](#).

No matter how we might differ about the role of the U.S. military in foreign affairs, *surely we can agree that America's war spending and commitment to policing the rest of the world are bankrupting the nation and spreading our troops dangerously thin.*

All of the [imperial powers amassed by Barack Obama and George W. Bush](#)—to kill American citizens without due process, to detain suspects indefinitely, to strip Americans of their citizenship rights, to carry out mass surveillance on Americans without probable cause, to suspend laws during wartime, to disregard laws with which they might disagree, to conduct secret wars and convene secret courts, to sanction torture, to sidestep the legislatures and

courts with executive orders and signing statements, to direct the military to operate beyond the reach of the law, to operate a shadow government, and to act as a dictator and a tyrant, above the law and beyond any real accountability—were inherited by Donald Trump. These presidential powers—acquired through the use of [executive orders, decrees, memorandums, proclamations, national security directives and legislative signing statements](#) and which can be activated by any sitting president—enable past, present and future presidents to operate above the law and beyond the reach of the Constitution.

Yet no matter how we might differ about how success or failure of past or present presidential administrations, *surely we can agree that the president should not be empowered to act as an imperial dictator with permanent powers.*

Increasingly, at home, we're facing an unbelievable show of force by government agents. For example, with [alarming regularity](#), unarmed men, women, children and even pets are being gunned down by twitchy, hyper-sensitive, easily-spooked police officers who shoot first and ask questions later, and all the government does is shrug and promise to do better.

Just recently, in fact, the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals cleared a cop who aimed for a family's dog (who showed no signs of aggression), missed, and instead [shot a 10-year-old lying on the ground](#). Indeed, there are countless incidents that happen every day in which Americans are shot, stripped, searched, choked, beaten and tasered by police for little more than daring to frown, smile, question, or challenge an order. Growing numbers of unarmed people are being shot and killed for just standing a certain way, or moving a certain way, or holding something—anything—that police could misinterpret to be a gun, or igniting some trigger-centric fear in a police officer's mind that has nothing to do with an actual threat to their safety.

No matter how we might differ about where to draw that blue line of allegiance to the police state, *surely we can agree that police shouldn't go around terrorizing and shooting innocent, unarmed children and adults or be absolved of wrongdoing for doing so.*

Nor can we turn a blind eye to the transformation of America's penal system from one aimed at protecting society from dangerous criminals to a profit-driven system that dehumanizes and strips prisoners of every vestige of their humanity. For example, in Illinois, as part of a "training exercise" for incoming cadets, prison guards armed with batons and shields rounded up 200 handcuffed female inmates, marched them to the gymnasium, then forced them to strip naked (including removing their tampons and pads), ["bend over and spread open their vaginal and anal cavities,"](#) while male prison guards promenaded past or stood staring. The 7th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled the entire dehumanizing, demoralizing mass body cavity strip search—[orchestrated not for security purposes but as an exercise in humiliation](#)—was legal. Be warned, however: this treatment will not be limited to those behind bars. In our present carceral state, there is no difference between the treatment meted out to a law-abiding citizen and a convicted felon: both are equally suspect and treated as criminals, without any of the special rights and privileges reserved for the governing elite. In a carceral state, there are only two kinds of people: the prisoners and the prison guards.

No matter how we might differ about where to draw the line when it comes to prisoners' rights, *surely we can agree that no one—woman, man or child—should be subjected to such degrading treatment in the name of law and order.*

In Washington, DC, in contravention of longstanding laws that restrict the government's ability to deploy the military on American soil, [the Pentagon has embarked on a secret mission of "undetermined duration" that involves flying Black Hawk helicopters over the nation's capital](#), backed by active-duty and reserve soldiers. In addition to the increasing militarization of the police—a de facto standing army—this military exercise further acclimates the nation to the sight and sounds of military personnel on American soil and the imposition of martial law.

No matter how we might differ about the deference due to those in uniform, whether military or law enforcement, *surely we can agree that America's Founders had good reason to warn against the menace of a national police force—a.k.a. a standing army—vested with the power to completely disregard the Constitution.*

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 example, in Pennsylvania, a school district is threatening to [place children in foster care if parents don't pay their overdue school lunch bills](#). In Florida, a [resident was fined \\$100,000 for a dirty swimming pool and overgrown grass](#) at a house she no longer owned. In Kentucky, government bureaucrats sent a cease-and-desist letter to a church ministry, warning that the group is [breaking the law by handing out free used eyeglasses to the homeless](#). These petty tyrannies inflicted on an overtaxed, overregulated, and underrepresented populace are what happens when bureaucrats run the show, and the rule of law becomes little more than a cattle prod for forcing the citizenry to march in lockstep with the government.

No matter how we might differ about the extent to which the government has the final say in how it flexes its power and exerts its authority, *surely we can agree that the tyranny of the Nanny State—disguised as "the better good," marketed as benevolence, enforced with armed police, and inflicted on all those who do not belong to the elite ruling class that gets to call the shots—should not be allowed to pave over the Constitution.*

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 that have infiltrated our government.

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 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.

No matter how you rationalize it, the lesser of two evils is still evil.

So how do you fight back?

How do you fight injustice? How do you push back against tyranny? How do you vanquish evil?

You don't fight it by hiding your head in the sand.

We have ignored the warning signs all around us for too long.

As I make clear in my book [*Battlefield America: The War on the American People*](#), the government has ripped the Constitution to shreds and left us powerless in the face of its power grabs, greed and brutality.

What we are grappling with today is a government that is cutting great roads through the very foundations of freedom in order to get after its modern devils. Yet the government can only go as far as "we the people" allow.

Therein lies the problem.

The consequences of this failure to do our due diligence in asking the right questions, demanding satisfactory answers, and holding our government officials accountable to respecting our rights and abiding by the rule of law has pushed us to the brink of a nearly intolerable state of affairs.

Intolerable, at least, to those who remember what it was like to live in a place where freedom, due process and representative government actually meant something. Having allowed the government to expand and exceed our reach, we now find ourselves on the losing end of a tug-of-war over control of our country and our lives.

The hour grows late in terms of restoring the balance of power and reclaiming our freedoms, but it may not be too late. The time to act is now, using all methods of nonviolent resistance available to us.

"Don't sit around waiting for the two corrupted established parties to restore the Constitution or the Republic," Naomi Wolf once warned. Waiting and watching will get us nowhere fast.

If you're watching, you're not doing.

Easily mesmerized by the government's political theater—the endless congressional hearings and investigations that go nowhere, the president's reality show antics, the warring factions, the electoral drama—we have become a society of watchers rather than activists who are distracted by even the clumsiest government attempts at sleight-of-hand.

It's time for good men and women to do something. And soon.

Wake up and take a good, hard look around you. Start by recognizing evil and injustice and tyranny for what they are. Stop being apathetic. Stop being neutral. Stop being accomplices. Stop being distracted by the political theater staged by the Deep State: they *want* you watching the show while they manipulate things behind the scenes. Refuse to play politics with your principles. Don't settle for the lesser of two evils.

As British statesman Edmund Burke warned, "The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men [and women] to do nothing."

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