

“The New Abnormal”: Authoritarian Control Freaks Want to “Micromanage Our Lives”

“Man is born free but everywhere is in chains.”—Jean-Jacques Rousseau

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Authoritarian control freaks out to micromanage our lives have become the new normal or, to be more accurate, the new abnormal when it comes to how the government relates to the citizenry.

This overbearing despotism, which pre-dates the COVID-19 hysteria, is the very definition of a Nanny State, where government representatives (those elected and appointed to work for us) adopt the authoritarian notion that the government knows best and therefore must control, regulate and dictate almost everything about the citizenry’s public, private and professional lives.

Indeed, it’s a dangerous time for anyone who still clings to the idea that freedom means the right to think for yourself and act responsibly according to your best judgment.

This tug-of-war for control and sovereignty over our selves impacts almost every aspect of our lives, whether you’re talking about decisions relating to our health, our homes, how we raise our children, what we consume, what we drive, what we wear, how we spend our money, how we protect ourselves and our loved ones, and even who we associate with and what we think.

As Liz Wolfe writes for Reason, “Little things that make people’s lives better, tastier, and less tedious are being cracked down on by big government types in federal and state governments.”

You can’t even buy a stove, a dishwasher, a showerhead, a leaf blower, or a light bulb anymore without running afoul of the Nanny State.

In this way, under the guise of pseudo-benevolence, the government has meted out this bureaucratic tyranny in such a way as to nullify the inalienable rights of the individual and limit our choices to those few that the government deems safe enough.

Yet limited choice is no choice at all. Likewise, regulated freedom is no freedom at all.

Indeed, as a study by the Cato Institute concludes, for the average American, freedom has declined generally over the past 20 years. As researchers William Ruger and Jason Sorens explain, “We ground our conception of freedom on an individual rights framework. In our view, individuals should be allowed to dispose of their lives, liberties, and property as they see fit, so long as they do not infringe on the rights of others.”

The overt signs of the despotism exercised by the increasingly authoritarian regime that passes itself off as the United States government (and its corporate partners in crime) are all around us: censorship, criminalizing, shadow banning and de-platforming of individuals who express ideas that are politically incorrect or unpopular; warrantless surveillance of Americans' movements and communications; SWAT team raids of Americans' homes; shootings of unarmed citizens by police; harsh punishments meted out to schoolchildren in the name of zero tolerance; community-wide lockdowns and health mandates that strip Americans of their freedom of movement and bodily integrity; armed drones taking to the skies domestically; endless wars; out-of-control spending; militarized police; roadside strip searches; privatized prisons with a profit incentive for jailing Americans; fusion centers that spy on, collect and disseminate data on Americans' private transactions; and militarized agencies with stockpiles of ammunition, to name some of the most appalling.

Yet as egregious as these incursions on our rights may be, it's the endless, petty tyrannies—the heavy-handed, punitive-laden dictates inflicted by a self-righteous, Big-Brother-Knows-Best bureaucracy on an overtaxed, overregulated, and underrepresented populace—that illustrate so clearly the degree to which “we the people” are viewed as incapable of common sense, moral judgment, fairness, and intelligence, not to mention lacking a basic understanding of how to stay alive, raise a family, or be part of a functioning community.

When the dictates of petty bureaucrats carry greater weight than the individual rights of the citizenry, we're in trouble, folks.

Federal and state governments have used the law as a bludgeon to litigate, legislate and micromanage our lives through overregulation and overcriminalization.

This is 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.

Overregulation is just the other side of the coin to overcriminalization, that phenomenon in which everything is rendered illegal, and everyone becomes a lawbreaker.

You don't have to look far to find abundant examples of Nanny State laws that infantilize individuals and strip them of their ability to decide things for themselves. Back in 2012, then-New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg infamously proposed a ban on the sale of sodas and large sugary drinks in order to guard against obesity. Other localities enacted bans on texting while jaywalking, wearing saggy pants, having too much mud on your car, smoking outdoors, storing trash in your car, improperly sorting your trash, cursing within earshot of others, or screeching your tires.

Yet while there are endless ways for the Nanny State to micromanage our lives, things become truly ominous when the government adopts mechanisms enabling it to monitor us for violations in order to enforce its many laws.

Nanny State, meet the all-seeing, all-knowing Surveillance State and its sidekick, the muscle-flexing Police State.

You see, in an age of overcriminalization—when the law is wielded like a hammer to force compliance to the government's dictates whatever they might be—you don't have to do anything “wrong” to be fined, arrested or subjected to raids and seizures and surveillance.

You just have to refuse to march in lockstep with the government.

As policy analyst Michael Van Beek warns, the problem with overcriminalization is that there are so many laws at the federal, state and local levels—that we can't possibly know them all.

"It's also impossible to enforce all these laws. Instead, law enforcement officials must choose which ones are important and which are not. The result is that they pick the laws Americans really must follow, because they're the ones deciding which laws really matter," concludes Van Beek. "Federal, state and local regulations — rules created by unelected government bureaucrats — carry the same force of law and can turn you into a criminal if you violate any one of them... if we violate these rules, we could be prosecuted as criminals. No matter how antiquated or ridiculous, they still carry the full force of the law. By letting so many of these sit around, just waiting to be used against us, we increase the power of law enforcement, which has lots of options to charge people with legal and regulatory violations."

This is the police state's superpower: empowered by the Nanny State, it has been vested with the authority to make our lives a bureaucratic hell.

Indeed, if you were unnerved by the rapid deterioration of privacy under the Surveillance State, prepare to be terrified by the surveillance matrix that will be ushered in by the Nanny State working in tandem with the Police State.

The government's response to COVID-19 saddled us with a Nanny State inclined to use its draconian pandemic powers to protect us from ourselves.

The groundwork laid with COVID-19 is a prologue to what will become the police state's conquest of a new, relatively uncharted, frontier: inner space, specifically, the inner workings (genetic, biological, biometric, mental, emotional) of the human race.

Consider how many more ways the government could "protect us" from ourselves under the guise of public health and safety.

For instance, 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.

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, these preemptive mental health programs could well signal a tipping point in the government's efforts to penalize those engaging in so-called "thought crimes."

This is how it begins.

On a daily basis, Americans are already relinquishing (in many cases, voluntarily) the most intimate details of who we are—their 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.

Having conditioned the population to the idea that being part of society is a privilege and not a right, such access could easily be predicated on social credit scores, the worthiness of one's political views, or the extent to which one is willing to comply with the government's dictates, no matter what they might be.

COVID-19 with its talk of mass testing, screening checkpoints, contact tracing, immunity passports, and snitch tip lines for reporting "rule breakers" to the authorities was a preview of what's to come.

We should all be leery and afraid.

At a time when the government 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, it won't take much for any of us to be considered outlaws or terrorists.

After all, the government likes to use the words "anti-government," "extremist" and "terrorist" interchangeably. The Department of Homeland Security broadly defines extremists as individuals "that are mainly anti-government, rejecting federal authority in favor of state or local authority, or rejecting government authority entirely."

At some point, being an individualist will be considered as dangerous as being a terrorist.

When anything goes when it's done in the name of national security, crime fighting and terrorism, "we the people" have little to no protection against SWAT team raids, domestic surveillance, police shootings of unarmed citizens, indefinite detentions, and the like, whether or not you've done anything wrong.

In an age of overcriminalization, you're already a criminal.

All the government needs is proof of your law-breaking. They'll get it, too.

Whether it's through the use of surveillance software such as ShadowDragon that allows police to watch people's social media activity, or technology that uses a home's WiFi router and smart appliances to allow those on the outside to "see" throughout your home, it's just a matter of time.

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 no longer a question of whether the government will lock up Americans for defying one of its numerous mandates but when.

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