

'D' is for Dictatorship NOT Democracy

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“When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is redefined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby-talk, when, in short, a people become an audience and their public business a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk; a culture-death is a clear possibility.” — Professor Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Discourse in the Age of Show Business*

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.

Played out on the national stage and eagerly broadcast to a captive audience by media sponsors, this farcical exercise in political theater can, at times, seem riveting, life-changing and suspenseful, even for those who know better.

Week after week, the script changes (Donald Trump’s Tweets, Congress’ hearings on Robert Mueller’s Russia probe, the military’s endless war drums, the ever-widening field of candidates for the 2020 presidential race, etc.) with each new script following on the heels of the last, never any let-up, never any relief from the constant melodrama.

The players come and go, the protagonists and antagonists trade places, and the audience members are quick to forget past mistakes and move on to the next spectacle.

All the while, a different kind of drama is unfolding in the dark backstage, hidden from view by the heavy curtain, the elaborate stage sets, colored lights and parading actors.

Such that it is, the realm of political theater with all of its drama, vitriol and scripted theatrics is what passes for “transparent” government today, with elected officials, entrusted to act in the best interests of their constituents, routinely performing for their audiences and playing up to the cameras, while doing very little to move the country forward.

Yet behind the footlights, those who really run the show are putting into place policies which erode our freedoms and undermine our attempts at contributing to the workings of our government, leaving us none the wiser and bereft of any opportunity to voice our discontent or engage in any kind of discourse until it’s too late.

It’s 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.

Indeed, while mainstream America has been fixated on the drama-filled reality show being televised from the White House, the American Police State has moved steadily forward.

Set against a backdrop of government surveillance, militarized police, SWAT team raids, asset forfeiture, eminent domain, overcriminalization, armed surveillance drones, whole body scanners, stop and frisk searches, roving VIPR raids and the like—all of which have been sanctioned by Congress, the White House and the courts—our constitutional freedoms have been steadily chipped away at, undermined, eroded, whittled down, and generally discarded.

Our losses are mounting with every passing day.

Free speech, the right to protest, the right to challenge government wrongdoing, due process, a presumption of innocence, the right to self-defense, accountability and transparency in government, privacy, press, sovereignty, assembly, bodily integrity, representative government: all of these and more have become casualties in the government's war on the American people.

The American people have been treated like enemy combatants, to be spied on, tracked, scanned, frisked, searched, subjected to all manner of intrusions, intimidated, invaded, raided, manhandled, censored, silenced, shot at, locked up, and denied due process.

None of these dangers have dissipated.

They have merely disappeared from our televised news streams.

The new boss has proven to be the same as the old boss, and the American people, the permanent underclass in America, has allowed itself to be so distracted and divided that they have failed to notice the building blocks of tyranny being laid down right under their noses by the architects of the Deep State.

Frankly, it really doesn't matter what you call the old/new boss—the Deep State, the Controllers, the masterminds, the shadow government, the police state, the surveillance state, the military industrial complex—so long as you understand that no matter who occupies the White House, it is a profit-driven, an unelected bureaucracy that is actually calling the shots.

In the interest of liberty and truth, here's an A-to-Z primer to spell out the grim realities of life in the American Police State that no one is talking about anymore.

A is for the AMERICAN POLICE STATE. A police state "is characterized by bureaucracy, secrecy, perpetual wars, a nation of suspects, militarization, surveillance, widespread police presence, and a citizenry with little recourse against police actions."

B is for our battered BILL OF RIGHTS. In the cop culture that is America today, where you can be kicked, punched, tasered, shot, intimidated, harassed, stripped, searched, brutalized, terrorized, wrongfully arrested, and even killed by a police officer, and that officer is rarely held accountable for violating your rights, the Bill of Rights doesn't amount to much.

C is for CIVIL ASSET FORFEITURE. This governmental scheme to deprive Americans of their liberties—namely, the right to property—is being carried out under the guise of civil asset forfeiture, a government practice wherein government agents (usually the police) seize private property they "suspect" may be connected to criminal activity. Then, whether or not any crime is actually proven to have taken place, the government keeps the citizen's property.

D is for DRONES. It is estimated that at least 30,000 drones will be airborne in American airspace by 2020, part of an \$80 billion industry. Although some drones will be used for benevolent purposes,

many will also be equipped with lasers, tasers and scanning devices, among other weapons—all aimed at “we the people.”

E is for ELECTRONIC CONCENTRATION CAMP. In the electronic concentration camp, as I have dubbed the surveillance state, all aspects of a person’s life are policed by government agents and all citizens are suspects, their activities monitored and regulated, their movements tracked, their communications spied upon, and their lives, liberties and pursuit of happiness dependent on the government’s say-so.

F is for FASCISM. 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 economic units.

G is for GRENADE LAUNCHERS and GLOBAL POLICE. The federal government has distributed more than \$18 billion worth of battlefield-appropriate military weapons, vehicles and equipment such as drones, tanks, and grenade launchers to domestic police departments across the country. As a result, most small-town police forces now have enough firepower to render any citizen resistance futile. Now take those small-town police forces, train them to look and act like the military, and then enlist them to be part of the United Nations’ Strong Cities Network program, and you not only have a standing army that operates beyond the reach of the Constitution but one that is part of a global police force.

H is for HOLLOW-POINT BULLETS. The government’s efforts to militarize and weaponize its agencies and employees is reaching epic proportions, with federal agencies as varied as the Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration stockpiling millions of lethal hollow-point bullets, which violate international law. Ironically, while the government continues to push for stricter gun laws for the general populace, the U.S. military’s arsenal of weapons makes the average American’s handgun look like a Tinker Toy.

I is for the INTERNET OF THINGS, in which internet-connected “things” will monitor your home, your health and your habits in order to keep your pantry stocked, your utilities regulated and your life under control and relatively worry-free. The key word here, however, is control. This “connected” industry propels us closer to a future where police agencies apprehend virtually anyone if the government “thinks” they may commit a crime, driverless cars populate the highways, and a person’s biometrics are constantly scanned and used to track their movements, target them for advertising, and keep them under perpetual surveillance.

J is for JAILING FOR PROFIT. Having outsourced their inmate population to private prisons run by private corporations, this profit-driven form of mass punishment has given rise to a \$70 billion private prison industry that relies on the complicity of state governments to keep their privately run prisons full by jailing large numbers of Americans for inane crimes.

K is for KENTUCKY V. KING. In an 8-1 ruling, the Supreme Court ruled that police officers can break into homes, without a warrant, even if it’s the wrong home as long as they think they have a reason to do so. Despite the fact that the police in question ended up pursuing the wrong suspect, invaded the wrong apartment and violated just about every tenet that stands between us and a police state, the Court sanctioned the warrantless raid, leaving Americans with little real protection

in the face of all manner of abuses by law enforcement officials.

L is for LICENSE PLATE READERS, which enable law enforcement and private agencies to track the whereabouts of vehicles, and their occupants, all across the country. This data collected on tens of thousands of innocent people is also being shared between police agencies, as well as with fusion centers and private companies. This puts Big Brother in the driver's seat.

M is for MAIN CORE. Since the 1980s, the U.S. government has acquired and maintained, without warrant or court order, a database of names and information on Americans considered to be threats to the nation. As Salon reports, this database, reportedly dubbed "Main Core," is to be used by the Army and FEMA in times of national emergency or under martial law to locate and round up Americans seen as threats to national security. As of 2008, there were some 8 million Americans in the Main Core database.

N is for NO-KNOCK RAIDS. Owing to the militarization of the nation's police forces, SWAT teams are now increasingly being deployed for routine police matters. In fact, more than 80,000 of these paramilitary raids are carried out every year. That translates to more than 200 SWAT team raids every day in which police crash through doors, damage private property, terrorize adults and children alike, kill family pets, assault or shoot anyone that is perceived as threatening—and all in the pursuit of someone merely suspected of a crime, usually possession of some small amount of drugs.

O is for OVERCRIMINALIZATION and OVERREGULATION. Thanks to an overabundance of 4500-plus federal crimes and 400,000 plus rules and regulations, it's estimated that the average American actually commits three felonies a day without knowing it. As a result of this overcriminalization, we're seeing an uptick in Americans being arrested and jailed for such absurd "violations" as letting their kids play at a park unsupervised, collecting rainwater and snow runoff on their own property, growing vegetables in their yard, and holding Bible studies in their living room.

P is for PATHOCRACY and PRECRIME. When our own government treats us as things to be manipulated, maneuvered, mined for data, manhandled by police, mistreated, and then jailed in profit-driven private prisons if we dare step out of line, we are no longer operating under a constitutional republic. Instead, what we are experiencing is a pathocracy: tyranny at the hands of a psychopathic government, which "operates against the interests of its own people except for favoring certain groups." Couple that with the government's burgeoning precrime programs, which will use fusion centers, data collection agencies, behavioral scientists, corporations, social media, and community organizers and by relying on cutting-edge technology for surveillance, facial recognition, predictive policing, biometrics, and behavioral epigenetics in order to identify and deter so-called potential "extremists," dissidents or rabble-rousers. Bear in mind that anyone seen as opposing the government—whether they're Left, Right or somewhere in between—is now viewed as an extremist.

Q is for QUALIFIED IMMUNITY. Qualified immunity allows officers to walk away without paying a dime for their wrongdoing. Conveniently, those deciding whether a police officer should be immune from having to personally pay for misbehavior on the job all belong to the same system, all cronies with a vested interest in protecting the police and their infamous code of silence: city and county attorneys, police commissioners, city councils and judges.

R is for ROADSIDE STRIP SEARCHES and BLOOD DRAWS. The courts have increasingly erred on the side of giving government officials—especially the police—vast discretion in carrying out strip searches, blood draws and even anal probes for a broad range of violations, no matter how minor the

offense. In the past, strip searches were resorted to only in exceptional circumstances where police were confident that a serious crime was in progress. In recent years, however, strip searches have become routine operating procedures in which everyone is rendered a suspect and, as such, is subjected to treatment once reserved for only the most serious of criminals.

S is for the SURVEILLANCE STATE. On any given day, the average American going about his daily business will be monitored, surveilled, spied on and tracked in more than 20 different ways, by both government and corporate eyes and ears. A byproduct of this new age in which we live, whether you're walking through a store, driving your car, checking email, or talking to friends and family on the phone, you can be sure that some government agency, whether the NSA or some other entity, is listening in and tracking your behavior. This doesn't even begin to touch on the corporate trackers that monitor your purchases, web browsing, Facebook posts and other activities taking place in the cyber sphere.

T is for TASERS. Nonlethal weapons such as tasers, stun guns, rubber pellets and the like have been used by police as weapons of compliance more often and with less restraint—even against women and children—and in some instances, even causing death. These “nonlethal” weapons also enable police to aggress with the push of a button, making the potential for overblown confrontations over minor incidents that much more likely. A Taser Shockwave, for instance, can electrocute a crowd of people at the touch of a button.

U is for UNARMED CITIZENS SHOT BY POLICE. No longer is it unusual to hear about incidents in which police shoot unarmed individuals first and ask questions later, often attributed to a fear for their safety. Yet the fatality rate of on-duty patrol officers is reportedly far lower than many other professions, including construction, logging, fishing, truck driving, and even trash collection.

V is for VIPR SQUADS. So-called “soft target” security inspections, carried out by roving VIPR task forces, comprised of federal air marshals, surface transportation security inspectors, transportation security officers, behavior detection officers and explosive detection canine teams, are taking place whenever and wherever the government deems appropriate, at random times and places, and without needing the justification of a particular threat.

W is for WHOLE-BODY SCANNERS. Using either x-ray radiation or radio waves, scanning devices and government mobile units are being used not only to “see” through your clothes but to spy on you within the privacy of your home. While these mobile scanners are being sold to the American public as necessary security and safety measures, we can ill afford to forget that such systems are rife with the potential for abuse, not only by government bureaucrats but by the technicians employed to operate them.

X is for X-KEYSCORE, one of the many spying programs carried out by the National Security Agency that targets every person in the United States who uses a computer or phone. This top-secret program “allows analysts to search with no prior authorization through vast databases containing emails, online chats and the browsing histories of millions of individuals.”

Y is for YOU-NESS. Using your face, mannerisms, social media and “you-ness” against you, you can now be tracked based on what you buy, where you go, what you do in public, and how you do what you do. Facial recognition software promises to create a society in which every individual who steps out into public is tracked and recorded as they go about their daily business. The goal is for government agents to be able to scan a crowd of people and instantaneously identify all of the individuals present. Facial recognition programs are being rolled out in states all across the country.

Z is for ZERO TOLERANCE. We have moved into a new paradigm in which young people are increasingly viewed as suspects and treated as criminals by school officials and law enforcement alike, often for engaging in little more than childish behavior. In some jurisdictions, students have also been penalized under school zero tolerance policies for such inane "crimes" as carrying cough drops, wearing black lipstick, bringing nail clippers to school, using Listerine or Scope, and carrying fold-out combs that resemble switchblades. The lesson being taught to our youngest—and most impressionable—citizens is this: in the American police state, you're either a prisoner (shackled, controlled, monitored, ordered about, limited in what you can do and say, your life not your own) or a prison bureaucrat (politician, police officer, judge, jailer, spy, profiteer, etc.).

As I make clear in my book *Battlefield America: The War on the American People*, the reality we must come to terms with is that in the post-9/11 America we live in today, the government does whatever it wants, freedom be damned.

We have moved beyond the era of representative government and entered a new age.

You can call it the age of authoritarianism. Or fascism. Or oligarchy. Or the American police state.

Whatever label you want to put on it, the end result is the same: tyranny.

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