

The Political Matrix Sustains the Illusion of Freedom

By [John W. Whitehead](#) and [Nisha Whitehead](#)

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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; culture-death is a clear possibility." — Neil Postman

What you smell is the stench of a dying republic.

Our dying republic.

We are trapped in a political matrix intended to sustain the illusion that we are citizens of a constitutional republic.

In reality, we are caught somewhere between a [kleptocracy](#) (a government ruled by thieves) and a [kakistocracy](#) (a government run by unprincipled career politicians, corporations and thieves that panders to the worst vices in our nature and has little regard for the rights of American citizens).

For years now, the government has been playing a cat-and-mouse game with the American people, letting us enjoy just enough freedom to think we are free but not enough to actually allow us to *live* as a free people.

In other words, we're allowed to bask in the *illusion* of freedom while we're being stripped of the very rights intended to ensure that we can hold the government accountable to abiding by the rule of law, the U.S. Constitution.

We're in trouble, folks.

This is no longer America, land of the free, where the government is of the people, by the people and for the people.

Rather, this is Amerika, where fascism, totalitarianism and militarism go hand in hand.

Freedom no longer means what it once did.

This holds true whether you're talking about the right to criticize the government in word or deed, the right to be free from government surveillance, the right to not have your person or your property subjected to warrantless searches by government agents, the right to due process, the right to be safe from militarized police invading your home, the right to be innocent until proven guilty and every other right that once reinforced the founders' commitment to the American experiment in freedom.

Not only do we no longer have dominion over our bodies, our families, our property and our lives, but the government continues to chip away at what few rights we still have to speak freely and think for ourselves.

My friends, we're being played for fools.

On paper, we may be technically free.

In reality, however, we are only as free as a government official may allow.

We only think we live in a constitutional republic, governed by just laws created for our benefit.

Truth be told, we live in a dictatorship disguised as a democracy where all that we own, all that we earn, all that we say and do—our very lives—depends on the benevolence of government agents and corporate shareholders for whom profit and power will always trump principle. And now the government is litigating and legislating its way into a new framework where the dictates of petty bureaucrats carry greater weight than the inalienable rights of the citizenry.

With every court ruling that allows the government to operate above the rule of law, every piece of legislation that limits our freedoms, and every act of government wrongdoing that goes unpunished, we're slowly being conditioned to a society in which we have little real control over our lives.

As Rod Serling, creator of the *Twilight Zone* and an insightful commentator on human nature, once observed, "We're developing a new citizenry. One that will be very selective about cereals and automobiles, but won't be able to think."

Indeed, not only are we developing a new citizenry incapable of thinking for themselves, but we're also instilling in them a complete and utter reliance on the government and its corporate partners to do everything for them—tell them what to eat, what to wear, how to think, what to believe, how long to sleep, who to vote for, whom to associate with, and on and on.

In this way, we have created a welfare state, a nanny state, a police state, a surveillance state, an electronic concentration camp—call it what you will, the meaning is the same: in our quest for less personal responsibility, a greater sense of security, and no burdensome obligations to each other or to future generations, we have created a society in which we have no true freedom.

Government surveillance, police abuse, SWAT team raids, economic instability, asset forfeiture schemes, pork barrel legislation, militarized police, drones, endless wars, private prisons, involuntary detentions, biometrics databases, free speech zones, etc.: these are mile markers on the road to a fascist state where citizens are treated like cattle, to be branded and eventually led to the slaughterhouse.

Freedom, or what's left of it, is being threatened from every direction.

The threats are of many kinds: political, cultural, educational, media, and psychological. However, as history shows us, freedom is not, on the whole, wrested from a citizenry. It is all too often given over voluntarily and for such a cheap price: safety, security, bread, and

circuses.

This is part and parcel of the propaganda churned out by the government machine.

That said, what we face today—mind manipulation and systemic violence—is not new. What is different are the techniques used and the large-scale control of mass humanity, coercive police tactics and pervasive surveillance.

We are overdue for a systemic check on the government's overreaches and power grabs.

By "government," I'm not referring to the highly partisan, two-party bureaucracy of the Republicans and Democrats. Rather, I'm referring to "government" with a capital "G," the entrenched Deep State that is unaffected by elections, unaltered by populist movements, and has set itself beyond the reach of the law.

For years now, we have suffered the injustices, cruelties, corruption and abuse of an entrenched government bureaucracy that has no regard for the Constitution or the rights of the citizenry.

We have lingered too long in this strange twilight zone where ego trumps justice, propaganda perverts truth, and imperial presidents—empowered to indulge their authoritarian tendencies by legalistic courts, corrupt legislatures and a disinterested, distracted populace—rule by fiat rather than by the rule of law.

Where we find ourselves now is in the unenviable position of needing to rein in all three branches of government—the Executive, the Judicial, and the Legislative—that have exceeded their authority and grown drunk on power.

We are the unwitting victims of a system so corrupt that those who stand up for the rule of law and aspire to transparency in government are in the minority. This corruption is so vast it spans all branches of government.

The predators of the police state are wreaking havoc on our freedoms, our communities, and our lives. The government doesn't listen to the citizenry, it refuses to abide by the Constitution, which is our rule of law, and it treats the citizenry as a source of funding and little else.

The American kleptocracy has sucked the American people down a rabbit hole into a parallel universe in which the Constitution is meaningless, the government is all-powerful, and the citizenry is powerless to defend itself against government agents who steal, spy, lie, plunder, kill, abuse and generally inflict mayhem and sow madness on everyone and everything in their sphere.

This dissolution of that sacred covenant between the citizenry and the government—establishing "we the people" as the masters and the government as the servant—didn't happen overnight. It didn't happen because of one particular incident or one particular president. It is a process, one that began long ago and continues in the present day, aided and abetted by politicians who have mastered the polarizing art of how to "divide and conquer."

Unfortunately, there is no magic spell to transport us back to a place and time where "we

the people” weren’t merely fodder for a corporate gristmill, operated by government hired hands, whose priorities are money and power.

Our freedoms have become casualties in an all-out war on the American people.

Through every fault of our own—our apathy, our ignorance, our intolerance, our disinclination to do the hard work of holding government leaders accountable to the rule of law, our inclination to let politics trump longstanding constitutional principles—we have been reduced to this sorry state in which we are little more than shackled inmates in a prison operated for the profit of a corporate elite.

If we continue down this road, there can be no surprise about what awaits us at the end.

For there to be any hope of real change, we must change how we think about ourselves, our fellow human beings, freedom, society, and the government.

The following principles may help any budding freedom fighters in the struggle to liberate themselves and our society.

First, we must come to grips with the reality that the present system does not foster freedom. The government’s primary purpose is maintaining power and control. It’s an oligarchy composed of corporate giants wedded to government officials who benefit from the relationship. In other words, it is motivated by greed and exists to perpetuate itself.

Second, voting is no guarantee of liberty. Voting is a way to keep the citizenry pacified. That’s why the government places so much emphasis on the reassurance ritual of voting. It provides the illusion of participation while maintaining the status quo. As Jordan Michael Smith, writing for the *Boston Globe*, concludes about the American government, “There’s the one we elect, and then there’s the one behind it, steering huge swaths of policy almost unchecked. Elected officials end up serving as mere cover for the real decisions made by the bureaucracy.”

Third, question everything. Don’t assume anything the government does is for the good of the citizenry. As James Madison warned, “All men having power ought to be distrusted to a certain degree.” Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Fourth, there is little hope for any true resistance if you are mindlessly connected to the electronic concentration camp. Remember, what you’re being electronically fed by those in power is meant to pacify, distract, and control you.

Fifth, be wise and realize that there is power in numbers. Networks, coalitions, and movements can accomplish much—especially if their objectives are focused, practical and nonviolent—and they are very much feared by government authorities.

Sixth, as always, change must start with “we the people.” I’ve always advised people to think nationally, but act locally. Yet it can be hard to make a difference locally when the local government is as deaf, dumb and blind to the needs of its constituents as the national government.

Seventh, local towns, cities and states can nullify or say “no” to federal laws that violate the rights and freedoms of the citizenry. When and if you see such federal laws passed, gather your coalition of citizens and demand that your local town council nullify such laws. If

enough towns and cities across the country would speak truth to power in this way, we might see some positive movement from the federal governmental machine.

Clearly, it's time to clean house at all levels of government.

We have been saddled with the wreckage of a government at all levels that no longer represents the citizenry, serves the citizenry, or is accountable to the citizenry.

"We the people" are not the masters anymore.

It doesn't matter whether you're talking about the federal government, state governments, or local governing bodies: at all ends of the spectrum and every point in between, a shift has taken place.

"We the people" are not being seen, heard or valued.

We no longer count for much of anything beyond an occasional electoral vote and as a source of income for the government's ever-burgeoning financial needs.

Everything happening at the national level is playing out at the local level, as well: the violence, the militarization, the intolerance, the lopsided governance, and an uneasy awareness that the citizenry have no say in how their communities are being governed.

So, what's the answer?

For starters, stop tolerating corruption, graft, intolerance, greed, incompetence, ineptitude, militarism, lawlessness, ignorance, brutality, deceit, collusion, corpulence, bureaucracy, immorality, depravity, censorship, cruelty, violence, mediocrity, and tyranny. These are the hallmarks of an institution that is rotten through and through.

Stop holding your nose in order to block out the stench of a rotting institution.

Stop letting the government and its agents treat you like a servant or a slave.

You've got rights. We've all got rights. This is our country. This is our government. No one can take it away from us unless we make it easy for them.

You've got a better chance of making your displeasure seen and felt and heard within your own community. But it will take perseverance and unity and a commitment to finding common ground with your fellow citizens.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), we're making it way too easy for the police state to take over.

So, stop being an accessory to the murder of the American republic.

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Constitutional attorney and author **John W. Whitehead** is founder and president of [The Rutherford Institute](#). His most recent books are the best-selling [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#), the award-winning [A Government of Wolves: The Emerging American Police State](#), and a debut dystopian fiction novel, [The Erik Blair Diaries](#). Whitehead can be contacted at staff@rutherford.org.

Nisha Whitehead is the Executive Director of The Rutherford Institute. Information about The Rutherford Institute is available at www.rutherford.org.

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