

# Something Wicked this Way Comes: Anarchy Is Being Loosed Upon the Nation

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Law and Justice](#)

*“Every day I ask myself the same question: [How can this be happening in America?](#) How can people like these be in charge of our country? If I didn’t see it with my own eyes, I’d think I was having a hallucination.”—Philip Roth, novelist*

Things are falling apart.

How much longer we can sustain the fiction that we live in a constitutional republic, I cannot say, but anarchy is being loosed upon the nation.

We are witnessing the unraveling of the American dream one injustice at a time.

Day after day, the government’s crimes against the citizenry grow more egregious, more treacherous and more tragic. And day after day, the American people wake up a little more to the grim realization that they have become captives in a prison of their own making.

No longer a free people, we are now pushed and prodded and watched over by twitchy, hyper-sensitive, easily-spooked armed guards who care little for the rights, humanity or well-being of those in their care.

The death toll is mounting.

The carnage is heartbreaking.

The public’s faith in the government to do its job—which is to protect *our* freedoms—is deteriorating.

It doesn’t take a weatherman to realize when a storm is brewing: clouds gather, the wind begins to blow, and an almost-palpable tension builds.

It’s the same way with freedom.

The warning signs are everywhere.

“Things fall apart,” wrote W.B. Yeats in his dark, forbidding poem “[The Second Coming](#).” “The centre cannot hold; mere anarchy is loosed upon the world, the blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere the ceremony of innocence is drowned ... Surely some revelation is at hand.”

The upcoming election and its aftermath will undoubtedly keep the citizenry divided and at each other’s throats, so busy fighting each other that they never manage to present a unified front against tyranny in any form. Yet the winner has already been decided. As

American satirist H.L. Mencken predicted almost a century ago:

“All the odds are on the man who is, intrinsically, the most devious and mediocre — the man who can most adeptly disperse the notion that his mind is a virtual vacuum. The Presidency tends, year by year, to go to such men. As democracy is perfected, the office of president represents, more and more closely, the inner soul of the people. [On some great and glorious day the plain folks of the land will reach their heart’s desire at last and the White House will be adorned by a downright moron.](#)”

In other words, nothing will change.

You cannot have a republican form of government—nor a democratic one, for that matter—when the government views itself as superior to the citizenry, when it no longer operates for the benefit of the people, when the people are no longer able to peacefully reform their government, when government officials cease to act like public servants, when elected officials no longer represent the will of the people, when the government routinely violates the rights of the people and perpetrates more violence against the citizenry than the criminal class, when government spending is unaccountable and unaccounted for, when the judiciary act as courts of order rather than justice, and when the government is no longer bound by the laws of the Constitution.

For too long, the American people have obeyed the government’s dictates, no matter how unjust.

We have paid its taxes, penalties and fines, no matter how outrageous. We have tolerated its indignities, insults and abuses, no matter how egregious. We have turned a blind eye to its indiscretions and incompetence, no matter how imprudent. We have held our silence in the face of its lawlessness, licentiousness and corruption, no matter how illicit.

We have suffered. Oh how we have suffered.

How much longer we will continue to suffer at the hands of a tyrannical police state depends on how much we’re willing to give up for the sake of freedom.

It may well be that Professor Morris Berman is correct: perhaps we are entering into the dark ages that signify the final phase of the American Empire. “It seems to me,” writes Berman, “that [the people do get the government they deserve, and even beyond that, the government who they are, so to speak.](#) In that regard, we might consider, as an extreme version of this... that Hitler was as much an expression of the German people at that point in time as he was a departure from them.”

For the moment, the American people seem content to sit back and watch the reality TV programming that passes for politics today. It’s the modern-day equivalent of bread and circuses, a carefully calibrated exercise in how to manipulate, polarize, propagandize and control a population.

As French philosopher Etienne de La Boétie observed half a millennium ago:

“Plays, farces, spectacles, gladiators, strange beasts, medals, pictures, and other such opiates, [these were for ancient peoples the bait toward slavery, the](#)

[price of their liberty, the instruments of tyranny](#). By these practices and enticements the ancient dictators so successfully lulled their subjects under the yoke, that the stupefied peoples, fascinated by the pastimes and vain pleasures flashed before their eyes, learned subservience as naively, but not so creditably, as little children learn to read by looking at bright picture books.”

The bait towards slavery. The price of liberty. The instruments of tyranny.

Yes, that sounds about right.

“We the people” have learned only too well how to be slaves. Worse, we have come to enjoy our voluntary servitude, which masquerades as citizenship.

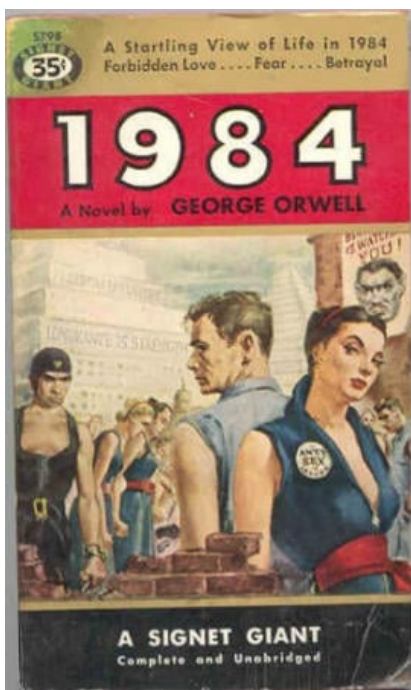
This presidential election is yet another pacifier to lull us into complacency and blind us to the monsters in our midst.

I refuse to be pacified, patronized or placated.

Here’s my plan: rather than staying glued to my TV set, watching politicians and talking heads regurgitate the same soundbites over and over, I’m going to keep doing the hard work that needs to be done to keep freedom alive in this country.

That’s why, almost 40 years ago, I founded [The Rutherford Institute](#): as a nonpartisan, apolitical organization committed to the principles enshrined in the Constitution and Bill of Rights that would work tirelessly to reshape the government from the bottom up into one that respects freedom, recognizes our worth as human beings, resists corruption, and abides by the rule of law.

It’s a thankless, never-ending job, but someone’s got to do it. And I can promise you that when I do eventually turn on the TV, John Carpenter—not Donald Trump or Joe Biden—will be my pick for escapist entertainment.



Carpenter’s films, known primarily for their horror themes, are infused with strong anti-authoritarian, overarching themes that speak to the filmmaker’s concerns about the

unraveling of our society, particularly our government. Even among a pantheon of dystopian films such as *Minority Report*, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *The Matrix*, *V for Vendetta*, and *Land of the Blind*, Carpenter's work stands out for its clarity of vision.

Carpenter sees the government working against its own citizens.

Yet while Carpenter is a skeptic and critic, there's also a strange optimism that runs through his films. "A close view of Carpenter's work reveals a romantic streak beneath the skepticism," John Muir writes in his insightful book *The Films of John Carpenter*, "a belief down deep—far below the anti-establishment hatred—that a single committed and idealistic person can make a difference, even if society does not recognize that person as valuable or good."

In fact, Carpenter's central characters are always out of step with their times. Underneath their machismo, they still believe in the ideals of liberty and equal opportunity. Their beliefs place them in constant opposition with the law and the establishment, but they are nonetheless freedom fighters. When, for example, John Nada destroys the alien hypno-transmitter in *They Live*, he restores hope by delivering America a wake-up call for freedom.

This is the theme that runs throughout Carpenter's films—the belief in American ideals and in people. "He believes that man can do better," writes Muir, "and his heroes consistently prove that worthy goals (such as saving the Earth from malevolent shape-shifters) can be accomplished, but only through individuality."

Thus, John Carpenter is more than a filmmaker. He is a cultural analyst and a keen observer of the unraveling of the American psyche. "I'm disgusted by what we've become in America," said Carpenter. "I truly believe there is brain death in this country. Everything we see is designed to sell us something. The only thing they want to do is take our money."

The following are my favorite Carpenter films.

*Assault on Precinct 13* (1976): This is essentially a remake of Howard Hawks' 1959 classic western *Rio Bravo*—much beloved by Carpenter. A street gang and assorted criminals surround and assault a police station. Paranoia abounds as the police are attacked from all sides and can see no way out. Indeed, Carpenter repeatedly has his characters comment, in disbelief, that "This can't happen, not today!" or "We're in the middle of a city ... in a police station ... someone will drive by eventually!" Or will they?



*Halloween* (1978): This low-budget horror masterpiece launched Carpenter's career. Acclaimed as the most successful independent motion picture of all time, the story centers on a deranged youth who returns to his hometown to conduct a murderous rampage after fifteen years in an asylum. This film, which assumes that there is a form of evil so dark that it can't be killed, deconstructs our technological existence while reminding us that in the end, we all may have to experience Orwell's stamping boot on our faces forever.

*The Fog* (1980): This is a disturbing ghost story made in the mode of Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963). Here the menace besieging a small town is not a pack of winged pests but rather a deadly fog bank that cloaks vengeful, faceless, evil spirits from which there may be no escape.

*Escape from New York* (1981): This is the ultimate urban nightmare. A ruined Manhattan of the future is an anarchic prison for America's worst criminals. When the U.S. president is captured as a hostage, the government sends a disgraced, rebellious war hero into Manhattan in what seems to be an impossible rescue mission. In fact, this film sees fascism as the future of America.

*The Thing* (1982): Considered by many as one of Carpenter's best films, this is a remake of the 1951 sci-fi classic of the same name. A team of scientists in a remote Antarctic outpost discover a buried spaceship with a ravenous, mutating alien that eventually creates a claustrophobic, paranoid environment within their compound. The social commentary is obvious as the horrible creature literally erupts and bursts out of human flesh. This film presupposes that increasingly we are all becoming dehumanized. Thus, in the end, we are all potential aliens.

*Christine* (1983): This film adaptation of Stephen King's novel finds a young man with a classic automobile that is demonically possessed. The car, representing technology with a will and consciousness of its own, goes on a murderous rampage. Do we now face the same possibility with the predominance of artificial intelligence?

*Starman* (1984): An alien from an advanced civilization takes on the guise of a young widow's recently deceased husband. The couple then takes off on a long drive to rendezvous with the alien spacecraft so he can return home. Surprisingly, as John Muir

recognizes, this film is a Christ allegory with the alien visitor possessing extraordinary powers to heal the sick, resurrect the dead, and perform miracles. The question posed is whether the only hope for humanity is a visitor from another world.

*They Live* (1988): This film, which I explore in detail in my books, assumes the future has already arrived. John Nada is a homeless person who stumbles across a resistance movement and finds a pair of sunglasses that enables him to see the real world around him. What he discovers is a monochrome reality in a world controlled by ominous beings who bombard the citizens with subliminal messages such as “obey” and “conform.” Carpenter makes an effective political point about the underclass (everyone except those in power, that is): we, the prisoners of our devices, are too busy sucking up the entertainment trivia beamed into our brains and attacking each other to start an effective resistance movement. As the Bearded Man in *They Live* tells us:

The poor and the underclass are growing. Racial justice and human rights are non-existent. They have created a repressive society and we are their unwitting accomplices . . . They are dismantling the sleeping middle class. More and more people are becoming poor. We are their cattle. We are being bred for slavery.



*In the Mouth of Madness* (1995): A successful horror novelist’s fans become so engrossed in his stories that they slip into dementia and carry out the grisly acts depicted in his books. When this film was being conceived, politicians were criticizing horror movies for promoting violence. Carpenter parodied this argument while noting that evil grows when people lose “the ability to know the difference between reality and fantasy.” As we lose ourselves in ever-evolving technology, we are increasingly blurring that distinction. Does that mean evil will eventually overcome us all?

Madness. Delusion. Denial. Paranoia. Inhumanity. These are some of the monsters of our age.

In the cinematic world of John Carpenter, whenever freedom falls to tyranny, it is because the people allowed it to happen.

It works that way in the real world, too.

The lesson, as I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#): they—the tyrants, the bogeymen, the strongmen, the enemies of freedom—live, because “we the people” sleep.

Time to wake up, America, and break free of your chains.

Something wicked this way comes.

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*This article was originally published on [The Rutherford Institute](#).*

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