

Whether You Live in a Small Town or a Big City, the Government Is Still Out to Get You

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"I can't remember what all Frank had fighting in the jar that day, but I can remember other bug fights we staged later on: one stag beetle against a hundred red ants, one centipede against three spiders, red ants against black ants. They won't fight unless you keep shaking the jar. And that's what Frank was doing, shaking, shaking the jar."— Kurt Vonnegut, Cat's Cradle

There's a meme that circulated on social media a while back that perfectly sums up the polarized, manipulated mayhem, madness and tyranny that is life in the American police state today:

"If you catch 100 red fire ants as well as 100 large black ants, and put them in a jar, at first, nothing will happen. However, if you violently shake the jar and dump them back on the ground the ants will fight until they eventually kill each other. The thing is, the red ants think the black ants are the enemy and vice versa, when in reality, the real enemy is the person who shook the jar. This is exactly what's happening in society today. Liberal vs. Conservative. Black vs. White. Pro Mask vs. Anti Mask. The real question we need to be asking ourselves is who's shaking the jar ... and why?"

Whether red ants will really fight black ants to the death is a question for the biologists, but it's an apt analogy of what's playing out before us on the political scene and a chilling lesson in social engineering that keeps us fixated on circus politics and conveniently timed spectacles, distracted from focusing too closely on the government's power grabs, and incapable of focusing on who's really shaking the jar.

This [controversy over Jason Aldean's country music video](#), "Try That In a Small Town," which is little more than authoritarian propaganda pretending to be respect for law and order, is

just more of the same.

The music video, riddled with images of militarized police facing off against rioters, implies that there are only two types of people in this country: those who stand with the government and those who oppose it.

Yet the song gets it wrong.

You see, it makes no difference whether you live in a small town or a big city, or whether you stand with the government or mobilize against it: either way, the government is still out to get you.

Indeed, the government's prosecution of the Jan. 6 protesters (part of a demographic that might relate to the frontier justice sentiments in Aldean's song) is a powerful reminder that the police state doesn't discriminate when it comes to hammering away at those who challenge its authority.

It also serves to underscore the government's tone-deaf hypocrisy in the face of its own double-crossing, double-dealing, double standards.

Imagine: the very same government that violates the rights of its citizenry at almost every turn is considering charging President Trump with conspiring against the rights of the American people.

It's so ludicrous as to be Kafkaesque.

[If President Trump is indicted](#) over the events that culminated in the Capitol riots of Jan. 6, 2021, the government could hinge part of their case on [Section 241 of Title 18 of the U.S. Code](#), which makes it a crime for two or more people to "conspire to injure, oppress, threaten or intimidate" anyone "with intent to prevent or hinder his free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege" the person enjoys under the U.S. Constitution.

That the government, which now constitutes the greatest *threat* to our freedoms, would appoint itself the so-called *defender* of our freedoms shows exactly how farcical, topsy-turvy, and downright perverse life in the American police state has become.

Unfortunately, "we the people" are partially to blame for allowing this double standard to persist.

While we may claim to value freedom, privacy, individuality, equality, diversity, accountability, and government transparency, our actions and those of our government rulers contradict these much-vaunted principles at every turn.

Even though the government continues to betray our trust, invade our privacy, and abuse our rights, we just keep going back for more.

For instance, we claim to [disdain the jaded mindset of the Washington elite](#), and yet we continue to re-elect politicians who lie, cheat and steal.

We claim to [disapprove of the endless wars that drain our resources and spread thin our military](#), and yet we repeatedly buy into the idea that patriotism equals supporting the

military.

We claim to [chafe at taxpayer-funded pork barrel legislation for roads to nowhere, documentaries on food fights, and studies of mountain lions running on treadmills](#), and yet we pay our taxes meekly and without raising a fuss of any kind.

We claim to [object to the militarization of our local police forces and their increasingly battlefield mindset](#), and yet we do little more than shrug our shoulders over SWAT team raids and police shootings of unarmed citizens.

And then there's our supposed [love-hate affair with technology](#), which sees us bristling at the government's efforts to monitor our internet activities, listen in on our phone calls, read our emails, track our every movement, and punish us for what we say on social media, and yet we keep using these very same technologies all the while doing nothing about the government's encroachments on our rights.

By tacitly allowing these violations to continue and legitimizing a government that has long since ceased to operate within the framework of the Constitution, we not only empower the tyrant but we feed the monster.

This is exactly how incremental encroachments on our rights, justified in the name of greater safety, become routine, wide-ranging abuses so entrenched as to make reform all but impossible.

We saw this happen with the police and their build-up of military arsenal, ostensibly to fight the war on drugs. The result: a [transformation of America's law enforcement agencies into extensions of the military](#), populated with battle-hardened soldiers who view "we the people" as enemy combatants.

The same thing happened with the [government's so-called efforts to get tough on crime by passing endless laws outlawing all manner of activities](#). The result: an explosion of laws criminalizing everything from parenting decisions and fishing to gardening and living off the grid.

Then there were the [private prisons](#), marketed as a way to lower the government's cost of locking up criminals. Only it turns out that private prisons actually cost the taxpayer *more* money and place profit incentives on jailing more Americans, resulting in the largest prison population in the world.

In the same way, the government campaign to spy on our phone calls, letters and emails was sold to the American people as a necessary tool in the war on terror. Instead of targeting terrorists, however, the government turned *us* into potential terrorists, so that if we dare say the wrong thing in a phone call, letter, email or on the internet, especially social media, we end up investigated, charged and possibly jailed.

The tactics follow the same script: first, the government lures us in with a scheme to make our lives better, our families safer, and our communities more secure, and then once we take the bait, they slam the trap closed and turn "we the people" into Enemy Number One.

Despite how evident it is that we are mere tools to be used and abused and manipulated for the power elite's own diabolical purposes, we somehow fail to see their machinations for what they truly are: thinly veiled attempts to expand their power and wealth at our expense.

So here we are, caught in a vicious cycle of in-fighting and partisan politics, all the while the government—which never stops shaking the jar—is advancing its agenda to lockdown the nation.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), until we can face up to that truth and forge our own path back to a world in which freedom means something again, we're going to be stuck in this wormhole of populist anger, petty politics and destruction that is pitting us one against the other.

In that scenario, no one wins, whether you live in a small town or big city.

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