



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on August 21, 2010

Don't Say We Didn't Warn You: RFID-embedded Bins in Cleveland

What was once a laughable plot of a late night science fiction movie, this nightmare of secret government implantation of microchips and the clandestine gathering of intimate information is now a reality in the United Kingdom and is not beyond the realm of possibility in the United States. It is certain that somewhere there is an American bureaucrat with a penchant for privacy pilfering that is slaving over the power granted by eco-fascists to his British cousins. For that reason, it is imperative that Americans refuse steadfastly to slouch along the constantly monitored path to servitude that is being set out for our fellow Anglophones.



Those were the now-prophetic words written by this author in March of this year in [a story](#) describing the surreptitious implantation of microchips in the trashcans of 2.6 million Britons ostensibly to encourage them to recycle. The monitors were placed in the bins without the knowledge of the owners, and the data collected from them were transmitted to local government computers and collated with additional personal information gathered from other sources.

Not content with sending us their cheddar cheese and their tea, the English have now exported their terrifying trash technology to the United States. In a story almost too chilling to believe, [The Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) exposed a new program that the City of Cleveland is set to roll out next year to make sure residents are going green.

On August 18, the Cleveland City Council announced that it had approved a \$2.5 million budget request for the high-tech carts for 25,000 customers. The recycling carts will contain a radio frequency identification (RFID) chip that will send a signal to the city's waste management department every time the recycling cart is rolled to the curb. If too much time passes without a signal being received, the city will send out a "trash supervisor" to rifle through the trash in search of recyclable items.

If the rubbish regulators find that the regular trash cart contains more than 10 percent recyclable material, then a \$100 fine could be imposed on the guilty planet haters.

In response to questions about the program (begun in a limited roll out in 2007), city officials stated that 25,000 RFID-embedded carts would be delivered every year until every one of the city's residents have one. If the funds are there, moreover, the city will retrofit older carts with the chips so that no one's garbage-disposal habits escape detection.

The Plain Dealer piece mentions that the monitoring devices are already in use in other American cities (Alexandria, Virginia, for example) and in England.

Officials in Cleveland, as those in England before them, assured residents that the RFID chips were



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being attached to the carts in order to improve efficiency. “Recycling is good for the environment and the city’s bottom line,” Cleveland city leaders told *The Plain Dealer*.

The final paragraph of the article published in *The New American* over five months ago is particularly timely in light of the developments in Cleveland and elsewhere. As Americans, we must be wary of the unblinking eye of government being cast on us at every turn. We must boldly refuse to slouch along the constantly monitored path to serfdom. As was said in March:

We must vigilantly watch for any such proposals that percolate up from our local authorities and heed well the wise words spoken over 2,000 years ago by Cicero, the famed Roman orator and defender of liberty, “An evil is most easily killed in its infancy.”



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