




# Break the Cycle: In 2024, Say No to the Government's Cruelty, Brutality and Abuse

*[“The greater the power, the more dangerous the abuse.”](#)*—Edmund Burke 

John Whitehead

Folks, it's time to break the cycle of abuses—cruel, brutal, immoral, unconstitutional and unacceptable—that have been heaped upon us by the government for way too long.

Here's just a small sampling of what we suffered through in 2023.

**The government failed to protect our lives, liberty and happiness.** The predators of the police state wreaked havoc on our freedoms, our communities, and our lives. The government didn't listen to the citizenry, refused to abide by the Constitution, and treated the citizenry as a source of funding and little else. Police officers shot unarmed citizens and their household pets. Government agents—including local police—were armed to the teeth and encouraged to act like soldiers on a battlefield. Bloated government agencies were allowed to fleece taxpayers. Government technicians spied on our emails and phone calls. And government contractors made a killing by waging endless wars abroad.

**The president became more imperial.** Although the Constitution invests the President with very specific, limited powers, in recent years, American presidents have claimed the power to completely and almost unilaterally alter the landscape of this country for good or for ill. The powers amassed by each successive president through the negligence of Congress and the courts—powers which add up to a toolbox of terror for an imperial ruler—empower whoever occupies the Oval Office to act as a dictator, above the law and beyond any real accountability. The presidency itself has become an imperial one with permanent powers.

**The cost of endless wars drove the nation deeper into debt.** Policing the globe and waging endless wars abroad hasn't made America—or the rest of the world—any safer, but it has made the military industrial complex rich at taxpayer expense.

**The courts failed to uphold justice.** Time and time again, the Supreme Court failed to right the wrongs being meted out by the American police state. A review of critical court rulings over the past decade or so, including some ominous ones by the U.S. Supreme Court, reveals a startling and steady trend towards pro-police state rulings by an institution concerned more with establishing order and protecting the ruling class and government agents than with upholding the rights enshrined in the Constitution.

**The Surveillance State rendered Americans vulnerable to threats from government spies, police, hackers and power failures.** Thanks to the government's ongoing efforts to build massive databases using emerging surveillance, DNA and biometrics technologies, Americans became sitting ducks for hackers and government spies alike. Billions of people have been affected by data breaches and cyberattacks. On a daily basis, Americans were made to relinquish the most intimate details of who we are—our biological makeup, our genetic blueprints, and our biometrics (facial characteristics and structure, fingerprints, iris scans, etc.)—in order to navigate an increasingly technologically-enabled world. The Department of Homeland Security, which has led the charge to create a Surveillance State, has continued to deploy mandatory facial recognition scans at airports and gather biometric data on American travelers. Police were gifted with new surveillance gadgets. The Corporate State tapped into



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our computer keyboards, cameras, cell phones and smart devices in order to better target us for advertising. Social media giants such as Facebook granted secret requests by the government and its agents for access to users' accounts. And our private data—methodically collected and stored with or without our say-so—was repeatedly compromised and breached.

**Mass shootings claimed more lives.** Mass shootings have taken place at churches, in nightclubs, on college campuses, on military bases, in elementary schools, in government offices, and at concerts. In almost every instance, you can connect the dots back to the military-industrial complex, which continues to dominate, dictate and shape almost every aspect of our lives.

**The rich got richer, and the poor went to jail.** Not content to expand the police state's power to search, strip, seize, raid, steal from, arrest and jail Americans for any infraction, no matter how insignificant, the courts continued their practice of jailing individuals who are unable to pay the hefty fines imposed by the American police state. These debtors' prisons play right into the hands of those who make a profit by jailing Americans. This is no longer a government "of the people, by the people, for the people." It is fast becoming a government "of the rich, by the elite, for the corporations," and its rise to power is predicated on shackling the American taxpayer to a debtors' prison guarded by a phalanx of politicians, bureaucrats and militarized police with no hope of parole and no chance for escape.

**"Show your papers" incidents skyrocketed.** We are not supposed to be living in a "[show me your papers](#)" society. Despite this, the U.S. government has introduced measures allowing police and other law enforcement officials to stop individuals (citizens and noncitizens alike), demand they identify themselves, and subject them to patdowns, warrantless searches, and interrogations.

**Free speech was dealt one knock-out punch after another.** Protest laws, free speech zones, bubble zones, trespass zones, anti-bullying legislation, zero tolerance policies, hate crime laws and a host of other legalistic maladies dreamed up by politicians and prosecutors (and championed by those who want to suppress speech with which they might disagree) conspired to corrode our core freedoms, purportedly for our own good. On paper—at least according to the U.S. Constitution—we are technically free to speak. In reality, however, we were only as free to speak as a government official—or corporate entities such as Facebook, Google or YouTube—allowed. The reasons for such censorship varied widely from political correctness, safety concerns and bullying to national security and hate crimes but the end result remained the same: the complete eradication of free speech.

**Police became even more militarized and weaponized.** Despite concerns about the government's steady transformation of local police into a standing military army, local police agencies continued to acquire weaponry, training and equipment suited for the battlefield. There are now reportedly more bureaucratic (non-military) government civilians armed with high-tech, deadly weapons than U.S. Marines.

**Schools turned into prisons.** So-called school "safety" policies, which run the gamut from zero tolerance policies that punish all infractions harshly to surveillance cameras, metal detectors, random searches, drug-sniffing dogs, school-wide lockdowns, active-shooter drills and militarized police officers, turned schools into prisons and young people into prisoners.

**The government waged a renewed war on private property.** The battle to protect our private property has become the final constitutional frontier, the last holdout against our freedoms being usurped. We no longer have any real property rights. That house you live in, the car you drive, the small



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(or not so small) acreage of land that has been passed down through your family or that you scrimped and saved to acquire, whatever money you manage to keep in your bank account after the government and its cronies have taken their first and second and third cut...none of it is safe from the government's greedy grasp. At no point do you ever have any real ownership in anything other than the clothes on your back. Everything else can be seized by the government under one pretext or another (civil asset forfeiture, unpaid taxes, eminent domain, public interest, etc.).

**The plight of the nation's homeless worsened.** In communities across the country, legislators adopted a variety of methods (parking meters, zoning regulations, tickets, and even robots) to discourage the homeless from squatting, loitering and panhandling. One of the most common—and least discussed—practices: homeless relocation programs that bus the homeless outside city limits.

**The government waged war on military veterans.** The government has done a pitiful job of respecting the freedoms of military veterans and caring for their needs once out of uniform. The plight of veterans today is America's badge of shame, with large numbers of veterans impoverished, unemployed, traumatized mentally and physically, struggling with depression, suicide, and marital stress, homeless, subjected to sub-par treatment at clinics and hospitals, left to mold while their paperwork piles up within Veterans Administration offices, and increasingly treated like criminals—targeted for surveillance, censorship, threatened with incarceration or involuntary commitment, labeled as extremists and/or mentally ill, and stripped of their Second Amendment rights—for daring to speak out against government misconduct.

**The Deep State took over.** The American system of representative government was overthrown by the Deep State—a.k.a. the police state a.k.a. the military industrial complex—a profit-driven, militaristic corporate state bent on total control and global domination through the imposition of martial law here at home and by fomenting wars abroad. When in doubt, follow the money trail. It always points the way. The takeaway: Everything the founders of this country feared has come to dominate in modern America.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), if freedom is to survive at all, "we the people" must refuse to allow the government's abusive behavior to be our new normal.

There is nothing *normal* about egregious surveillance, roadside strip searches, police shootings of unarmed citizens, censorship, retaliatory arrests, the criminalization of lawful activities, warmongering, indefinite detentions, SWAT team raids, asset forfeiture, police brutality, profit-driven prisons, or pay-to-play politicians.

Let's not take the mistakes, carnage, toxicity and abuse of this past year into 2024.

As long as we continue to allow callousness, cruelty, meanness, immorality, ignorance, hatred, intolerance, racism, militarism, materialism, meanness and injustice—magnified by an echo chamber of nasty tweets and government-sanctioned brutality—to trump justice, fairness and equality, there can be no hope of prevailing against the police state.

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