



The White House Goes Rogue: Secret Surveillance Program Breaks All the Laws

*We are rapidly entering the age of no privacy, where everyone is open to surveillance at all times; where there are no secrets from government. — William O. Douglas, dissenting in *Osborn v. United States* (1966)*



John Whitehead

The government wants us to believe that we have nothing to fear from its mass spying programs as long as we've done nothing wrong.

Don't believe it.

It doesn't matter whether you obey every law. The government's definition of a "bad" guy is extraordinarily broad, and it results in the warrantless surveillance of innocent, law-abiding Americans on a staggering scale.

For instance, it was recently revealed that the White House, relying on a set of privacy loopholes, has been sidestepping the Fourth Amendment by paying AT&T to allow federal, state, and local law enforcement to access—without a warrant—the [phone records of Americans who are not suspected of a crime](#).

This goes way beyond the NSA's metadata collection program.

Operated during the Obama, Trump and now the Biden presidencies, this [secret dragnet surveillance](#) program (formerly known as Hemisphere and now dubbed Data Analytical Services) uses its association with the White House to sidestep a vast array of privacy and transparency laws.

According to Senator Ron Wyden, Hemisphere has been operating without any oversight for more than a decade under the guise of cracking down on drug traffickers.

This is how the government routinely breaks the law and gets away with it: in the so-called name of national security.

More than [a trillion domestic phone records are mined through this mass surveillance program](#) every year, warrantlessly targeting not only those suspected of criminal activity but *anyone* with whom they might have contact, including spouses, children, parents, and friends.

It's not just law enforcement agencies investigating drug crimes who are using Hemisphere to sidestep the Fourth Amendment, either. Those who have received training on the program reportedly [include postal workers, prison officials, highway patrol officers, border cops, and the National Guard](#).

It's a program ripe for abuse, and you can bet it's getting abused.

Surveillance, digital stalking and the data mining of the American people—weapons of compliance and control in the government's hands—haven't made America any safer, and they certainly aren't helping



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to preserve our freedoms.

Indeed, America will never be safe as long as the U.S. government is allowed to shred the Constitution.

The Fourth Amendment was intended to serve as a protective forcefield around our persons, our property, our activities, our communications and our movements. It keeps the government out of our private business except in certain, extenuating circumstances.

Those extenuating circumstances are spelled out clearly: government officials must have probable cause that criminal activity is afoot (a higher legal standard than “reasonable suspicion”), which is required by the Constitution before any government official can search an individual or his property.

Unfortunately, all three branches of government—the legislatures, courts and executive offices—have given the police state all kinds of leeway when it comes to sidestepping the Fourth Amendment.

As a result, on a daily basis, Americans are already being 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 clear the nearly insurmountable hurdle that increasingly defines life in the United States: we are now guilty until proven innocent.

Warrantless, dragnet surveillance is the manifestation of a lawless government that has gone rogue in its determination to do whatever it wants, whenever it wants, the Constitution be damned.

Dragnet surveillance. Geofencing. Fusion centers. Smart devices. Behavioral threat assessments. Terror watch lists. Facial recognition. Snitch tip lines. Biometric scanners. Pre-crime. DNA databases. Data mining. Precognitive technology. Contact tracing apps.

What these add up to is a world in which, on any given day, the average person is now monitored, surveilled, spied on and tracked in more than 20 different ways by both government and corporate eyes and ears.

This creepy new era of government/corporate spying—in which we’re being listened to, watched, tracked, followed, mapped, bought, sold and targeted every second of every day—has been made possible by a global army of techno-tyrants, electronic eavesdroppers, robotic snoops and digital Peeping Toms.

The government has a veritable arsenal of surveillance tools to track our movements, monitor our spending, and sniff out all the ways in which our thoughts, actions and social circles might land us on the government’s naughty list, whether or not you’ve done anything wrong.

Rounding out the list of ways in which the Techno-Corporate State and the U.S. government are colluding to nullify the privacy rights of the individual is the Biden Administration’s [latest drive to harness the power of artificial intelligence technologies](#) while claiming to protect the citizenry from harm.

In his [executive order on artificial intelligence](#), President Biden is calling for guidelines on how the government will use AI while simultaneously insisting that corporations protect consumer privacy.

Talk about ironic that the very government that has been covertly invading our privacy rights wants to appoint itself the guardian of those rights.

Tell me this: how do you trust a government that continuously sidesteps the Constitution and undermines our rights? You can’t.



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A government that repeatedly lies, cheats, steals, spies, kills, maims, enslaves, breaks the laws, overreaches its authority, and abuses its power at almost every turn can't be trusted.

At a minimum, you shouldn't trust the government with your privacy, property or freedoms.

Whatever else it may be—a danger, a menace, a threat—the U.S. government is certainly not looking out for our best interests.

Remember, the purpose of a good government is to protect the lives and liberties of its people.

Unfortunately, what we have been saddled with is, in almost every regard, the exact opposite of an institution dedicated to protecting the lives and liberties of its people.

Indeed, the government has a history of shamelessly exploiting national emergencies for its own nefarious purposes.

Terrorist attacks, mass shootings, civil unrest, economic instability, pandemics, natural disasters: the government has been taking advantage of such crises for years now in order to gain greater power over an unsuspecting and largely gullible populace.

That's exactly where we find ourselves now: caught in the crosshairs of a showdown between the rights of the individual and the so-called "emergency" state.

All of those freedoms we cherish—the ones enshrined in the Constitution, the ones that affirm our right to free speech and assembly, due process, privacy, bodily integrity, the right to not have police seize our property without a warrant, or search and detain us without probable cause—amount to nothing when the government and its agents are allowed to disregard those prohibitions on government overreach at will.

This is the grim reality of life in the American police state: our so-called rights have been reduced to technicalities in the face of the government's ongoing power grabs.

While surveillance may span a broad spectrum of methods and scenarios, the common denominator remains the same: a complete disregard for the 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 the Constitution means nothing.

Any attempt by the government to encroach upon the citizenry's privacy rights or establish a system by which the populace can be targeted, tracked, monitored and singled out must be met with extreme caution.

Dragnet surveillance in an age of pre-crime policing and overcriminalization is basically a fishing expedition carried out without a warrant, a blatant attempt to circumvent the Fourth Amendment's warrant requirement and prohibition on unreasonable searches and seizures.

What we need is a digital "No Trespassing" sign that protects our privacy rights and affirms our right to be left alone.

Then again, as I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), what we really need is a government that respects the rights of the citizenry and obeys the law.



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