

## A Cautionary Tale?

History is interesting. I just read some articles and wrote an assignment on Feudalism in Carolingian France. Given our current economic state, I feel it is possible that we could devolve into a group of feudal/serfdom states.

Everyone says that America is free, but how free are we really? Can you live in your house without paying rent or mortgage? Can you grow enough food on your property to survive and not pay extra taxes or get permits to do so? Can we move onto state property (any forest or mountain), build a cabin, and then live a life off the grid?

We have bought into more neat little gizmos that allow us greater accessibility, and consequently dissolve our Fourth Amendment rights as these technologies (and the corporate service providers) collaborate with intelligence agencies that gather our information.

The notion that a group of people is listening in on our calls is antiquated at best. The information hubs owned and operated by companies like Verizon manage millions of phone, fax, email, and Internet activity daily. George W. Bush gave amnesty to all of the communication companies who have co-operated with the Federal government in redirecting all of that information to National Security Agency (NSA) supercomputers (no, not computers wearing capes and flying around...I am talking about huge capacity mainframe computers).

These computers have specially designed Artificial intelligence (AI) software that analyzes every transmission for keywords, word associations, and patterns. Each transmission is catalogued and stored for future reference. Anything that is deemed suspicious is red flagged and reviewed (with all associated data) by a human analyst. Everything is stored and correlated using advanced social networking analytics. All of our medical records, financial transactions, job and education histories, Internet activity, and photos from our cell phones...everything that we share the NSA analyzes, catalogues, and stores.

The way our justice system works, if a crime is committed a list of suspects are developed by the police and each lead is reviewed; a suspect is questioned and if the detective feels he has something to pursue a warrant is then issued and evidence or lack thereof) is gathered. A case is built and the person who the police believe is guilty is brought to trial so long as there is sufficient evidence to support such a claim.

Now, since George W. Bush and his corrupt cabinet have altered that, information is already housed by the NSA with no oversight and can be used to coerce or charge American citizens with real or imagined crimes. Thus, any one of us can be blackmailed if we choose to go into office. Any one of us can be detained indefinitely and tortured if someone in the government chooses to label us as terrorists. Ask yourself this...what is the difference between treason and dissent? Everyone has his or her opinion on this and a corrupt administration (such as George W Bush's) would gather a legal team (just as Bush did) to redefine the laws according to their agenda.

Now the Federal government can enter your home without a warrant, search your papers and computer for anything they feel is pertinent, with barely any oversight from Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA). The cost of food, clothing and housing is on the rise and has been for as long as I can recall. People are losing

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their jobs to outsourcing firms and company bankruptcy. The average wage is falling because of competition from India, China, and yes, even prison labor. How long will it take before the average citizen begins to revolt? How many families will become homeless or go hungry before they react? Unbelievably, the Bush Administration saw fit to deploy Blackwater after Hurricane Katrina to protect property from looters. In other words, a force of mercenaries was deployed with flak jackets and automatic weapons against American civilians in a disaster area. Why? The answer is that the capital of investors is more important than the lives of citizens. If you think my statement is cynical and untrue, check the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) laws concerning what a company is bound to do by law if controlling shareholders demand that the company be sold. The employees do not have a say and are not even considered.

How free are?

Property will only be sold to those who can afford it, and rightfully so. Nevertheless, there are also many obstacles for people to overcome to buy a home, the first of which is credit. I will discuss the corruption rampant in the credit industry another time, but I do not think there is one person reading this who is unaffected by credit scores. Then there are also local levies to pay, permits, and paying of officials to “ensure” your house is livable according to several standards (as opposed to a box in the Boston Commons).

As lending companies work with fewer poor and middle class citizens, corporations and wealthy people will consume all of the property. Add to that, the amount of foreclosures annually (on the rise) and you have a huge migration of capital from the masses to the elite cabals of wealthy investors.

Now imagine that instead of traditional jobs that pay less than a livable wage, we are given the privilege of living on a parcel of land granted to us under contract agreement that we will work (serve) in one of the industries owned by the endowment source, but not for money per se. They will provide the food and clothing we need and all of it will be deducted from our earnings. Everything we work for will be issued as a line of credit with immediate needs (food, shelter/rent, utilities, etc) deducted before you even get a chance to say no.

I don't predict it, but this is not outside the realm of possibility. It certainly would make a good book and a cautionary tale.