



Evil Walks Among Us: Monsters With Human Faces Wreak Havoc on Our Freedoms

“But these weren’t the kind of monsters that had tentacles and rotting skin, the kind a seven-year-old might be able to wrap his mind around—they were monsters with human faces, in crisp uniforms, marching in lockstep, so banal you don’t recognize them for what they are until it’s too late.” — Ransom Riggs, *Miss Peregrine’s Home for Peculiar Children*



John Whitehead

Enough already.

Enough with the distractions. Enough with the partisan jousting.

Enough with the sniping and name-calling and mud-slinging that do nothing to make this country safer or freer or more just.

We have let the government’s evil-doing, its abuses, power grabs, brutality, meanness, inhumanity, immorality, greed, corruption, debauchery and tyranny go on for too long.

We are approaching a reckoning.

This is the point, as the poet W. B. Yeats warned, when things fall apart and [anarchy is loosed upon the world](#).

We have seen this convergence before in Hitler’s Germany, in Stalin’s Russia, in Mussolini’s Italy, and in Mao’s China: the rise of strongmen and demagogues, the ascendancy of profit-driven politics over deep-seated principles, the warring nationalism that seeks to divide and conquer, the callous disregard for basic human rights and dignity, and the silence of people who should know better.

Yet no matter how many times the world has been down this road before, we can’t seem to avoid repeating the deadly mistakes of the past.

This is not just playing out on a national and international scale. It is wreaking havoc at the most immediate level, as well, creating rifts and polarities within families and friends, neighborhoods and communities that keep the populace warring among themselves and incapable of presenting a united front in the face of the government’s goose-stepping despotism.

We labor today under the weight of countless tyrannies, large and small, disguised as “the better good,” marketed as benevolence, enforced with armed police, and carried out by an elite class of government officials who are largely insulated from the ill effects of their actions.

For too long now, the American people have rationalized turning a blind eye to all manner of government wrongdoing—asset forfeiture schemes, corruption, surveillance, endless wars, SWAT team raids, militarized police, profit-driven private prisons, and so on—because they were the so-called lesser



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of two evils.

Yet the unavoidable truth is that the government—through its acts of power grabs, brutality, meanness, inhumanity, immorality, greed, corruption, debauchery and tyranny—has become almost indistinguishable from the evil it claims to be fighting, whether that evil takes the form of [terrorism](#), torture, [drug trafficking](#), [sex trafficking](#), murder, violence, theft, pornography, [scientific experiments](#) or some other diabolical means of inflicting pain, suffering and servitude on humanity.

At its core, this is not a debate about politics, or constitutionalism, or even tyranny disguised as law-and-order. This is a condemnation of the monsters with human faces who walk among us.

Many of them work for the U.S. government.

This is the premise of [John Carpenter's film *They Live*](#), which was released thirty-five years ago and remains unnervingly, chillingly appropriate for our modern age.

Best known for his horror film *Halloween*, which assumes that there is a form of evil so dark that it can't be killed, Carpenter's larger body of work is infused with a strong anti-authoritarian, anti-establishment, laconic bent that speaks to the filmmaker's concerns about the unraveling of our society, particularly our government.

Time and again, Carpenter portrays the government working against its own citizens, [a populace out of touch with reality](#), technology run amok, and a future more horrific than any horror film.

In *Escape from New York*, Carpenter presents fascism as the future of America.

In *The Thing*, a remake of the 1951 sci-fi classic of the same name, Carpenter presupposes that increasingly we are all becoming dehumanized.

In *Christine*, the film adaptation of Stephen King's novel about a demon-possessed car, technology exhibits a will and consciousness of its own and goes on a murderous rampage.

In *In the Mouth of Madness*, Carpenter notes that evil grows when people lose "the ability to know the difference between reality and fantasy."

And then there is Carpenter's *They Live*, in which two migrant workers discover that the world is not as it seems. In fact, the population is actually being controlled and exploited by aliens working in partnership with an oligarchic elite. All the while, the populace—blissfully unaware of the real agenda at work in their lives—has been lulled into complacency, indoctrinated into compliance, bombarded with media distractions, and hypnotized by subliminal messages beamed out of television and various electronic devices, billboards and the like.

It is only when homeless drifter John Nada (played to the hilt by the [late Roddy Piper](#)) discovers a pair of doctored sunglasses—Hoffman lenses—that Nada sees what lies beneath the elite's fabricated reality: control and bondage.

When viewed through the lens of truth, the elite, who appear human until stripped of their disguises, are shown to be monsters who have enslaved the citizenry in order to prey on them.

Likewise, [billboards blare out hidden, authoritative messages](#): a bikini-clad woman in one ad is actually ordering viewers to "MARRY AND REPRODUCE." Magazine racks scream "CONSUME" and "OBEY." A wad of dollar bills in a vendor's hand proclaims, "THIS IS YOUR GOD."

When viewed through Nada's Hoffman lenses, some of the other hidden messages being drummed into



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the people's subconscious include: NO INDEPENDENT THOUGHT, CONFORM, SUBMIT, STAY ASLEEP, BUY, WATCH TV, NO IMAGINATION, and DO NOT QUESTION AUTHORITY.

This indoctrination campaign engineered by the elite in *They Live* is painfully familiar to anyone who has studied the decline of American culture.

A citizenry that does not think for themselves, obeys without question, is submissive, does not challenge authority, does not think outside the box, and is content to sit back and be entertained is a citizenry that can be easily controlled.

In this way, the subtle message of *They Live* provides an apt analogy of our own distorted vision of life in the American police state, what philosopher Slavoj Žižek refers to as [dictatorship in democracy](#), "the invisible order which sustains your apparent freedom."

Tune out the government's attempts to distract, divert and befuddle us and tune into what's really going on in this country, and you'll run headlong into an unmistakable, unpalatable truth: what we are dealing with today is an authoritarian beast that has outgrown its chains and will not be restrained.

We're being fed a series of carefully contrived fictions that bear no resemblance to reality.

Despite the fact that we are 17,600 times more likely to die from heart disease than from a terrorist attack; 11,000 times more likely to die from an airplane accident than from a terrorist plot involving an airplane; 1,048 times more likely to die from a car accident than a terrorist attack, and [8 times more likely to be killed by a police officer than by a terrorist](#), we have handed over control of our lives to government officials who treat us as a means to an end—the source of money and power.

As the Bearded Man in *They Live* warns, "They are dismantling the sleeping middle class. More and more people are becoming poor. We are their cattle. We are being bred for slavery."

We have bought into the illusion and refused to grasp the truth.

From the moment we are born until we die, we are indoctrinated into believing that those who rule us do it for our own good. The truth is far different.

The powers-that-be want us to feel threatened by forces beyond our control (terrorists, pandemics, mass shootings, etc.).

They want us afraid and dependent on the government and its militarized armies for our safety and well-being.

They want us distrustful of each other, divided by our prejudices, and at each other's throats.

We are little more than expendable resources to be used, abused and discarded.

In fact, a study conducted by Princeton and Northwestern University concluded that the [U.S. government does not represent the majority of American citizens](#). Instead, the study found that the government is ruled by the rich and powerful, or the so-called "economic elite." Moreover, the researchers concluded that policies enacted by this governmental elite nearly always favor special interests and lobbying groups.

In other words, we are being [ruled by an oligarchy](#) disguised as a democracy, and arguably on our way towards fascism—a form of government where private corporate interests rule, money calls the shots, and the people are seen as mere subjects to be controlled.

Rest assured that when and if fascism finally takes hold in America, the basic forms of government will



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remain: Fascism will appear to be friendly. The legislators will be in session. There will be elections, and the news media will continue to cover the entertainment and political trivia. Consent of the governed, however, will no longer apply. Actual control will have finally passed to the oligarchic elite controlling the government behind the scenes.

Sound familiar?

Clearly, we are now ruled by an oligarchic elite of governmental and corporate interests.

We have moved into “corporatism” ([favored by Benito Mussolini](#)), which is a halfway point on the road to full-blown fascism.

Corporatism is where the few moneyed interests—not elected by the citizenry—rule over the many. In this way, it is not a democracy or a republican form of government, which is what the American government was established to be. It is a top-down form of government and one which has a terrifying history typified by the developments that occurred in totalitarian regimes of the past: police states where everyone is watched and spied on, rounded up for minor infractions by government agents, placed under police control, and placed in detention (a.k.a. concentration) camps.

For the final hammer of fascism to fall, it will require the most crucial ingredient: the majority of the people will have to agree that it’s not only expedient but necessary.

But why would a people agree to such an oppressive regime?

The answer is the same in every age: fear.

[Fear makes people stupid.](#)

Fear is the method most often used by politicians to increase the power of government. And, as most social commentators recognize, an atmosphere of fear permeates modern America: fear of terrorism, fear of the police, fear of our neighbors and so on.

The propaganda of fear has been used quite effectively by those who want to gain control, and it is transforming the populace into fearful, compliant, pacified zombies content to march in lockstep with the government’s dictates.

This brings me back to *They Live*, in which the real zombies are not the aliens calling the shots but the populace who are content to remain controlled.

When all is said and done, the world of *They Live* is not so different from our own. As one of the characters points out, “The poor and the underclass are growing. Racial justice and human rights are nonexistent. They have created a repressive society, and we are their unwitting accomplices. Their intention to rule rests with the annihilation of consciousness. We have been lulled into a trance. They have made us indifferent to ourselves, to others. We are focused only on our own gain.”

We, too, are focused only on our own pleasures, prejudices and gains. Our poor and underclasses are also growing. Injustice is growing. Inequality is growing. A concern for human rights is nearly nonexistent. We too have been lulled into a trance, indifferent to others.

Oblivious to what lies ahead, we’ve been manipulated into believing that if we continue to consume, obey, and have faith, things will work out. But that’s never been true of emerging regimes. And by the time we feel the hammer coming down upon us, it will be too late.

So where does that leave us?



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The characters who populate Carpenter's films provide some insight.

Underneath their machismo, they still believe in the ideals of liberty and equal opportunity. Their beliefs place them in constant opposition with the law and the establishment, but they are nonetheless freedom fighters.

When, for example, John Nada destroys the alien hypno-transmitter in *They Live*, he delivers a wake-up call for freedom. As Nada memorably declares, "I have come here to chew bubblegum and kick ass. And I'm all out of bubblegum."

In other words: we need to get active and take a stand for what's really important.

Stop allowing yourselves to be easily distracted by pointless political spectacles and pay attention to what's really going on in the country.

As I make clear in my book [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), the real battle for control of this nation is taking place on roadsides, in police cars, on witness stands, over phone lines, in government offices, in corporate offices, in public school hallways and classrooms, in parks and city council meetings, and in towns and cities across this country.

All the trappings of the American police state are now in plain sight.

Wake up, America.

If they live (the tyrants, the oppressors, the invaders, the overlords), it is only because "we the people" sleep.

ABOUT JOHN & NISHA WHITEHEAD:

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