



Written by [John and Nisha Whitehead](#) on March 27, 2026

## The Stealing of America: You're Not a Citizen — You're a Revenue Stream for the Power Elite

You're not imagining it.

Everything costs more. Everything is monitored.

Everything feels like it's designed to take — from your wallet, your time, your freedom.

That's because it is.

The government has turned everyday life into a revenue stream — funding endless wars, bloated agencies, surveillance systems, and profit-driven policing... all on your dime.

You're not just paying taxes. You're paying to be watched. Paying to be policed. Paying to be controlled.

This isn't government. It's a business model.

By now, it has become painfully clear that the only economic plan being advanced by the Trump administration is [the kind that enriches the oligarchy at the expense of everyone else](#).

This is Donald Trump's "let them eat cake" moment.

Tens of millions in one year alone for the president's weekend golf trips while [government agencies are dismantled](#) and tens of thousands of federal workers have their jobs slashed. According to the web tracker "Did Trump Golf Today?" [Trump has spent 23.5% of his presidency golfing](#) at an estimated cost of \$141 million to the taxpayer.

An [extra \\$200 billion in additional defense funding](#) so Pete Hegseth can make a game out of war with Iran. More than \$16 billion was spent in the first 12 days of Trump's war on Iran. That does not include the rising cost of gas and consumer goods or the long-term costs of supporting those injured in the war.

[\\$1 billion to a French company to not develop two wind projects](#) off the coasts of North Carolina and New York.

[\\$14 billion in oil revenue to Iran](#) to fund its war with the U.S.

[\\$22 million in one month on lobsters and ribeye steak](#) so the Defense Department wouldn't have to risk losing some of their taxpayer-funded budget. \$1.8 million for musical instruments, including a "[\\$98,329 Steinway & Sons grand piano for the Air Force chief of staff's home](#)", a \$26,000 violin, and a \$21,750 custom handmade flute from the luxury Japanese brand Muramatsu."

[\\$400 million for a 90,000-square-foot ballroom](#) to which most taxpayers will never be invited.

[\\$75 - \\$150 million to turn a public golf course into a championship-level golf course](#) in the nation's capital.

[\\$100 million for a 250-foot "Arc de Trump"](#) next to Arlington National Cemetery.



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At least [\\$60 million for a UFC event on the White House South Lawn](#) to commemorate Donald Trump's 80<sup>th</sup> birthday.

While members of Trump's inner circle dine on lobster and filet mignon, Robert F. Kennedy Jr. suggests that Americans struggling with the high cost of beef instead [buy and eat "cheap cuts" like liver](#).

Meanwhile, the rest of the country is left to absorb a [higher cost of living driven by Trump's tariffs, inflation, and economic policies](#) that punish the many to benefit the few.

At every turn, the Trump administration's claims of slashing government spending have translated into even greater expense for the taxpayer with little to nothing to show for it.

All of those DOGE layoffs may have reduced the size of the federal workforce on paper, but in reality they have resulted in taxpayers footing the bill for [unemployment benefits](#) instead of salaries.

Trump may have dropped oversight into police misconduct — effectively giving a green light to police violence — but [taxpayers will still be forced to pay](#) for every lawsuit and settlement that follows.

In the eyes of Trump and his cohorts, you are not a citizen — you are a revenue stream, and the government is cashing in.

Call it what you will — taxes, penalties, fees, fines, regulations, tariffs, tickets, permits, surcharges, tolls, asset forfeitures — but the only word that truly describes the constant bilking of the American taxpayer by the government and its corporate partners is this: theft.

We're living in a topsy-turvy Sherwood Forest where the government and its corporate allies aren't stealing from the rich to feed the poor — they're stealing from the poor, the middle class, and anyone not politically connected to further enrich the powerful.

The result is as predictable as it is devastating: the poor get poorer, the rich get richer, and the American Dream has been replaced by a surveillance state propped up by endless war, crippling debt, and legalized plunder.

What Americans still fail to grasp is this: if the government can take your property, your income, your privacy, and your freedom at will, you don't have rights — you have privileges.

And privileges can be revoked.

The American police state, with its surveillance cameras, militarized police, SWAT raids, fusion centers, drones, AI tracking systems, predictive policing algorithms, asset forfeiture schemes, and privatized prisons, is not about keeping you safe.

It is about profit.

It is a sprawling, multi-trillion-dollar ecosystem designed to move money from taxpayers through government agencies and into corporate hands, all under the ever-shifting justifications of "security," "law and order," and "national emergency."

The rationalizations never change.

We are told it is about terrorism, drugs, immigration, public safety, or civil unrest. Today, those justifications have simply been expanded to include artificial intelligence, foreign adversaries, domestic extremism, and a permanent state of war abroad.

But these are pretexts.



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The real motive has remained the same for decades: control the population, monetize the system, and keep the money flowing upward.

Follow the money and the truth becomes impossible to ignore: The government isn't serving you. It's billing you.

The same government that claims it cannot afford healthcare, education or housing somehow always finds unlimited funds for war.

And the bill always comes due to the American taxpayer.

In this new economy, you are no longer just a citizen.

You are a revenue stream, a data point, a potential suspect, and a body to be managed.

Whether through taxes, fines, surveillance or forced labor, the system is designed to extract value from you at every stage of your life.

And when you add it all up, the cost is not merely financial — it is constitutional.

Every dollar poured into this machinery comes at the expense of your privacy, your property, your due process rights, your freedom of movement, and your freedom of speech.

As I make clear in [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) and in its fictional counterpart [The Erik Blair Diaries](#), this is the real bottom line: you are paying for the erosion of your own freedoms.

It is time to defund the police state, dismantle the profit incentives, restore constitutional limits, and return power — and resources — to the people.

Because until that happens, the theft will continue.

And the only question left will be how much is left to steal.

## **About John & Nisha Whitehead:**

*Constitutional attorney and author John W. Whitehead is founder and president of The Rutherford Institute. His latest books [The Erik Blair Diaries](#) and [Battlefield America: The War on the American People](#) are available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com). Whitehead can be contacted at [johnw@rutherford.org](mailto:johnw@rutherford.org). Nisha Whitehead is the Executive Director of The Rutherford Institute. Information about The Rutherford Institute is available at [www.rutherford.org](http://www.rutherford.org).*



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