

## The Real Zombies R Us

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“We the people” have become the walking dead of the American police state.



Romero—a filmmaker hailed as the architect of the zombie genre—is [dead at the age of 77](#), but the zombified police state culture he railed against lives on.

Take a good look around today:

We’re still plagued by the socio-political evils of cultural apathy, materialism, domestic militarism and racism that Romero depicted in his Night of the Living Dead trilogy.

Romero’s zombies have taken on a life of their own in pop culture, as well.

Indeed, you don’t have to look very far anymore to find them lurking around every corner: wreaking havoc in movie blockbusters, [running for their lives](#) in 5K charity races, and putting government agents through their paces in [mock military drills](#) arranged by the Dept. of Defense (DOD) and the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

In fact, the CDC put together a [zombie apocalypse preparation kit](#) “that details everything you would need to have on hand in the event the living dead showed up at your front door.”

Zombies also embody the government’s paranoia about the citizenry as potential threats that need to be monitored, tracked, surveilled, sequestered, deterred, vanquished and rendered impotent.

Case in point: in AMC’s hit television series [The Walking Dead](#) and the spinoff Fear the Walking Dead, it’s not just flesh-eating ghouls and cannibalistic humans that survivors have to worry about but the police state “tasked with protecting the vulnerable” that poses some of the gravest threats to the citizenry.

As David Sims writes for the [Atlantic](#):

More than anything, Fear the Walking Dead is a drama about occupation, the breakdown of society, and the ease with which seemingly decent people can decide that might makes right. Like any dystopian fiction, it’s easy to dismiss as fantasy, but remove the

zombies and Fear could be taking place in dozens of real-world locations... This is happening here ... but it could happen anywhere.

Why the fascination with zombies?

Perhaps it's because zombie fiction provides us with a way to "[envision](#) how we and our own would thrive if everything went to hell and we lost all our societal supports." As Time magazine reporter James Poniewozik phrases it, the "[apocalyptic drama](#) lets us face the end of the world once a week and live."

Writing for the New York Times, Terrence Rafferty [notes](#):

In the case of zombie fiction, you have to wonder whether our 21st-century fascination with these hungry hordes has something to do with a general anxiety, particularly in the West, about the planet's dwindling resources: a sense that there are too many people out there, with too many urgent needs, and that eventually these encroaching masses, dimly understood but somehow ominous in their collective appetites, will simply consume us. At this awful, pinched moment of history we look into the future and see a tsunami of want bearing down on us, darkening the sky. The zombie is clearly the right monster for this glum mood, but it's a little disturbing to think that these nonhuman creatures, with their slack, gaping maws, might be serving as metaphors for actual people—undocumented immigrants, say, or the entire populations of developing nations—whose only offense, in most cases, is that their mouths and bellies demand to be filled.

In other words, zombies are the personification of our darkest fears.

Fear and paranoia have become hallmarks of the modern American experience, impacting how we as a nation view the world around us, how we as citizens view each other, and most of all how our government views us.

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 working on the American populace.

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.

We have allowed ourselves to become fearful, controlled, pacified zombies.

Most everyone keeps their heads down these days while staring zombie-like into an electronic screen, even when they're crossing the street. Families sit in restaurants with their heads down, separated by their screen devices and unaware of what's going on around them. Young people

especially seem dominated by the devices they hold in their hands, oblivious to the fact that they can simply push a button, turn the thing off and walk away.

Indeed, there is no larger group activity than that connected with those who watch screens—that is, television, lap tops, personal computers, cell phones and so on. In fact, a Nielsen study reports that American screen viewing is at an all-time high. For example, the average American watches approximately 151 hours of television per month.

Psychologically, such screen consumption is similar to drug addiction. Research shows that regardless of the programming, viewers' brain waves slow down, thus transforming them into a more passive, nonresistant state.

Historically, television has been used by those in authority to quiet discontent and pacify disruptive people. "Faced with severe overcrowding and limited budgets for rehabilitation and counseling, more and more prison officials are using TV to keep inmates quiet," according to Newsweek.

Given that the majority of what Americans watch on television is provided through channels controlled by six mega corporations, what we watch is now controlled by a corporate elite and, if that elite needs to foster a particular viewpoint or pacify its viewers, it can do so on a large scale.

We are being controlled by forces beyond our control.

This is how the police state takes charge.

As the Atlantic notes, "The villains of [Fear the Walking Dead] aren't the zombies, who rarely appear, but the U.S. military, who sweep into an L.A. suburb to quarantine the survivors. Zombies are, after all, a recognizable threat—but Fear plumbs drama and horror from the betrayal by institutions designed to keep people safe."

What we are experiencing is a [betrayal](#) of the very core values—a love of freedom, an adherence to the rule of law, a spirit of democracy, a commitment to accountability and transparency, and a recognition that civilian rule must always trump military methods—that have guided this nation from its inception.

The challenge is not whether we can hold onto our freedoms in times of peace and prosperity, but whether we can do so when all hell breaks loose.

Fear the Walking Dead drives this point home by setting viewers down in the midst of societal unrest not unlike our own current events ("a bunch of weird incidents, police protests, riots, and ... rapid social entropy"). Then, as Forbes reports, "the military showed up and we fast-forwarded into an ad hoc police state with no glimpse at what was happening in the world around our main cast of hapless survivors."

Anyone who has been paying attention knows that it will not take much for the government—i.e., the military—to lock down the nation in the event of a national disaster.

The government is not out to keep us safe by monitoring our communications, tracking our movements, criminalizing our every action, treating us like suspects, and stripping us of our means of defense while equipping its own personnel with an amazing arsenal of weapons.

No, this is not security. It is an ambush. And it is being carried out in plain sight.

For example, for years now, the government has been carrying out military training drills with zombies as the enemy. In 2011, the DOD created a 31-page instruction manual for how to protect America from a terrorist attack carried out by zombie forces. In 2012, the CDC released a guide for surviving a zombie plague. That was followed by training drills for members of the military, police officers and first responders.

The zombie exercises appeared to be kitschy and fun—government agents running around trying to put down a zombie rebellion—but what if the zombies in the exercises are us, the citizenry, viewed by those in power as mindless, voracious, zombie hordes?

Consider this: the government started playing around with the idea of using zombies as stand-ins for enemy combatants in its training drills right around the time the Army War College issued its [2008 report](#), warning that an economic crisis in the U.S. could lead to massive civil unrest that would require the military to intervene and restore order.

That same year, it was revealed that the government had amassed more than 8 million names of Americans considered a threat to national security, to be used “by the military in the event of a national catastrophe, a suspension of the Constitution or the imposition of martial law.” The program’s name, Main Core, refers to the fact that it contains “copies of the ‘main core’ or essence of each item of intelligence information on Americans produced by the FBI and the other agencies of the U.S. intelligence community.”

Also in 2008, the Pentagon launched the Minerva Initiative, a \$75 million military-driven research project focused on studying social behavior in order to determine how best to cope with mass civil disobedience or uprisings. The Minerva Initiative has funded projects such as “Who Does Not Become a Terrorist, and Why?” which “conflates peaceful activists with ‘supporters of political violence’ who are different from terrorists only in that they do not embark on ‘armed militancy’ themselves.”

In 2009, the Dept. of Homeland Security issued its reports on Rightwing and Leftwing Extremism, in which the terms “extremist” and “terrorist” were used interchangeably to describe citizens who were disgruntled or anti-government.

Meanwhile, a government campaign was underway to spy on Americans’ mail, email and cell phone communications. News reports indicate that the U.S. Postal Service has handled more than 150,000 requests by federal and state law enforcement agencies to monitor Americans’ mail, in addition to photographing every piece of mail sent through the postal system.

Fast forward a few years more and you have local police being transformed into extensions of the military, taught to view members of their community as suspects, trained to shoot first and ask questions later, and equipped with all of the technology and weaponry of a soldier on a battlefield.

In 2015, the Obama administration hired a domestic terrorism czar whose job is to focus on anti-government American “extremists” who have been designated a greater threat to America than ISIS or al Qaeda. As part of the government’s so-called war on right-wing extremism, the Obama administration agreed to partner with the United Nations to take part in its Strong Cities Network program, which is training local police agencies across America in how to identify, fight and prevent extremism.

In other words, those who believe in and exercise their rights under the Constitution (namely, the right to speak freely, worship freely, associate with like-minded individuals who share their political

views, criticize the government, own a weapon, demand a warrant before being questioned or searched, or any other activity viewed as potentially anti-government, racist, bigoted, anarchic or sovereign), are now at the top of the government's terrorism watch list.

Earlier this year, it was revealed that the Pentagon has been using a dystopian training video to prepare armed forces to solve future domestic political and social problems which they anticipate arising by 2030. It's only five minutes long, but the military training video says a lot about the government's mindset, the way it views the citizenry, and the so-called "problems" that the military must be prepared to address in the near future, which include criminal networks, illicit economies, decentralized syndicates of crime, substandard infrastructure, religious and ethnic tensions, impoverishment, economic inequality, protesters, slums, open landfills, over-burdened sewers, and a "growing mass of unemployed."

Even more troubling, however, is what this military video doesn't say about the Constitution, about the rights of the citizenry, and about the dangers of using the military to address political and social problems.

Noticing a pattern yet?

"We the people" or, more appropriately, "we the zombies" are the enemy in the eyes of the government.

So when presented with the Defense Department's battle plan for defeating an army of the walking dead, you might find yourself tempted to giggle over the fact that a taxpayer-funded government bureaucrat actually took the time to research and write about vegetarian zombies, evil magic zombies, chicken zombies, space zombies, bio-engineered weaponized zombies, radiation zombies, symbiant-induced zombies, and pathogenic zombies.

However, in an age of extreme government paranoia, this is no laughing matter.

The DOD's strategy for dealing with a zombie uprising, outlined in "CONOP 8888," is for all intents and purposes a training manual for the government in how to put down a citizen uprising or at least an uprising of individuals "infected" with dangerous ideas about freedom.

Rest assured that the tactics and difficulties outlined in the "fictional training scenario" are all too real, beginning with martial law.

So how does the military plan to put down a zombie (a.k.a. disgruntled citizen) uprising?

The strategy manual outlines five phases necessary for a counter-offensive: shape, deter, seize initiative, dominate, stabilize and restore civil authority. Here are a few details:

**Phase 0 (Shape):** Conduct general zombie awareness training. Monitor increased threats (i.e., surveillance). Carry out military drills. Synchronize contingency plans between federal and state agencies. Anticipate and prepare for a breakdown in law and order.

**Phase 1 (Deter):** Recognize that zombies cannot be deterred or reasoned with. Carry out training drills to discourage other countries from developing or deploying attack zombies and publicly reinforce the government's ability to combat a zombie threat. Initiate intelligence sharing between federal and state agencies. Assist the Dept. of Homeland Security in identifying or discouraging immigrants from areas where zombie-related diseases originate.

**Phase 2 (Seize initiative):** Recall all military personal to their duty stations. Fortify all military outposts. Deploy air and ground forces for at least 35 days. Carry out confidence-building measures with nuclear-armed peers such as Russia and China to ensure they do not misinterpret the government's zombie countermeasures as preparations for war. Establish quarantine zones. Distribute explosion-resistant protective equipment. Place the military on red alert. Begin limited scale military operations to combat zombie threats. Carry out combat operations against zombie populations within the United States that were "previously" U.S. citizens.

**Phase 3 (Dominate):** Lock down all military bases for 30 days. Shelter all essential government personnel for at least 40 days. Equip all government agents with military protective gear. Issue orders for military to kill all non-human life on sight. Initiate bomber and missile strikes against targeted sources of zombie infection, including the infrastructure. Burn all zombie corpses. Deploy military to lock down the beaches and waterways.

**Phase 4 (Stabilize):** Send out recon teams to check for remaining threats and survey the status of basic services (water, power, sewage infrastructure, air, and lines of communication). Execute a counter-zombie ISR plan to ID holdout pockets of zombie resistance. Use all military resources to target any remaining regions of zombie holdouts and influence. Continue all actions from the Dominate phase.

**Phase 5 (Restore civil authority):** Deploy military personnel to assist any surviving civil authorities in disaster zones. Reconstitute combat capabilities at various military bases. Prepare to redeploy military forces to attack surviving zombie holdouts. Restore basic services in disaster areas.

Notice the similarities?

Surveillance. Military drills. Awareness training. Militarized police forces. Martial law.

Mind you, the government is not being covert about any of this. It's all out in the open.

If there is any lesson to be learned, it is simply this: as I point out in my [book](#), Battlefield America: The War on the American People, whether the threat to national security comes in the form of actual terrorists, imaginary zombies or disgruntled American citizens infected with dangerous ideas about freedom, the government's response to such threats remains the same: detect, deter and annihilate.

It's time to wake up, America, before you end up with a bullet to the head (the only proven means of killing a zombie).

As television journalist Edward R. Murrow warned in a 1958 [speech](#):

We are currently wealthy, fat, comfortable and complacent. We have currently a built-in allergy to unpleasant or disturbing information. Our mass media reflect this. But unless we get up off our fat surpluses and recognize that television in the main is being used to distract, delude, amuse, and insulate us, then television and those who finance it, those who look at it, and those who work at it, may see a totally different picture too late.

<http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/47482.htm>

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Jungle Drum Prose/Poetry. <http://jungledrum.lingama.net/news/story-2776.html>