WIRING OUR HOMELESS

LOGAN'S RUN: 21ST CENTURY

Mandatory sub-dermal tracking systems to be implanted in New York, San Francisco, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania and Washington DC's Homeless Populations.

By Laura Dawn Lewis

In the movie Logan's Run, all citizens are implanted with a tracking device, which follows their movements once activate. On the day of each person's thirtieth birthday, the tracking devices go off. Any citizen who fails to participate in Carousel, state sanctioned murder packaged as soul renewal and rebirth, is hunted down via this implant and killed by the Sandmen, the state's killing enforcement squad.

Though the Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tags set to be tested and surgically implanted below the skin by the *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services* in the homeless populations of New York, San Francisco, Washington DC and Bethlehem, Pennsylvania are not being used to insure killing as those in Logan's Run, they do turn the most vulnerable people in America into cattle, tagged and monitored like animals. Mandatory, compulsory and not a choice, the RFID tags are miniature radio transmitters the size of a matchstick inserted under the skin that enable police and government social programs to track and document the movements of homeless people electronically.

Positioned as "*A rare opportunity to use advanced technology to meet society's dual objectives of better serving our homeless population while making our cities safer*," by HRSA Administrator Betty James Duke, some may consider this government newspeak designed to quell the general population investigation into the fact that this is a clear violation of our Fourth Amendment right to be secure in our person. It brings up issues in the Fifth Amendment by depriving the homeless of the only thing they have, freedom and liberty. It allows the government to use private property, the body of each homeless person, for public use.

Implanting RFID's would not be an issue if the homeless chose to have this implant, freely without the sacrifice of services, agreeing to all restrictions, including the ability to be monitored and were paid or compensated for participation. Then it is a person's choice. It is a completely different issue when it is required or if a person of diminished capacity accepts it without understanding what he or she is doing. When this is the case, a person is used. The current presentation of this program shows it to be mandatory rather than choice.

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How does one argue that the compulsory implanting of a radio chip under a person's skin is just? Sold to the American public as a necessary tool of public good, one cannot help but reflect on the common saying, "*The road to hell is paved with good intentions*." Abject poverty becomes a societal sin, giving license to the government to monitor your every move. Poverty becomes the sole justification for electronic imprisonment. This is a deprivation of liberty. Making a person a monitored animal entrusts the government with full authority to use any information collected for research purposes or to round up and channel American citizens and non-citizens alike. The homeless RFID program is set to go into effect in five American cities now and possibly nationwide over the next several years.

WHAT EXACTLY ARE RFID'S?

United Press International reported April 1, 2004 that, "Participating states will receive grants of $14 million to $58 million from the federal Projects for Assistance in Transition from Homelessness (PATH) program, which was created under the McKinney Act to fund support services for the homeless. A second phase of the project, scheduled to be completed in early 2005, will wirelessly transmit live information on the locations of homeless people to handheld computers running the Windows CE operating system."

RFID's are currently used in commerce to track purchases, inventory and in some cases consumer behavior by transmitting information via a radio signal that can be picked up by any person with a receiver tuned to that frequency. Ford Motor Company implants RFID's in all tires since 2001 to quickly identify the tires during service. Selected toll roads in Canada use RFID's and Shell Oil implements them in their *EasyPass®* system. Future applications being implemented include United Kingdom's Marks & Spencer's department store's tagging of RFID's onto their clothing. The European Central Bank is working to develop a hair-thin transmitter that can be imbedded in all Euros by 2005 to prevent, the agencies implementing the transmitters in the European currency state, laundering, black market transactions and bribery. In Tokyo, RFID's are being tested to monitor peoples in-store reading habits at bookstores and newsstands, supposedly for market research and the Western Beef Development Center in Canada implanted 292 calves to track the animals from growth through slaughter.

Like the cattle in Canada, the HRSA proposes implanting RFID's in homeless people to better track them, for his or her own good of course. The general reaction of most Americans in this age of transparent civil liberties coagulate around the idea that if this makes us "safer" the infringement remains just.

TARGETING SOCIETY'S WEAKEST:

In Nazi Germany, Hitler first went after society's most vulnerable, the mentally ill, homosexuals and handicap. The mentally ill, loose in society often caused problems and can be a danger to others and themselves through no fault of their own. To his "Great

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society", they were as much of an embarrassment as an inconvenience. Convincing the German people their safety would be greatly enhanced if these problem people were removed from society, his policies of containment and execution began. Soon Catholics, gypsies, communists, Poles and Jews would find themselves targets. TOP

How he soothed the German society into compliance illustrates classic conditioning. Hitler tested the waters on policies, acclimating the population slowly toward acceptance, beginning with the smallest, least able to defend itself portions of society, the mentally ill. Ironically, the majority of America's homeless suffer from mental illness, handicaps or addiction. Far more concerning is the fact that thirty-six percent of homeless people are families with children under the age of eighteen.

Reading through the escalation of persecution in Nazi Germany, correlations with the United States since September 11th. Fear consistently used as the reason for all policies blinds Americans as we lay down our freedoms for the perceived safety of our government guardian. From this blind trust, the Patriot Act, CAPPS II, HR 3077 and the latest craziness once thought unthinkable, The Republican National Committee's pressure on the Federal Election Commission ("FEC"). The Republican National Committee is calling for new rules to financially punish non-profit organizations that dare to communicate with the public critically of President Bush or members of Congress. Also unthinkable, now we want to brand people electronically.

Prior to September 11th, this idea would be unconscionable. It's time we stopped using September 11th as an excuse for everything. Each of us has a greater chance of being hit by lightning than killed by a terrorist. Nearly 100,000 Americans died last year from prescription mix-ups, over 400,000 from tobacco related illness. Contrast that with the total number of civilian casualties by terrorists in the United States from January 1, 2002 through today: Zero.

FOR OUR SAFETY AS A NATION

Hitler tattooed those he wished to track. Rather than use sub-dermal ink, America uses sub-dermal electronics to categorize, tag and track our homeless, against their will, rationalizing for their protection and society's protection. Who will be the next group requiring monitoring? Will we implant RFID's into convicted shoplifters who have served their time so that security can monitor them when they enter a store?

What about deadbeat dads and moms who fail to pay child support? Shouldn't they too be monitored? Their lack of payment places children at risk and creates situations that may cause children to become criminals. Consider it a pre-emptive strike against possible future activity. While we're at it, under the guise of protection from abduction or getting lost, shouldn't an RFID be inserted under every newborn's skin? Doesn't that make you feel safer?

What about people collecting social security, unemployment or welfare? Shouldn't they be monitored to make sure they do not abuse the programs our tax dollars pay for? What

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about the criminal who is released? Sure they've done their time, but society is safer if the police and parole boards always know where they are. Don't forget every person with a DUI, (*Driving Under the Influence*). Think of how many lives could be saved if every person convicted of a DUI was tracked by the local police!

Then we have our War on Terror. All of the Arabs in this country, Christian or Muslim could at some point become rebellious to the way we treat them and ridicule their culture, faiths and traditions. We brand all as potential terrorists with our self-righteous callousness, therefore for the safety of Americans shouldn't all Arabs be tagged to prevent terrorism? While were at it, why not implant and tag every Hispanic American so we can easily identify who is here illegally? Or every African American who grows up in the hood since statistics show many end up dead or in jails?

Where does it end, Logan's Run? In the movie, freedom prevails. Two people escape the monitoring systems and in turn free the entire society, finding themselves in an ancient ruin of Washington DC. Logan's Run takes place in the USA, the ultimate irony. This movie is supposed to be science fiction, not a prelude to reality.

Where does it end, America? Eventually each and every one of us will fall under some category that must be monitored for our own or society's protection whether due to circumstance of life, such as unemployment, illness, old age or bad choices. Is this freedom? Is this what we fight for? If we allow our government to exploit the most vulnerable, the homeless and mentally ill in our society as implanting tracking systems within a person's skin does, it is only a matter of time before they find an excuse to implant us all.

EPILOGUE

An interesting footnote to all this, now that this story is breaking, DHHS amended its statements to press this will be voluntary. If it is voluntary, why implant the transmitter under the skin? Wouldn't it be more voluntary if the homeless who choose to be monitored have a bracelet that can be removed when he decides he no longer cares to participate? It certainly would cost less. And if it is voluntary, who's representing the homeless to make sure each understands what he is agreeing to? If one chooses not to participate, what do they forgo? These questions as of yet do not have answers. Perhaps in time they will.

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