

From Slavery to the War on Terror: The Evolution of Surveillance in America

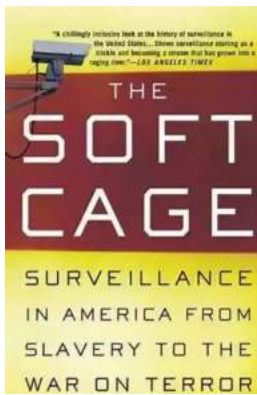
Surveillance has always been an integral part of American history, undergoing significant transformations throughout the centuries. From the days of slavery to the current era of the War on Terror, the methods, technologies, and motives for surveillance have evolved, shaping the social and political landscape of the nation. This article takes a deep dive into the historical context, exploring the various stages of surveillance in America and its impact on society.

The Era of Slavery: Control and Subjugation

During the era of slavery in America, surveillance played a crucial role in maintaining control and subjugating enslaved individuals. Plantation owners and overseers utilized various methods, such as slave patrols and surveillance networks, to prevent rebellions and ensure the obedience of their human property. The alt attribute keyword for this section is "slavery surveillance control".

The Rise of the Surveillance State: Industrialization and Urbanization

With the rise of industrialization and urbanization in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, surveillance expanded beyond the confines of the plantation. Government agencies and private corporations began employing surveillance techniques to monitor and regulate the growing population. From the Pinkerton National Detective Agency to the birth of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), a new era of surveillance emerged. The alt attribute keyword for this section is "surveillance state industrialization".



The Soft Cage: Surveillance in America, From Slavery to the War on Terror

by Christian Parenti(Kindle Edition)

★★★★☆ 4.7 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 3602 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 287 pages



The Cold War and the National Security State

The Cold War brought about unprecedented advancements in surveillance technology. The United States government, in its pursuit of national security, deployed surveillance programs like COINTELPRO and ECHELON to gather intelligence and suppress dissent. The alt attribute keyword for this section is "Cold War surveillance national security".

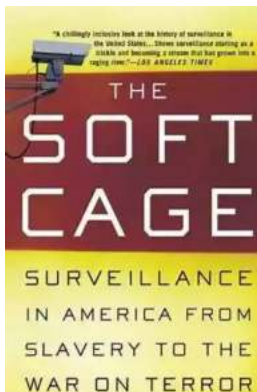
The Digital Age and Modern Surveillance

The advent of the internet and digital technology revolutionized surveillance practices once again. Government agencies, such as the National Security Agency (NSA), expanded their capabilities to monitor electronic communication and collect vast amounts of personal data. Private companies also joined in, with social media platforms and tech giants collecting user data for various commercial purposes. The alt attribute keyword for this section is "digital age surveillance".

The War on Terror: Balancing Security and Privacy

Following the tragic events of September 11, 2001, surveillance in America took a significant turn. The government initiated widespread surveillance programs, such as the Patriot Act and the creation of the Department of Homeland Security, in an attempt to combat terrorism. However, these measures raised concerns about privacy and civil liberties, sparking debates about the balance between security and individual freedoms. The alt attribute keyword for this section is "surveillance War on Terror privacy".

The evolution of surveillance in America tells a complex story that reflects the shifting values, technologies, and political climates throughout history. From the control and subjugation of slaves to the modern challenges of balancing security and privacy, surveillance has become an omnipresent force in American society. Understanding this history is vital as we navigate the complexities of surveillance in the 21st century.



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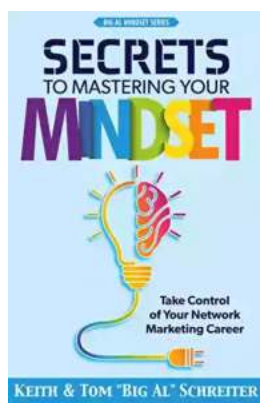
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On a typical day, you might make a call on a cell phone, withdraw money at an ATM, visit the mall, and make a purchase with a credit card. Each of these routine

transactions leaves a digital trail for government agencies and businesses to access. As cutting-edge historian and journalist Christian Parenti points out, these everyday intrusions on privacy, while harmless in themselves, are part of a relentless (and clandestine) expansion of routine surveillance in American life over the last two centuries—from controlling slaves in the old South to implementing early criminal justice and tracking immigrants. Parenti explores the role computers are playing in creating a whole new world of seemingly benign technologies—such as credit cards, website "cookies," and electronic toll collection—that have expanded this trend in the twenty-first century. *The Soft Cage* offers a compelling, vitally important history lesson for every American concerned about the expansion of surveillance into our public and private lives.



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