



Trumpism Isn't "Literally 1984" – It's Something Stranger and More Dangerous

****By [M&LE.1]****

At a Trump rally in Phoenix, thousands chant "USA!" as the former president declares the media "the true enemy of the people." Phones are raised, livestreams flicker across Truth Social and TikTok. It's not fear that binds them—it's belonging. They're not resisting surveillance; they're documenting it, celebrating it, weaponizing it.

This isn't Orwell's boot on the face. This is something else. Something slicker. Something streamed.

When people say we're living through *1984*, they're not wrong—but they're not quite right, either. The rise of Donald Trump and the authoritarian movement that now animates his political base doesn't just echo Orwell's dystopia. It exceeds it, warping surveillance, repression, and psychological control into forms Orwell couldn't have foreseen: crowd-sourced, televised, and willingly embraced.

**Big Brother Reimagined**

Trump is not a bureaucratic tyrant in the mold of Big Brother. He is something more dangerous in a media-driven world: a myth. A symbol. A brand. And that makes him immune to the normal rules of political accountability.

What Orwell imagined as totalitarianism enforced through fear, we now witness as fascism-as-spectacle—glamorous, entertaining, and self-reinforcing. Trump's brand of authoritarianism is hypermasculine, performative, and emotionally weaponized. He doesn't need telescreens to watch you when millions of Americans broadcast their own ideological purity online daily. He doesn't need a Ministry of Truth when Fox News, Truth Social, and Telegram channels flood the zone with curated fiction, repeated until belief congeals.

Trump's mythic identity isn't just projected—it's enforced through mass participation. In Orwell's world, citizens feared the state. In ours, they fear being left behind by the movement. Fear of irrelevance. Fear of weakness. And this fear fuels loyalty that feels like love.

Thoughtcrime is Real

This willing participation creates the perfect conditions for thoughtcrime enforcement. Consider the case of Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian immigrant jailed not for actions, but for beliefs—accused under material support statutes that criminalize ideological proximity. This is not an isolated incident. Under Trump-era (and post-Trump) doctrines, immigrants, protestors, and marginalized people increasingly find themselves targeted for who they are, not what they've done.

This is thoughtcrime with a national security badge. The same logic drives ICE raids, "watchlists," and the surveillance of Muslim communities. It's the logic of preemptive guilt—and it operates most effectively when communities police themselves, reporting neighbors who seem insufficiently patriotic, insufficiently grateful, insufficiently loyal.

Surveillance State 2.0

In this world, surveillance isn't imposed—it's gamified, aestheticized, and crowd-sourced. While Orwell envisioned a grim dystopia where people were constantly watched, we have something worse: a surveillance system we opt into for the dopamine hits.

In Orwell's vision, people feared being watched. In ours, we fear being ignored. That's the genius of today's surveillance state: it doesn't need to impose control—it incentivizes self-broadcast, offering status in exchange for submission. Telescreens were forced on Orwell's citizens; we buy ours from Apple.

Private data brokers, AI-driven police algorithms, ICE surveillance partnerships with Palantir—this is the financialized upgrade of state control. No need for a Ministry of Love when Amazon Ring and Google know your face, your neighborhood, and your voice. And while many decry these trends under Biden as well, it was Trump's DHS that most effectively fused

surveillance with racialized enforcement, targeting immigrants and protestors with militarized precision.

The result is a system where resistance feels impossible not because it's forbidden, but because it's invisible—lost in the noise of performed loyalty.

The Triumph of Doublethink

Doublethink completes the loop: a mind disoriented by contradiction can't organize resistance. Orwell coined "doublethink" to describe the act of holding contradictory beliefs simultaneously. In the Trump era, this isn't just tolerated—it's celebrated.

Trump can claim the 2020 election was stolen while insisting he's the rightful victor. He can call for "law and order" while praising insurrectionists. He can call journalists enemies of the people, then whine about censorship. His followers can demand government stay out of their lives while cheering ICE raids in their neighborhoods.

These aren't bugs. They're features. Doublethink destroys the shared reality democracy requires—and replaces it with a loyalty test. Truth is not what's provable; it's what the leader feels. And what the followers perform.

A Global Phenomenon

This is not an American anomaly. In India, Hungary, and Brazil, strongmen have risen on similar myths—combining nationalism, masculinity, and media ecosystems that make dissent seem like treason. Modi's Hindu nationalism, Orbán's "illiberal democracy," Bolsonaro's military nostalgia—all deploy the same template of voluntary authoritarianism, where citizens police themselves and surveillance feels like patriotism.

The difference is scale and sophistication. American technology, American media reach, and American cultural export power have created the most seductive authoritarian spectacle in history.

Something Worse Than Orwell

So yes, comparisons to *1984* feel apt. But if Orwell's dystopia was a warning, ours is a remix: faster, more seductive, and wired directly into our dopamine circuits.

We are not being dragged into authoritarianism. We're dancing toward it, live-streaming all the way. The ministries of Truth, Love, and Plenty have been privatized, optimized, and rebranded as entertainment. Big Brother isn't watching us—we're watching him, and paying for the privilege.

The fight for democracy isn't just about ballots. It's about belief. Memory. Language. It's about something harder than resistance: the slow work of rehumanizing politics and rebuilding shared truth.

We won't resist this by shouting louder. We resist it by remembering what it means to see one another as human—not as content, not as followers, not as enemies. In an era where surveillance feels like love and propaganda feels like purpose, the quiet refusal to perform may be our last act of defiance.

The choice isn't between freedom and oppression. It's between authentic connection and digital simulation. Between reality and spectacle. Between waking up and staying entertained.

We still have time to choose. But the window is closing, one livestream at a time.

[Word count: approximately 1,100 words]