

LIBERTY PLEDGE

NEWSLETTER

Libertarian National Committee, Inc. ♦ 2600 Virginia Ave, NW, Suite 200 ♦ Washington, DC 20037 ♦ Phone: (202) 333-0008 ♦ Fax: (202) 333-0072
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Why I love Libertarians

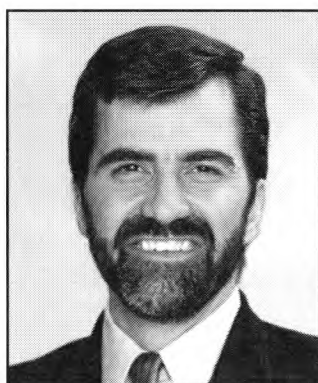
By Joseph Bast

From the Heartland Institute

Published on December 11, 2013



The Web site of the National Libertarian Party has an online opinion poll that asks: “Which option most closely matches your feeling about the closing of the WWII Memorial during the so-called government shutdown?” I love it that they refer to the “so-called” government shutdown, so true in light of all the reports that government continued to spend our money at an alarming rate.



Joseph Bast

The first three proposed answers are what you might expect: “The government should not have closed the WWII Memorial” (58%), “It was OK for the government to close the WWII Memorial” (3%), and “I don’t care much whether or not the memorial was closed during the shutdown” (5%).

But the next possible answer was a surprise: “The WWII Memorial should have been built on private property to avoid political meddling.” The thinking man’s answer! As Ayn Rand would have said, “check your premise.” If you rely on politicians to erect monuments, don’t complain if they choose to shut them down. An impressive 20% chose that answer.

The final possible answer, though, is even better: “A non-interventionist policy at the time of WWI

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— Joseph Bast, President, Heartland Institute

might have prevented WWII.” I don’t think it’s possible to read that without laughing out loud. There shouldn’t even be a monument (to close down or keep open) because there never should have been a war. That’s really thinking it through! And 10% of the 5,516 folks who answered the poll chose that answer.

This is why I love libertarians. They think things through and for themselves, never accept the choices as they are presented by the political or chattering classes, and always check the premise. The result may not always be an effective tactic or strategy for advancing freedom, but that’s not always the point, is it? Finding the truth and speaking it out loud are their own reward, and they are toxic to totalitarianism of all stripes, eventually if not right away. No intellectual movement speaks truth to power better than libertarianism.

Diane and I just sent a gift to the LP to help them buy a building in Washington DC. You can learn more about that effort by going here: lp.org/office-fund

Libertarian Party in the News

Libertarians: Snowden debate foretold 50 years ago in 'Outer Limits' episode

By John Gizzi

Excerpted from *Newsmax*

Published on December 25, 2013

As the world learned this year from Edward Snowden the degree that the U.S. government has used electronic surveillance, a few old hands recalled that much of what the National Security Agency renegade revealed in 2013 was actually foretold in 1963 in a very unlikely venue: an hour-long episode of the popular ABC-TV science fiction series of the time, "The Outer Limits."

Incredible as it sounds, it's true. As President Barack Obama addressed the collection and storage of millions of Americans' phone records at his news conference Friday, libertarians who hailed Snowden as a whistleblower rather than a traitor told *Newsmax* about rediscovering the "Outer Limits" episode "O.B.I.T." that stands for "Outer Band Individuated Teletracer."

The story is about a high-tech scanning device at a military base that can eavesdrop on any of its personnel within a 100-mile radius.

"O.B.I.T.," in fact, is developing a "Atlas Shrugged"-style following among those who consider themselves libertarians and fighters for civil liberties.

"I watched 'O.B.I.T.' last night," Libertarian Party National Political Director Carla Howell told *Newsmax* recently, adding that it brought back memories "of my brother and sister being frightened by an episode that left them screaming for hours into the night.

"One of the purposes of science fiction is to predict and prevent forces of evil. It's a shame more people were not exposed to the O.B.I.T. story and took the threat it foretold more seriously," Howell said.

Shot in striking black-and-white, it first aired on November 4, 1963. The episode commences with the murder of a U.S. Army officer at the Cypress Hills Research Center, a top secret Department of Defense facility in New Mexico.

At the time of his death, the officer was operating and writing reports from O.B.I.T., which can monitor

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conversations of the center's personnel at any time or place. The fictional U.S. Sen. Jeremiah Orville arrives at the center to conduct a hearing on the device. It is soon discovered that the device had authorization from the Pentagon and was manufactured by a private contractor no longer in business.

"Nobody at the center is unaware of its existence," Byron Lomax, deputy director of Cypress Hills, assures Sen. Orville, and then offers the standard defense heard today to justify widespread surveillance: "People who have nothing to hide have nothing to fear from O.B.I.T."

"I'd hate to have that machine trained on me when I'm cussing out a fellow senator," replies Orville, "or the president, or my former law partner, or my wife."

The senator's questioning unearths some startling discoveries about the extent of O.B.I.T.'s eavesdropping. One civilian employee at the center calls it a "Peeping Tom machine. It follows you anywhere, anytime." Colonel Grover of the center's military staff says on the witness stand that O.B.I.T.'s regular monitoring "is like a debilitating disease" and "the worst thing of all is I can't not look. It's like a drug or a horrible addiction."

As it turns out, there are O.B.I.T. devices doing monitoring on 18 military bases and they are also employed in civilian life: industry, education, and the communications business.

The dramatic courtroom-style scenes reach a climax, and there is a dramatic twist about the origin of O.B.I.T.

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Snowden debate foretold 50 years ago

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Gary Johnson, former New Mexico governor and 2012 Libertarian presidential nominee, was strongly moved after a recent viewing.

“It is remarkable that a 50-year-old TV episode could have been so prescient,” Johnson told Newsmax. “The Outer Band Individuated Teletracer is alive and well, with the only real difference being that was capable of being only slightly more intrusive than what our government appears to be doing today. With a few more drones and surveillance cameras, today’s spy agencies may get there.”

Johnson was especially stirred by “the characterization of O.B.I.T. as a ‘debilitating device’ that ‘saps the very spirit’ from its targets. Fifty years ago, those writers obviously got the reality that a government spying on its own citizens with no justification has a chilling effect on freedom.”

Johnson strongly believes that “every member of Congress and senator — not to mention the president — should be required to watch or read Colonel Grover’s ‘testimony.’ He nailed it, albeit with some great 1960s vintage melodrama.”

“It’s also worth noting that the idea that the fruits of domestic spying might be used against an elected official even made its way into the story,” he said. “I don’t even want to contemplate that possibility, but there was a time when we wouldn’t have contemplated the possibility that our own government would be sweeping up billions of phone calls, emails and financial transactions.”

New and renewing Liberty Pledgers

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Randall Grant	Carl W. Rohde
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Darren M. Greway	Benjamin Sanders
Douglas J. Gryboski	Evan Schackmann
Peter Hahnstadt	Brandon Schaner
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Curtis U. Helsley	Dean W. Schottky
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Kenneth Hoerricks	Erik Smith
Susan J. Hogarth	Bob Smither
David J. Horn	William A. Spalding
Carolyn Howell	Michael Stollery
Terry Howell	Jason A. Sulskis
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Libertarian Party in the News

Libertarians seeing red over street light cameras

By Michael W. Freeman

Excerpted from the *Orlando Sentinel*

Published on December 23, 2013

David Leavitt and Mark Schmidter were at City Hall for the Winter Park City Commission meeting on Dec. 9, but they were not on the agenda and, as residents of other cities, were not even following any of the items that commissioners were discussing.

What they wanted, instead, was an opportunity to address the city leaders during citizen comment time, and to ask Winter Park to head in a different direction when it comes to traffic enforcement, and get rid of all cameras on traffic lights.

“It’s a violation of your Fourth Amendment rights,” said Schmidter.

That amendment, Schmidter noted, prohibit unreasonable searches, and for the government to discreetly record people on video at traffic lights falls within that scope, he said.

“You can’t meet your accuser,” he said.

Leavitt agreed, saying that if a motorist gets captured on video by the camera, “There is no guaranteed witness to what happened.”

Leavitt is the chairman of the Libertarian Party of Seminole County, and Schmidter is an Orange County roofing contractor who is active in Libertarian politics and causes. Both men have been traveling to municipalities in Central Florida, urging city leaders to get rid of cameras at traffic lights and to stop violating the civil rights of its citizens.

“I am talking at every City Council meeting in three different counties,” Leavitt said. “We’re talking to the cities that have them, to make sure they are all educated about this issue, and to convince cities to get rid of them. The city of Winter Park, we know, has at least eight cameras that are hidden. That’s eight that we know of.”

Clarissa Howard, the city’s director of communications, noted by email that “We have eight red light camera locations, and they were activated at different times. Two were activated in January 2011, two activated in September 2011, and the other four were activated in December 2011.”

“If I own a shop here and I have a video surveillance camera, that’s okay, because it is my shop and it’s private property. But a city government should not have cameras recording citizens.”

— *David Leavitt, Chairman, Seminole County LP*

Leavitt said he opposes the cameras because it represents a government intrusion into the lives of its citizens, without enhancing public safety, which has been the aim of cameras that are intended to capture motorists driving through red lights and other moving violations.

“It’s not about safety,” Schmidter said. “It’s all about the money. The ticket is \$160, but half of that goes to the state. The other half is split between the city and the people who make the cameras.”

It’s been estimated that red light cameras generate millions in revenue from tickets for cities in Florida.

But Leavitt countered that this kind of government intrusion goes too far, and that municipal governments should not be secretly videotaping residents or visitors.

“If I own a shop here and I have a video surveillance camera, that’s okay, because it is my shop and it’s private property,” he said. “But a city government should not have cameras recording citizens.”

If someone else drives your car, he said, and is recorded by one of the cameras running a red light, the owner of the car is left holding the bag – in effect, paying for a crime they did not commit, Leavitt said. It leaves city residents in the position of having to expend resources to prove they were not the ones who violated the law.

“You have to spend your time, money and effort to report who was driving the car, if they even know it,” he said.

Schmidter said this is also an educational campaign that Libertarian activists are launching with an aim at the public. All too often, Schmidter said, residents seem apathetic about the civil liberties that are forfeiting to their local government.

“We always fall back to the Constitution,” he said.