

Part I Off and Running

2009 w/ endless revisions into 2024.

Millions of us are fully aware—*we must engage*. Well, I believed we knew that so once a bit of conviction gelled to this belief, I spent half of 2009 agonizing over how to write about what's so alarming with newday technology. That effort, eventually morphed into a few bulging fledglings but, I didn't care. I was just so damn happy to be off and running, I mustered up some courage and sent them to *Newsweek!* But, no response. Well, it took a bit of time for my elation to settle down but when it did, I thought hmm...was a no-response cuz I plum overshot the size limit or, was it something else? So, I asked some friends to read my efforts. Their review came back so disheartening, I skulked the rest of that year away. And as my pen lay idle, their words did not. Frankly, they didn't think we cared enough to band together to effect any—*much-needed change*. Certain political division was too deeply rooted in America, they felt my effort was futile. The final hit, they didn't think we bother to read much nowadays, and certainly not something jam-packed with such heavy topics!

When I look back on those first years of mind-numbing durations; struggling to find words to paste to thoughts, struggling to squirrel time away to even take a stab at actually doing it, a smile of irony creases my face. When I finally did reach for that pen, I then spent more years piling on even more heaviness! Still, those challenges shrivel in comparison to the one that rode in on the wings of that long ago, simple belief. A belief, that turned into one unshakable conviction. Sure, it's easy to believe we must better engage cuz we must! Seriously, who doesn't believe this? But for someone so adept at building sentences backwards, for someone saddled with such a skittish sidekick constantly reminding me of all that I lack, it sure wasn't easy to believe that I, could actually create an effective starterplate. Indeed, picking up a pen to even begin, was one of the biggest, nearly insurmountable challenges—I've ever tackled.

Didactic Finesse.

The timeworn power dance—now has a 4th partner. It's a formidable entity unto itself. This unhuman intelligence, already controls nearly every infrastructure, nearly every aspect of human living. Eager to partner with this it, our course-setting elites raced us headlong into one irreversibly entrenched—*monitored wall of existence*. And on their reckless power-driven lead, they are stuffing their job-eliminator its—*with our lifeline jobs*. And just ahead, lays one irreversible—*transcending abyss*. So before all humanity gets shoved any further down this road—*a road that ain't no upwardly mobile freeway~ CR*, today's free world masses; the torchbearers for all humanity, must pull out some brake fluid cuz as it stands, we are gifting our own kids—*one helluva nightmare*.

This series could be shortened. Allot! A skilled writer could easily serve up what's all-encompassing, with real didactic finesse; like the above paragraph even! It's not that my writing skills haven't improved, it's that I'm on a mission. We all know what's looming; even catch the imminence of it in the soundbites tossed to us. But, we then typically go on with our busy lives, try not to think about it, seldom talk about it, and certainly have yet to engage a retracking—*to one aspect about it!* For this mission to chance success then, you may as well pop a cool one and settle in cuz, this is gonna take a while.

It's a One Stop Shop.

An Olympic gold medalist, jockey, rock star or writer, these were the visions I'd occasionally pull on to ease my blue-collar doldrums. As a writer, historical fiction glossed those visions so how my first writing stab ended up being chocked full of real-time drags

is beyond me! I do know actual writers come out of the starting gate with something other than drag-chocked pages which is why I've tried shuffling this one to the rear plenty of times but, it belongs here. Monitoring. That's what newday technology feasts on. We need to start—*the most overdue conversation we must have*—where the feast is first set before, we delve into how newday tech grows so, please stick out the long haul as I'm not sure I'd be able to recover the heart I'd lose, if my editing friends end up being right.

Today's technology, is set to monitor and chart absolutely anything someone wants to track including competent workforces—*the primo grub source*. Sugar-plum thoughts dancing in our heads about workers being monitored purely for safety, raises and attaboys, needs erased. Newday workforce monitoring-tech is the one-stop-shop, super deal of the day! *Its*, not only gather the data needed to create the tech-patterns for our replacement, *its* then provide the necessary targeting-data for elites to show their human headaches the door but! That's not all! *Its, then slide right into our lifeline seats!* Corp/industry elites bent on replacing human workers with *its*, paint us comparatively inept against the technology here to replace us. How? *Quantifiable Measurable Attributes*. See, technology can only tally attributes that can be value-assigned. Consequently, every intuitive, common-sense or ethical decision, every creative and reactionary capability we come with, aren't in their measured scheme of things, either cuz our unique attributes can't be value-assigned, or are intentionally omitted. So, job-eliminators will continue to look exceedingly attractive, and we'll continue to look comparatively inept, so long as this skewed way of measuring continues. At some point, these yahoos had to realize this but, the appeal to get rid of paycheck-us, already captivated them and their investment wads so they needed to at least recoup if not reap, their projected rewards. It also had to become apparent to them—they should've thought their recklessness out a bit more. A great time to have paused and asked themselves—*just because we can, should we?* But, they didn't and, it's a done deal now.

I liken today's monitoring agendas to an oxen's tightly wrapped compress on one wounded leg. A guaranteed case of rot will set in if the temporary fix gets any tighter, or stays permanently. And, I liken course-setting elites who eagerly monitor us for control and/or replacement, to the oxen's master who didn't rationally think about mending the leg before whacking it off. All of us, must slow invasive technologies down and devise better fixes. As for the oxen's master, he can monitor the damn cart all he wants but, the wheels to commerce carts aint gonna turn without a healthy—*four legged oxen*.

Fastidious Note-Takers.

Homework time. *Quantifiable, Measurable, Attributes*—begins today's outing. It's a concept that's been around for a long time but its uses on workers and society, is relatively new. Stephen Baker writes; in laymen no less, about this concept and others in his book—*The Numerati*. "About 40 years ago, computer chips invented in the 1980s started it all. Tiny bits of silicon, bristling with millions of microscopic transistors, have grown cheaper and more powerful ever since. Virtually anything that can benefit from a dab of smarts, now gets chips. Chips, are fastidious note-takers and record the minutiae of our lives. Taken alone, each bit of data is meaningless. Put together, patterns are then made. Patterns, are also useless unless—*their values can be measured to then quantify.*"

As to the zillion bits of recorded data flung out into the big www.vastland, Baker likens this to a vast information stream constantly circling the globe. "Send a smiley face from your cellphone, and that tiny bit of behavior; *not just words*, instantly rushes with billions of others thru fiber-optic cables, soaring up to a satellite and back down, checking in at a server farm in Singapore—*even before we can pocket our phones*. These gathered

bits of info about us, are used by marketers for the goods we purchase, by politicians for how we vote, by corp/industry for how we work. These zillion bits are called unstructured data til someone tells the whiz-kid computers to structure it all. As the data we produce continues to explode and computers grow relentlessly stronger, these maestros gain in power. Human data-whizzes; armed with their whiz-kid computer sidekicks, are pouring into biology, medicine, advertising, sports, politics, work arenas. They are adding us up. *We are being quantified.*” Baker refers to these people as—*The Numerati*. I label anyone who can scrawl a chalkboard full of integrated symbols, letters, numbers, divisors; basically anyone who invents amazingly complex anything’s—*brainiacs*.

Numerati Brainiacs, armed with computers, rule our days—almost. For all their brainiac capabilities, their efforts still won’t materialize into much without backing. Many a’ course-setting political/corporate elites, don’t know how any of this works any more than we do but, they know what end product they want, and they have the bucks to see it thru. For industry, Baker begins with the timeless barter system that finally got replaced with the original Numerati notion of—*cold hard cash*. “Automation and factories then ushered in mass production but of limited varieties. For instance, blue jeans vied for the consumer dollar within a limited realm of blue jeans. But as technology and globalization advanced, so did consumer variety options. In 50 years, we’ve gone from a demand and control economy, to one driven by consumers.” And it’s cuz of this; cuz we’re no longer forced to shop at the company store, industries must now spend millions, to figure out how to corral our free to choose, wherever we want to spend `em—dollars. The stuff that rules—*is in our very hands*. In this full circle reality, industry must try to figure out how we will spend our dollars at the end of the product line, and keep the cost of goods competitive at the front of the line. *Numerati brainiacs*, are here to help on both counts.

On the consumer end, we are quantified to figure out how to get our purchasing attention; to profile what kinds of people will buy what. Previously, I’d mentioned a technology that tracks our brainwaves; to monitor what snags our focus. I envision this monitoring will soon lurk—if not already, behind those pesky ads that float by on our screens and as we peer at them, they will peer right back and that is—*plumass creepy*.

Baker explains how info about us, gets gleaned from all the sparks we shoot; mouse clicks and words via the web but! That’s not all! “Data from old fashioned caches of every bitsy list ever made about us hoarded in file drawers, is also fed into computers for more quantifying. Along with all the personal data we leave behind out in the big www.vastland, this ginormous info-heap is called static data or chaotic waves. It’s all somewhat useless until—*someone mines it to quantify it.*” And boy are we mined.

Mining.

Data-miners and technologists, then begin to sort us. We are broken into buckets and tribes. “To retailers looking to understand the consuming mass, we’re further refined. We may land in the true friend bucket as a loyal shopper, a butterfly bucket for sporadic shoppers, barnacle bucket for coupon clippers.” In this chapter, I found another important tidbit. “In Europe, this bucket sorting is to provide shoppers with enhanced service but not to compile shopping-related data to profile them. Data privacy, is a far more explosive issue in Europe than in America.” Go Europe! Somebody, must sound the alarm! Still!

“For politicians, the bucket sorting of us becomes more complex since vote-casting is secret whereas dollar-casting is not. Profiling then, must go deeper than sales receipts and for this, we are put into tribes. Computer enhanced, quantifiable profiling began in 2004 in America, to ferry-out potential voters. And potential is key cuz die-hard republicans and democrats will face blizzards to cast their vote whereas the rest of us,

are plopped into tribes. Barn Raisers and Hearth Keepers, ascribe to faith-based living. The Inner Compass tribe insists on fitness—both in body and balance sheet. The Right Clickers, know the value of the right side of the mouse vs the left.” On it goes. Guess we’re plopped into one of 10 tribes. This has been going on for 20 years now and as of 2024, is still likely unbeknownst to most of us, and it’s still—*all just getting warmed up.*

Bad Guys.

Baker interviewed Jeff Jonas; a technologist who initially made his millions building a surveillance business. “Jonas is now vehemently opposed to statistical data-mining for predicting the next terrorist. He fears its intrusions and false alerts. Yet, he trusts that data and surveillance can protect our freedoms without sacrificing privacy.” However, Jonas concludes: “We technologists, had better spend more time thinking about what we are creating. Hopefully, we will create a technology that protects our identities, policies to safeguard our rights, and smart people to make policy. Without sound oversight, we’re liable to get the worst of both: *a surveillance society—that still fails to make us safe.*”

Those statements are potent. First, vigilant wariness isn’t derived from a mere hope. Action-mode, must follow and that, hasn’t much happened. Consequently, it’s now a fairly muddled line between mining and profiling. Our words, behaviors, location, are already in the monitoring lineup so I’d guess brain-fingerprinting our fleeting thoughts, just about cinches the deal. While looking into this incredibly invasive scheme, I discovered the sell to slide neuromarketing into society began as an anti-terrorist tool. Soon after, the sell was to provide paralyzed people the opportunity to surf online. Both sells, tap fear and compassion; the surefire wins—*for our acceptance.* As of 2024, many companies now use neuromarketing. Nowadays, the sell is to provide consumer us what we really want! And mostly cuz fMRI brain-scanning is still super expensive, I don’t think our screens are yet snooping out what we really think, or want. As yet, volunteer noggin’s are being peered into to see what they really think, and oh yeah—*what they really want.*

Today’s latest cash cows are sensors/trackers. Basically, these are one in the same. Smartphones, already have sensor/trackers embedded. Our exact location, fingerprints, voice recognition, heart rate, eye-tracking movements, can now be tracked via our most favored tech-toy. And when covid came along, so did an app that can track if we are in close proximity to someone who has covid! Wow! Why do we keep falling for such ploys? Our willingness to rollover and meekly accept it all—only tightens the noose around our freedoms for hell’s sake! We gotta start responsibly thinking this stuff thru! As for online tracking, that’s about cookies; embedded messages, web servers pass to web browsers, whenever we visit websites! Currently, we get to choose which cookies we allow into our computers but if we don’t want cookies, then be sure not to miss-click cuz the icon to select—*an allowance for all,* is sure easy to hit!

Sensors track. Think of the movie—*The Minority Report.* The cricket-looking bugs running all over the place trying to track Tom Cruise down are sensors and Hollywood, didn’t think those up—*right outta the blue.* I just spent the past hour trying to understand why all this tracking is so damn appealing but, I give up. My head now hurts. Just know the primo sell-taps are: fear; the most timeworn one, entertainment, safety, compassion and now enhanced; the latest sell-tap used to snag our acceptance, to exist in high-tech monitored style. Chatbots, are the latest monitoring ploy; currently sliding in under the compassionate sell. This whole, fully-monitored existing, came on readily unquestioned, cuz we readily accepted these sell-taps. So, here’s my catchy sell. Any tech-monitoring once accepted, gets embedded. Data now netted, gets headed—for everything dreaded! Man can I go sideways! *I lean into the wind cuz we aint coming back here again! ~JE.*

Fear Grease.

Alexander Hamilton quote: *"To be more safe, society at length become more willing to run the risk of being less free."* Fear-slathered control is, the most timeworn of all conditioning ploys so we, aren't experiencing anything new. We've been conditioned to believe all this monitoring was needed cuz there's lots of bad guys out there so, is there? I'd bet good money that we, don't have more bad guys on the loose than any other era ever did! The only monumental difference between yesterday and today is that fear-slathered control, is now airtight effective. *Embedded. Entrenched. Irreversible. Dreaded. Never to slink away dammit!*

Data-mining realities become even graver as emphasized in Jonas's comment that he fears the intrusions and false alerts. He's right. Compiled data innocently profiling us or otherwise, is not only intrusive—*it can easily get it wrong and/or manipulated.* Regardless of trusty government assurances and slicked-up honcho sells, confidential caches about each one of us, just keep getting evermore vulnerable. Daily news, already delivers a steady diet of leaked confidential info, computer hacking, viruses, credit card fraud. Any victim of identity theft, can tell anyone who will listen that once wrong data puts us into the big www.vastland, years of a prolonged nightmare ensues.

Jonas hits another bullseye; the need for sound oversight or we'll end up with overlord surveillance that still fails to make us safe. So, is sound oversight what we have? Well, free world ruling cadres; those we chose to make best-case decisions for us, did rush us headlong into one irreversibly entrenched monitored wall for existing! They surely did, rush to stuff every snippet of data about us into their vast IT database; *the cat's meow for total control.* And in America, it was the *DOT; Department of Transportation*, who required states to implement realtime highway monitoring in by 2016, uh, purely for our safety. *The DOT*, wants to keep us apprised of traffic and weather. Sure, reckless speeders and weather conditions can leave devastation in their wake so we bought into this rationality without even blinking. Yeah, fear conditioning works alright. It's just the price we are willing to pay to be more safe—*that deserves seriously loud, consideration.*

All control agendas, now slide every edict imagined—*under the banner of safety.* It got real crowded under there—*real fast.* Everywhere; within all industry, malls, societal hangouts and especially—all modern means of transportation which now has GPS monitoring fully embedded, the ability to keep precise tabs on us, slides right in under the safety banner. Coupled with all the video monitoring that popped-up like the measles and I mean everywhere, it's been one helluva price we've paid—*to be more safe.* However—*transportation, is how free societies move about.* No safety logic, will ever remove this fully-entrenched, done-deal we now have, from the wholly invasive, overlord category. The internet continues to take on heat so if the ability to control our voice transpires, do we still get to call ourselves free without any merit to back that up?

Drone usage within society; something I was just sure would come up against great opposition, didn't. Sound oversight for this in America, came as a greenlight straight from our Supreme Court by declaring: *"Individuals have no expectation of privacy in public places and, our own private property resides below public airspace."* No ruling armature, bothered to garner our consensus for this monumentally invasive, hover in our very face ploy. Was the consensus of any free world society garnered before, overlord control was fully entrenched? Was the move to securely tuck our freedom right in under the banner of safety, intentionally meant to make freedom a concern, no longer of the people—*for the people? It's like watchin' freedom bein' sucked straight out to sea and the delusion is feelin' dangerous to me ~PJ.*

GPS in transportation, slid in via the safety tap. GPS in phones, used safety and entertainment, and the drone industry took notice. Off they raced to the entertainment industry and in a blink, drones became the fastest growing, tech-toy industry. The latest of latest—*monitoring via entertainment*, is found out in the big www.vastland; the playing of war games that actually pays winners. The mula for that human-thinking cache is worth questioning, so I did! Turns out, *usa.gov* is the major mula-donor which means it's our hard-earned tax dollars, paying those winners. But, players don't seem to care who saps their brains; so long as it pays. Anyone, armed with an agenda and some bucks, can gain access to this treasure trove of human thinking. ***Can you read my mind? TK.*** Yep, well-enough to build patterns for how we play war games; the must-have thinking chip Super-Goliath needs, in order to become—*truly invincible*. For other thinking-chips, Baker states: "Acxiom of Conway Arkansas keeps lifestyle data on nearly every American, and IBM builds replicable skill-data, extracted from their 300,000 employee database."

At this stage, it all seems so unstoppable which it is for any tech already irreversibly entrenched. It's right-now us, who must consider now and loudly—*what the hell is next?* Many companies, simply gather monitored data extracted from us, specifically to compile patterns about how we think, how we act, how we do our jobs. And if we were just dealing with integral industries and good-guy governments, maybe this wouldn't be such a grave concern. After all, the majority of us are law-abiding, tax-paying, good and decent citizens. But, we're also dealing with—*and always will*, powermonger ilk and who knows what schemes they're cookin' up! Plus, there's still that thing about who actually needs jobs; its or us? At the very least, we must acknowledge this free-for-all monitoring gig, is utterly reckless, wholly invasive, and we'd be recklessly naïve—to *think anything less*.

While Numerati Brainiacs, programmers, technologists, data-miners and e-tailers all find this familiar ground, I don't but I'm learning. We all need to be learning. Everyone; Numerati Brainiacs, ruling cadres, experts and patriotic masses free enough to actually get to loudly question stuff—*why are we doing this to our own kids future?*

Back to the Grind.

We can choose to veer away from some of the currently entrenched monitoring going on; at least for now, by keeping our eyes and our very being away from peering pixels. *By staying caged in our own home, offline, curtains drawn.* But once we head out the door and off to work, that's no longer a choice.

Monitoring, barged right thru industry doors somewhere around 20 years ago. Whenever the actual onset was for each industry, monitoring machines have been glaring at workers ever since. Safety, was the given reason but—wasn't the driving factor. All along, industry honchos giddy to replace us with paycheckless-its, knew their investments wouldn't come to fruition til they monitored us for how we do what. Once this transpired, in marched rudimentary machinery like RCO's; *radio-controlled equipment*. Contraptions, which worked some of time, but definitely recorded all of the time—*how we do our jobs*, and definitely confounded efficiency—all of the time! So if you were and/or still are, an exasperated worker wondering when the boss is gonna wake up and see how costly and inefficient replacement machines are, they aren't asleep. They knew all along, a complete recogging to how work has forever been done, would begin inefficiently but obviously, felt their reckless idiocy was worth the bucks. Yes idiocy. They're the ones who came up with the bright idea to relegate workers to headache status, then whack off a hind leg to the oxen that pulls their damn commerce carts!

Replacement machines did get smarter. Higher-pay jobs were first to hit the chopping block but a whole host of jobs are on the block now. Any honcho, concerned

only with boosting productivity with or without us—are the course-setting elites of today. *The ones who can't recall our name cuz we're just a number~ BS.* Yeah, we're still just a number only now, a quantifiable number of—the monumental, guinea pig test-group. We are just the same as IBM's, 300,000 monitored test-group. As for all those high-tech jobs that were created, 2023 opened to the tune of another, job-slashing in the tech-sector; happened several more times—in just that year. We should track how many slashings this sector incurs cuz it's like a 2 for 1 slashing. Whenever any replacement round for any industry tags out at freebase-recogging; the goal to reach before we wake up to say whoa, there's less need to keep a surfeit of programmers around. I keep wondering just who, is supposed to spend end-of-the-line product dollars without an end-of-the-line paycheck? Machines sure won't. Machines, will never be compelled to do one damn thing.

Power Brokering 101.

This series is about dance partners cuz invasive technologies, don't just magically transpire. Power brokering begins this next leg but because we're a now-global society, those power moves have also become, seriously confounded. And, I opted to include even the gory, power brokering maneuvers cuz masses, come with a well-noted proclivity to overlook how the power dance rocks—and that it never ceases. But, since I spent so damn many years stalled on where *Our Story* was to end, these kind of power moves just kept stacking-up; squawking to be included. At first, I kept this section thinned down by replacing yesterday's events with hotly pressed ones til I saw the immense value of leaving them. Much about how these moves even begin, and much about how momentum even builds, are as predictable as we are. Basically then, about all that really changes are the dates, the names of the places and the people, who get caught up in these hells.

As of 2024, there's 195 countries in today's world; a number that often fluctuates, as does the number of countries currently embroiled in civil unrest. By 2014, the bad guy was *ISIS; Islamic State of Iraq and Syria*, and America just delivered airstrike round #1 their way. I wondered then and still do, what resets the count, to what's become countless; the year or the catchphrase? By 2015, *ISIS shortened to IS; Islamic State*; likely to convey a broader, Mid-East inclusion. Meanwhile, Palestine and Israel were again, coming unhinged. Same thing in 2023, when Hamas terrorists left Israel with their streets running red. Same with Putin. He invaded Ukraine in 2014, then again in 2022. Both nightmares, still rage. But when this fledgling was hatched in 2011, it just happened to be a year that aptly showcased—*The Timeworn Power Dance*.

2011 began with the use of *Facebook*, to help Iranian masses loosen their oppressive reins. The mass in Tunisia, then raged against their heavy-handler, and the first Arab despot was ousted; rampant unemployment was the predictable us-push, to show how we say enough. And so began—*The Arab Spring*. By May; after a decade-long manhunt, Bin Laden finally faced the grim reaper. By fall, Egypt's ousted despot; the one who bilked millions from that mass, stood trial. In Libya, their nutcase tyrant; who also bilked millions from its mass, remained on the lam for most of the summer til October when he too, faced the grim reaper. Down in Africa, Sudan was trying to break ties from the rest of that war-ridden continent to strike out on their own. Over in Spain, the unemployed were erupting. In South America, their emerging Democracy-type systems continue to remain precariously unsafe, from the autocratic ambitions that continue to plague them. What's become so damn predictable, begins with despots, tyrants, autocrats, all varied titles, that all have at least 3 things in common: they are self-serving egomaniacs, which means they are all in constant need of evermore heavy-handed power, and evermore self-absorbed grandeur. The one fact—*we must stop overlooking*.

The power dance isn't oppressively obvious in the free world but, it's still there. In 2012, America's disaffected; fed up with high unemployment and corporate greed, rolled down Wall Street, rolled across our great land—rippled across the globe. Our angst, thus became an evident—*real-live wave*. By 2013, Black Lives Matter made their move, and it's still going strong. By 2018, The Yellow Jackets came out en-masse over in France, and it's still limping along. Angst builds. Gory mayhem, is the oh-so typical outcome that follows, which oh-so typically transpires by someone hijacking our angst wave, and taking it for a down-spiral spin. Those waves, only end up in one place. This is the oh-so predictable cycle, that will go on and on til finally—some mass changes this timeworn jig up. Springsteen sings—*one step up ~ two steps back*. This song strikes the tempo to what has also become oh-so predictable—*about how we move*. And for the cynic; certain this jig will forever remain gory, then just realize—status-quo never changes, til finally it does.

To effect change—*belief comes first*. I believe the key to minimizing tragic domination cycles, rests in the hands of freer and educated masses. I'm not alone in this belief. But change, can be hard to see sometimes so consider this. We are the first era ever, to finally witness Democracy-type systems—*tip the overlord scale*. Also, we've watched communistic/socialistic experiments rise, then dwindle. Democracy systems, have become the best forward-ho governing option—to ensure ethical, freer existing. However, masses must engage and—*this includes more than casting an occasional vote*. Currently, Democracy is waning all across the globe which should concern us all. Currently, there's a real-live undermining going on beneath the very pillars of America's Democracy. Currently, oppressed masses all across the globe, continue to struggle their way to what freer masses already enjoy; what we take for granted even. If they succeed, world tolerance moves forward and we all win but if they don't, or if they trade one brand of oppression for another, humanity's progression trudges two steps back—*once again*.

But Money is Power.

America, isn't the only country experiencing an ever-widening gap between the ultra-rich and ultra-poor. And, this isn't happening just cuz countries fortunate to even have middles, now witness their middles shrink. In 2011, *Forbes* list of world billionaires tapped in at 1,210. By 2014, that list escalated to 1,645 billionaires. When the 2018 list tapped in at 2,208 billionaires, *Forbes* stated: "This elite group is worth \$9.1 trillion; up 18% since last year." As of 2024, 2,781 individuals made the billionaire cut. And a billionaire, isn't just a doubled-up millionaire. I found this quip to put some perspective onto what is—a *billion*. A thousand millions, equals a single billion. A stack of 1 million dollars, is 333 feet high. A stack of 1 billion dollars, is 1000 times taller and counted in miles; 63 miles in fact. Hope that helps put some perspective onto a billion cuz when we get into world debts, those are now counted in trillions and never, did I find a thing to put some perspective onto what is—*absolutely unfathomable*.

That the ultra-rich get richer, isn't the problem. Editor Sam Pizzigati of the online weekly—*Too Much*, wrote a great clip to put some clarity on what is—the *problem*. He cites statistics from *The United Nations World Institute University* and tells us that today's billionaires, now hold more wealth than half of this world's adults. So less than a drop of this world's population, clutch a combined wealth of more than 4 billion of us, clutching our scratched-together pennies. This, begins the problem. Pizzigati recaps: "These powerful, then flex their political-mite and play ego-games leaving society in a lurch. In China, they try to undo recent worker protection laws. In India, they squabble amongst themselves creating huge blackouts." This is why the tag Oligarchy rose to the surface. *Oligarchy*: "Government by the few, where money is concentrated in the hands of a small

faction where power is exercised by them—*usually for corrupt and selfish purposes.*” It is in every nation’s concern—*when moneyed-power overrides the health of masses.* Pizzigati quotes Camdessus; *a previous International Monetary Fund Director*, who stood in a room full of world leaders in 1996 and boldly stated: “A world that lets the wealth concentrate in a precious few hands, is asking for colossal trouble. The widening gap between rich and poor within nations, is morally outrageous, economically wasteful and potentially, socially explosive. Ignore the obligation to share, and the world will surely witness confrontation, violence and civil disorder.” It’s been 28 years since Camdessus spoke those words. The wealth disparity gap—*is now Grand Canyon humongous.*

There’s no sense in getting hung-up on how rich the rich are or even what’s a moral obligation to share. Civil disorder doesn’t arise cuz the rich just keep getting richer. Personally, I don’t begrudge the rich and I don’t think most of us do. Besides, the rich typically generously donate to charities and some of them, are genuine philanthropists at heart even. It’s elitism; aka Oligarchy, condensed into such a small faction of now-global, ultra-wealthy elites, that is gravely disconcerting. Equally disconcerting, is the Grand Canyon gap between the tiptop and all the rest of us. This gap, gauges the overall health of entire societies. So when disparity gapes; when 1 out of every 8 humans, currently exist at extreme starvation-level poverty, when the hordes of not even 1% could actually bury whole cities in food, when middles plum shrivel, and when the great majority must try to make ends meet within low-income to downright poor brackets, Camdessus use of explosive—*is spot-on.* Modestly existing or otherwise, free world us are not immune to the troubles of the oppressed, hungry and angry others. 9/11, reminded us of that.

Connecting Rods.

We are—*a now-global society.* I hadn’t much thought about this til I went to gather up a few global connecting rods for this fledgling. Of course, we all know the price tags of world unrest reverberate across our globe but when the 2011 Tsunami hit Japan, I saw where geological upheaval recoveries, also come with global price tags so I added that to my list. I found a few more connecting rods in *Newsweek*; a loyal subscriber back when they had printed periodicals, and even after they slighted me. I neglected to notate dates on all my scribbled notes so this next—*aptly titled clip*, must’ve ran during the recession. Written by Professor Nial Ferguson titled—*Connecting the Dots*, it’s about Eurozone finances: “The economic crisis, revealed the reluctance of those least affected, to bail out the hardest hit. Equally culpable, are Euroland’s core banks as are peripheral ones. The dirty little secret of eurozone finances is that if one of the periphery countries were to default, German banks would be among the biggest losers. They’re all in this banking crisis together.” Another connecting-rod was about global tax quandaries by Robert Samuelson titled—*The Real GE Scandal.* “It’s not that multinational *GE* didn’t pay taxes or that other mega-corps don’t either, it’s that we don’t know how to tax global businesses. Love them or hate them, global multinationals are here to stay.” Yet another tie that binds us is about labor protection laws; something industrialized nations are required to provide but come with a price tag other countries; such as China, do not incur. So, everything stamped—*Made in China*, comes slave-like affordably packaged to the rest of the world so we purchase a great deal of their wares. China, then ends up with money to spare; financing freer experiences, such as *America’s—runaway debt.*

One connection, took a bit of time to germinate but the seed was planted when I happened upon an interview with Australian actor Kate Blanchet who made the comment that American politics—is everyone’s concern. Years later, I was chatting with some Swedish and French tourists who echoed the same but by then, my scope was fully zeroed

in on the worldwide race to covet Superintelligence so I replied that actually, it's the politics of all powerful nations—*that should concern everyone*. Which, brings us full-circle back to what's all-encompassing, and why the power dance will remain a running-theme in—*The Story of Our Times*.

Blanchet's comment about American politics being everyone's concern, hit home several years later while watching a debate on genetic modification. It was a London professor who looked straight into the camera and implored all Americans; the forerunner to these races—to *please think carefully about what we are doing*. I thought wow! If America dropped out of the race to covet Superintelligence, what powerhouse moves up to be the forerunner? China? Russia? Who would—a *now-global mass*, want to have leading the charge to this race? Then, I thought about it a bit further.

No ruling armature of any single country—America's included, can slow the race to covet Super-Goliath down, the tinkering with our gene pool, tech-transcending or whatever else, this Tech-Godsend has in store. So if American politics is everyone's concern, then all other masses must realize and now—*it's the American mass*, who will need all the reinforcements we can get if our universal goal is to slow these nightmares down! And while we all might be hoping the free world good guys win these races, that's about a finish line outcome. The cash cows of today's so-called advancements, are set to a breakneck blinding pace so tomorrow, isn't even in their sights.

Retracking.

Even within a mere 500-year lookback, feudalism, serfdom, slavery, were the common systems nearly every one of our ancestors endured. A governance, where royalty and nobility worked together to control the lands and the masses. Today, masses do exist freer than ever which is unprecedented but control, merely adapted. To control the lands of every yesterday, is to control the now-global, stock-power mite of today. Today's ultra-rich, now mesh with elected politicians within the free world; not nobility, and it's safe to imply that every set of ultra-rich hands this world over, holds controlling stock in at least one, multinational corp. So even though representation is regional, the powerful reach of mega-corps; now called CorpOligarchies for hell's sake, integrates regional representation onto a global scale. Here's a decade lookback to how that meshing has worked itself out, here in America.

In 2008 from Reuters; one of the largest world news outlets: "American lawmakers enjoyed an extraordinary run in their personal investments but to determine their total net worth, is impossible. Congress; the rule-writing armature, uses their own financial disclosure forms exempting them, from the very rules everyone else must follow. Consequently, these officials have millions personally invested in the politically influential industries—*they regulate*. Real-Estate. Banking. Pharmaceuticals. Energy. Technology."

In 2014 from www.ballotpedia.org. "For the first time in history, the majority of America's elected Washington officials are millionaires. Curiously, all during a time when Congress members had a \$316 million gain—*while median household incomes decreased*."

In 2018 from www.rollcall.com. "Congressional members total wealth reported for 2017 was around \$2.43 billion; about a 20% increase from the previous Congress. This eye-popping gain came when *The Dow Jones and S&P 500*, averaged less than 10%." So, I divvied this up. Using \$2.43 billion by 535 representatives, comes out to about \$454 million—*per member*. Wow! For that kind of bank roll, you'd think they could figure out how to effectively run our country as one, power-shared entity dammit!

Lifetime Entrenchment.

Historically in America, most national level representation hailed from the wealthier class which used to be fairly logical simply cuz the ability to competently weigh-in on regional/global decision-making, meant you had to be educated enough to at least be able to read and write; a luxury only the privileged had during much of our developing Democracy. And as the prerequisite, bloodline ruling systems declined in other, now-freer countries; supplanted by their own Democracy-type systems, the only prerequisite left in today's free world used to maintain the wide gap between elitism and masses—*is wealth*.

In such a blessed era of now-educated and competent commoners where finally, we get to embark on a patriotic representation trek if passionate enough, why then, are we still ruled by the rich? Well, there's at least 2 reasons in America that are certain. Here, it now takes millions to land a national-level incumbency pass. Takes millions more, to keep—*what's become a pass for a lifetime*. The very logical necessity of limiting term representation, was snuffed out in 1995; nearly 30 years ago now. The very logical necessity of limiting the financing of those terms—*for what is now political entrenchment*, was snuffed out in 2010. Both dismal turn of events came to pass—*all on our watch*.

High-level representation; where the pork pot literally overflows with billions to dole out, lifetime incumbents now have ample time to direct that flow back to the hands that generously support—*their lifetime passes*. America's national representation run of 2020, came with a \$14 billion price tag. This showcases what a high-stakes gambit our election process has become; a gambit, largely responsible for why our Democracy is often called—*Imperial Capitalism or Shamocracy*. Both tags, bring on an embarrassed flush whenever I read them. But when I think about our representation being fully aware those tags nor CorpOligarchy—*don't spell Democracy*, that brings on an enraged flush! Damn! *Our representation, is undermining the very epitome of what is Democracy!* But, we allowed this gambit to become—*status quo*. Sure, unionized and ideological outlets contribute to this gig but even combined, those wads don't come close to what corps dole out. And the bulkiest wads, come straight outta the pockets of just a few, ultra-rich cronies, whose mega-corps have much to gain, so long as their high-stakes gambit pays off. We, are the gamble. We, are why billions are spent.

Convolutd.

Convolutd? You bet! Provincial existing; localized production of goods, trading, governance, took a stark turn of-late. Multinational Corps, now fuse all world masses together on a global scale of just one, moneyed-power, stock-trading system. This precise drivetrain consortium; production, trade, banking, jobs, taxes, is what provides an existence for nearly every society now. Maybe this is good, maybe not but here's what's certain. When riding the rollercoaster of stock-mite power that's set to high-stakes screech volume, when the wealth of the land is being rendered right down into the controlling hands of a mighty few, and when today's cash cows are all-things-techno with scant regard to the calamities most are then geared to develop into, the concern for all masses today, and for our own progeny's tomorrow, gets but a mere—*backseat glimpse*.

Monitoring/replacement tech, compounds what's already convolutd. For instance, the monitoring in one humanitarian field; say bone cancer, then shares that data with another field; say bone replacement, which gives a young leukemia victim a walking chance, and we all know how that spin will go, should go. So where's the stopgap after humanitarian advancements—*which then paves the way to tech-transcendence?* How do we put a sanity-cap on monitoring law-abiding societies, and the gutting of workforces? When do we—*intend pull out the brake fluid to put some whoa onto some of this?*

To persist in touting fear-based justifications during a chapter blessed with an overwhelming law-abiding mass, stems from a ruling cadre's ever-growing disregard of us. Period. But before we conclude all powerhouse elites are negligent of their oaths and responsibilities, it'd be more prudent to realize it's our systems, the self-serving learned how to undermine, that's no longer effectively working—*at least for us*. To be clear, my ire is directed at our representation of-late—*not Democracy*. So here's my patriotic affirmation. I champion pureform existing, our globe; so we have somewhere to even exist, and Democracy—*first and foremost*. And though this is written from an American perspective; so please apply accordingly—*vigilant wariness applies to all freer masses*. This is our measure of sound oversight, and to do so isn't audacious or fanatical! We shoot ourselves in the foot every time we tag deriding labels onto ourselves! And while on labels, we need to come up with an extraction plan to reclaim a few words the outer fringe camps absconded with. Vigilant, patriotic, progressive, conservative, are words that convey how all humanity managed to get this far so those words belong to all of us! Yes, this American thinks my country is fantastic but it's in every patriotic bone I have that aches for free world masses to engage as one! America's system, isn't the only Democracy being undermined. Basic common decency for all—*is our guiding beacon*. Democracy is—*the only system guided by that same beacon*. It's a system worthy to protect, worthy to ever-improve. Even if the self-serving don't believe this, I do. Do you?

Who are We?

We are more than just a number. There's some great reasons why quantifying us; workers, consumers, voters, society, is completely offensive and it has everything to do with such aggressive tactics raining down on us while adding us up. Such irresponsible schemes are completely remiss of decency; valuing the individuals we are, the qualities we come with—*the parts of us that can't be quantified*. That's a whole lot of the human picture not getting painted! This pathetic skewing infuriates me whenever I witness it in action. In this showdown with machines, I've come to see this stand-alone insult, as the most covered-up pitfall to be found on this tech-road we've suddenly been flung upon!

Baker concluded in his book: "As the Numerati advance, they're going to be measuring and profiling countless aspects of human behavior. This is going to raise torturous moral questions, ones that until now—*we never knew to ask*." Well, I'm providing a running-list of questions worth asking now and loudly! However, the questions that are torturous, are cuz they're directed at us; *the free world torchbearers for all humanity who actually gets to loudly question stuff!* So, why aren't we? Our critics say easy-living is the culprit that got the best of us so, did it? Freer and educated, is what our predecessors ushered in to define themselves significant so what defines free wheelin' us of today as significant? By remaining unmoved, irreversibly-entrenched monitoring is what we've bequeathed to our own, and I just can't believe this is what we wanted to gift them so, why did we? Where was our united outrage? Was a fully monitored existence truly unstoppable? Do we only say freedom measures the travel of human progression but—*don't actually believe it?* Do we even think about it? What do you; the one reading these word right now—think about, and believe?

Guess it doesn't much matter what actually caused us to stall and for so many years but to persist in remaining unmoved about what's going on, damn sure does. The tech-changes coming within the next dozen years, are slated to surpass all changes of the past 30 years. *Changes that effect the socio-everything for every world mass*. For freer us who can do something, we must at least start learning and talking loudly about what's going on cuz if we don't, it will be us—*who will implode Democracy systems*.

We are, a now-global economy. A realtime reality, that's got it all coming down to what ruling system will prevail for tomorrow's, unparalleled Tech-Godsend reality. If we won't champion freer and educated Democracies, we must consider now, how that will set our kids up for their tomorrow. Allowing elitism to run roughshod over us again, goes back to that ***one step up, two steps back jig***. Countless, are the times masses were forced to remind rulers they matter. Historically, it's called a revolution and happens whenever rulers treat a mass like some inconsequential entity long enough, the mass finally unites to remind them otherwise. The power dance will be a forever constant. The only tempo changer then is—*free world engagement*. Currently; primarily cuz decent-pay jobs are getting harder to come by but also, cuz we're being deluged with outright lies and misinformation, America is witnessing a surge of white supremacists. Wherever any mass finds it hard to feed their families, whenever disregards of us, angst and ignorance expands, it clouds the why or where it all even began. Escalation then follows and that is—***talkin' bout a revolution ~TC. The Human Experiment***, is not an exclusive ride for elitism. We, are not insignificant passengers. They need to remember this, but so do we.

Choices.

To speak of what we must face and where we actually stand, is to face today's realities—*with eyes wide open*. We, not rulers. Besides, they're off on rollercoaster runaway and we hold the brake fluid. We are at a now or never juncture. Sitting smack in our lap, are the significant and revolutionary anomalies of—*freer and educated*. Unprecedented actualities, just sitting ripe-n-ready for the next forward-ho adaptation spurt and at some point—*like right now dammit*, we must cash in on this! Greater mass awareness, initiates greater mass unity. This is the logical, ***next step up***. And one way or the other, this is the choice each of us will make for tomorrow's future. *Each of us*.

Life is—*all about choice*. I made the choice to write this series and so far, you've made the choice to read it. And since this story didn't unfold for me overnight, I want to afford you the benefit of a slow unfolding too. Retention, takes a bit of time to gel, and there's just no way of getting around that. Maybe, we just need some time together, to digest and chat about the surfaces I'm scratching. Sure hope so anyway but undeniably, what we've been doing isn't working. At least for us.

These installments are, long and heavy. Most require several hours to digest which is to mean—*mulling time included*. Take some breaks but stick it out. Realize, this offering is—*The Story of our Times*. Which does mean for the better—*and the worse*. We've got a fair case of the worse going on right now so must guard against this mission becoming a miserable experience or, we won't get far. And since most of us hail from the blue/white collar sectors, means we're a colorful lot! There's just no sense pretending we're all-about business, so I borrowed music to help spark us, and added a trivia twist for a bit of relief as one measure to help prevent this from becoming a drag. Please, knock yourself out and come up with other engaging measures! We are indeed inventive! Music and song though, gives beat to our thoughts, rhythm to embrace our passion. Song, helped slaves endure what had to be—utter misery. ***Swing low sweet chariot, comin' for to carry us home ~JS***. All we have to do, is tackle what's nearly insurmountable!

Humans, won't get some auto-program upgrade in order to affect change. Please begin the old-fashioned bio-process by tapping hope, belief, faith. Hope, til belief takes over so that we can, make a positive change cuz together—*we surely can*. Have faith, that a handful of perfectly-flawed installments can give our unity a start so I'm asking, please climb with me. ***Help me get over this mountain, help me get over this hill ~CCRW***.

Most Sincerely Yours, Publius

