

Sunday, December 23, 2007

Biometrics, Big Brother, and the Bill of Rights.

Â "There are no nations; there are no peoples. There are no Russians. There are no Arabs. There is no third world. There is no west. There is only one holistic system of systems; one vast interwoven, interacting, multivariate multinational dominion of dollars. Petrodollars, electrodollars, reichmarks, rubles, rin, pounds and shekels. It is the international system of currency that determines the totality of life on this planet. That is the natural order of things today." (Ned Beatty's Arthur Jensen to Peter Finch's Norman Beale, in Network.)Â No matter how much I like Ned Beatty as an actor, I despise his Arthur Jensen character, depicted above, who claims the world to be nothing but "the international system of currency." In reality, governments exist, and must be fully answerable to people. Governments will only be answerable to people if people insist on it. Â For instance, when the United States proceeds with an ambitious biometrics program to identify and track people worldwide through images of their faces, fingerprints and palm patterns, people need to recognize the harm such a program can cause to civil liberties, and they need to speak up, starting with me and with everyone reading this blog entry. Jon Katz.

Posted by Jon Katz in First Amendment at 00:00

Although Ned Beatty reminds me of an attorney I once knew, I find his character, Arthur Jensen, fascinating yet chilling. I agree, a government should be answerable, but when I hear of stuff like biometrics, I'm reminded of Big Brother, cointelpro, and civil rights abuse. In the 60's, William Sheldon, a psychologist, took 4000 nude photos of Yale students and attempted to profile them on their body types-only later to be debunked. The F.B.I.'s biometric program is a fancy version of that, which I believe should be debunked and discredited too. It is up to a people to hold their lawmakers accountable, and demand an end to this racial profiling. We can make a difference!

Anonymous on Dec 26 2007, 21:11

Thanks, John, for your comment. As you say, we must all make our lawmakers accountable. Have a great week. Jon

Anonymous on Jan 1 2008, 21:05