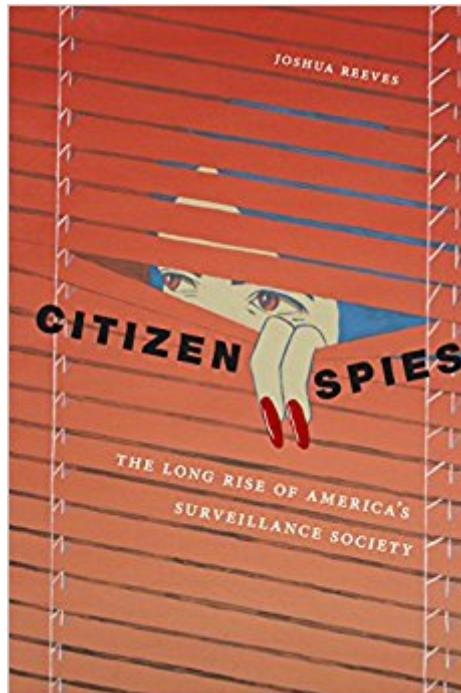




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Citizen Spies: The Long Rise Of America's Surveillance Society



Synopsis

The history of recruiting citizens to spy on each other in the United States. Ever since the revelations of whistleblower Edward Snowden, we think about surveillance as the data-tracking digital technologies used by the likes of Google, the National Security Administration, and the military. But in reality, the state and allied institutions have a much longer history of using everyday citizens to spy and inform on their peers. *Citizen Spies* shows how “If You See Something, Say Something” is more than just a new homeland security program; it has been an essential civic responsibility throughout the history of the United States. From the town crier of Colonial America to the recruitment of youth through “junior police” to the rise of Neighborhood Watch, AMBER Alerts, and Emergency 9-1-1, Joshua Reeves explores how ordinary citizens have been taught to carry out surveillance on their peers. Emphasizing the role humans play as “seeing” and “saying” subjects, he demonstrates how American society has continuously fostered cultures of vigilance, suspicion, meddling, snooping, and snitching. Tracing the evolution of police crowd-sourcing from “Hue and Cry” posters and America’s Most Wanted to police-affiliated social media, as well as the U.S.’s recurrent anxieties about political dissidents and ethnic minorities from the Red Scare to the War on Terror, Reeves teases out how vigilance toward neighbors has long been aligned with American ideals of patriotic and moral duty. Taking the long view of the history of the citizen spy, this book offers a much-needed perspective for those interested in how we arrived at our current moment in surveillance culture and contextualizes contemporary trends in policing.

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Customer Reviews

“In an age where surveillance studies tends to focus on digital systems and technologies, Joshua Reeves’s excellent work reminds us of the long duree of governance through the recruitment of citizens as extensions of police. This deep expedition into peer to peer spying meticulously connects seeing to saying, observing to reporting, and ultimately surveillance to communication. Citizen Spies takes us on a rollicking ride where we discover that our neighbors are as integral as the devices in snoop and snitch culture.”-Jack Z. Bratich, author of Conspiracy Panics: Political Rationality and Popular Culture "Wonderfully written, Citizen Spies asks us to consider the implications of governing when carried out through the bodies of citizens, particularly through their capacities for surveillance and communication. Examining case studies of U.S. citizens invited to spy on others from D.A.R.E., a program that encourages children to snitch on their parents, to crowdsourcing Reeves upends notions of civic duty. Citizen Spies provocatively invites us, in response to the invocation 'if you see something, say something,' to not say anything when we see something: silence as an act of radical resistance." -Rachel E. Dubrofsky, co-editor, Feminist Surveillance Studies “Joshua Reeves’s groundbreaking book explores the myriad ways in which looking out for one another has come to mean monitoring one another in the name of security and public safety. It is a cautionary tale for an era of interactive populism about how people have come to actively participate in their own submission and how this could be otherwise. In this respect, it is an urgently important contribution to our understanding of the pitfalls and potentials of contemporary citizenship.”-Mark Andrejevic, Pomona College "Analyzing citizen-policing initiatives from 'Hue and Cry' posters in 1775 to...Call-911 programs, author Reeves’s cutting insight deconstructs the protocols and policies of what he calls 'America’s surveillance society.' [T]his book carefully examines historical accounts and court cases up to present day, and the withering effects of police crowdsourcing on America’s dream of security, comfort, and liberty."-Starred Library Journal "Reeves’s larger point is that the array of surveillance and control systems established in American society since the Sept. 11 attacks is largely dependent on habits of complicity, or at least of acquiescence, that have been a very long time in forming."-Inside Higher Ed “Citizen Spies offers a fascinating history of citizen-led policing, as well as partnerships between citizens and police, in order to situate current forms of criminal justice and information sharing through digital media. Timely, engaging, and a pleasure to read, Joshua Reeves provides a

much-needed perspective for scholarly and practice-based conversations about policing technologies and surveillance. —Daniel Trottier, author of *Social Media as Surveillance: Rethinking Visibility in a Converging World*

Joshua Reeves is Assistant Professor of New Media Communications and Speech Communication at Oregon State University.

This book is amazingly right on track! Enjoyed the read....

Citizen Spies is two very different books: one a failure, one a success. The failure is the bizarre restriction of the evidence Joshua Reeves allows readers to know. The success is that he uses this limited evidence to show that Americans should work to avoid being spies for the authorities. It fails because citizen spying is demonstrably a true evil all over the world. It is a standard tool of authorities. East Germany had everyone spying on each other. China is probably the worst of the worst, as neighborhood widows are charged with spying on everyone, and denouncing anyone they please. The USA did it in the Philippines. The Nazis did it in WWII. So Reeves's case can be proven with certainty, really easily, by looking outward. Instead, he examines a small number of (by comparison) tame American programs that debatably head in that direction. Things like Neighborhood Watch, D.A.R.E. and "If you see something, say something." He argues the spying is worse than the poor and often negative results the programs obtain. Americans call in millions of anti-terrorism tips each year which actually "prevent authorities from acting on them in any meaningful way." This includes 40 alleged terrorist plots every day. Many lives have been ruined for absolutely nothing but a clue or an accusation. Just like China. In Citizen Spies, we learn that the proper bureaucratese is "lateral surveillance initiative." We learn that various paranoid agencies are busy instilling pointless fear. For example, for DHS, suspicious activity includes talking on a cell phone, using cash, or frequently checking a wristwatch. Reeves reserves some of his most damning rhetoric for D.A.R.E., the public school program by which the police turn children into informants against their parents. Essentially brainwashing them into telling everything, they convince children they are there to help their parents if they take drugs. Police instruct them never to tell their parents they're talking to the police because parents routinely beat children who do(!). The kids rat on their parents, whereupon they lose their jobs, go to prison, and split up the family. The

state seizes all their assets, and the children can then be rotated through foster homes. A win-win by D.A.R.E. standards. D.A.R.E. has a billion dollar budget to promulgate this family values spy program. The hypocrisy of a supposedly "free" people is stinging. It could be said that Edward Snowden was just following the Americans Golden Rule: if you see something, say something. 77% of Americans don't approve of their surveillance by the government. Reeves says don't co-operate, and leave your personal tracking device home. David Wineberg

More about vigilantism than espionage, this well organized text informs on 5 aspects of the 'see and say' culture whereby citizens use information technology to aid police in law enforcement; Crowd sourcing, 911 technologies, Neighborhood Watch programming, Seeing and saying youth activity like D.A.R.E. and Lateral surveillance programs. The book cites questionable social consequences, giving coverage on positive and negative aspects, especially tensions between active citizen law enforcement participation and vigilantism with 'spy on your neighbor' mentality. It's not new as police have promoted "hue and cry" citizenry pursuit since colonial times. Since WWII we have lived by the slogan 'Silence Means Security.' Public participation has been encouraged by posting of '10 most wanted' and TV programs like 'America's Most Wanted.' Crowd sourcing can be manipulated by police-affiliated government. There are watch patrols that reduce number of police needed, but resistance groups like Occupy Wall street movement are using to fight police power. Government encouraging citizen participation in surveillance and snitching accelerated with LBJ's "war on crime." Nowadays the terrorist is replacing the spy as the unseen enemy. Technological advances have enhanced efficiency but posed new problems. Many feel it reduces people to instruments or objects. There have been problems with pranking, as with celebrity 'SWATS.' After captain Zimmerman shot Trayvon Martin authorities have been discouraging Neighborhood Watch people from carrying firearms. Coercion of youth by organizations like D.A.R.E. and junior police clubs have fueled anti-snitch violence as well as respect for drug dealers who funded local social programming. Organizations like Huey P. Newton Gun Club and the Guardian Angels incite more fear than security. Surveillance and control systems established in American society since the Sept. 11 attacks effort to monitor and report on others is largely dependent on habits of complicity, or at least of acquiescence in programs like Neighborhood Watch, AMBER Alerts, and Emergency 9-1-1. Revelations of Edward Snowden has caused data-tracking digital technologies have been used by Google, the National Security Administration, and the military to be used for surveillance.

Citizen Spies by Joshua Reeves is a free NetGalley ebook that I read in late February. Reeves describes feelings of safety as overwhelming one's human nature to harm someone (often discriminatingly) in defense of their life and property, in the guise of a hyper-vigilant neighborhood watch, feelings of hostility and contamination toward cultural groups, the use of social media outlets against neighborhood crime, and the history of propagandized silence in fear of global terrorism and/or espionage. My eyes were really wide open when the concept of Wanted posters were explained as evolving into 'Dangerous: Do Not Approach, Contact Authorities Immediately,' as well as the overview of snitch culture, and children's groups, such as D.A.R.E. or the junior police.

This is a must-read book for anyone seeking to understand the roots of the dynamics of mass surveillance in the post-9/11 age, roots that go far deeper back into US history than most people imagine. Engagingly well-written and impeccably researched, Citizen Spies is the cutting edge text on the subject.

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