

We Are Living in *Fahrenheit 451*

“Congress shall make no law abridging the press” is a grander lie than Santa Claus. At least children will mature and realize that Santa is a lie. Just as all of Bradbury’s predictions about a technocratic future in *Fahrenheit 451* were ignored, the main message regarding censorship was also forgotten. Currently, Julian Assange’s imprisonment is history’s most blatant violation of the free press. Therefore, we should wonder if Bradbury’s vision became the government’s guide to tyranny. Everyone wants to avoid the dictatorship described in *1984*, but, for some reason, no one wants to prevent the future described in *Fahrenheit 451*.

The most lethal weapon in the world is not a nuke, gun, or even speech; it is fear. Regardless if it is a phobia of viruses, guns, or ideas, anyone will do anything to prevent the fear. The government fears free thoughts. Remember how Lenin’s revolution overthrew the Tsar? Having learned from the Tsar’s mistake, currently, governments are persecuting Julian Assange, the editor of Wikileaks, a site that publishes whistleblower documents. However, there is absolutely no legitimate reason for this. The US claims that leaking footage of murdering civilians may jeopardize the safety of the soldiers involved. Just an idea: if the US did not send soldiers in helicopters to gun down foreign innocents, the soldiers’ safety would have never been jeopardized. That is just an excuse. The US army is the largest in the world and one dead soldier means nothing to them. They merely wanted to censor Assange to conceal their crimes and protect the current establishment. Similarly, in *Fahrenheit 451*, Montag and other men left the city with the knowledge of books before it was destroyed. Their gathering proves that the destruction of the current order is only possible when knowledgeable citizens come together. Unfortunately for the real-world counterpart, such knowledgeable citizens either do not exist or are arrested, making revolutions almost impossible.

“Give me liberty or give me death” is the most misunderstood quotation of all time. The government will always choose to give death. During the raid on the woman’s house, Beatty forced her to surrender her books. After refusing to do so, she burnt the house down along with herself. In the eyes of the heartless firefighters, she would have been taken to an insane asylum anyways. At least they have one less house to handle. In the same light, Mr. Assange’s arrest is a classic example of governments preferring death over liberty. Having spent seven years locked in the Ecuadorian embassy, upon his arrest, despite being forty-seven, Assange looked seventy. The year of heavy stress of being a prisoner inside the embassy caused his premature aging. Now, despite his declining mental and physical health, he is still imprisoned. It also did not improve his health when authorities abused him in prison. Just like the woman who burnt her house down, he will be granted death instead of liberty. The current deliberate failure to treat his health will cause his inevitable death, which will somehow be ruled as suicide. When will the government give citizens liberty instead?

Ever since the rise of technology, society has become more oblivious to the issues plaguing them. For the past decade Montag has never questioned the legitimacy or ethics of his job until Clarisse questioned his occupation one time. As evident with his wife, Mildred, technology distracts people from the truth and the issues they face. In the real world, distractions come in all forms from the media and government--which are using communication technologies to be super-spread distractions. For instance, Donald Trump recently pardoned Susan B Anthony, a dead feminist from the 1900s. He chose her instead of pardoning someone

such as Assange or Snowden. There is no doubt that this was a distraction from the heroes' current horrible mistreatment. Of course, pardoning either one of the men would not be in his interest since he wants to build a surveillance state, but he could simply not have pardoned Ms. Anthony. Now the media will gobble up this pardon for a week and conveniently not mention the people who should be pardoned instead. If the public is not focused on Trump's heroic enemies, he always wins. Additionally, the media, through technology, has made it ever so much easier to distract the public regarding the people who we should defend. Somehow, the media have convinced people that a different child rapist is the hope of America and that a whistleblower is a traitor. This is the technological future they say that will change humanity. They ain't wrong.