

Book Review: Police State U.S.A. by Cheryl K. Chumley

Kam Williams
Special To
The Skanner News

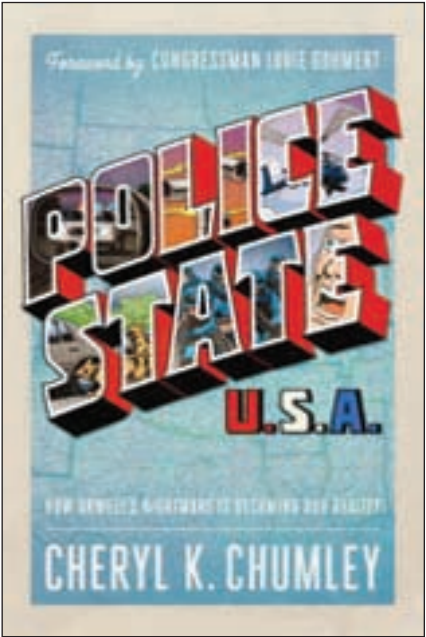
Anybody tuning in to the media coverage of the daily protests of the shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri can't help but notice the intimidating police presence that makes the city look more like a battlefield than a suburban enclave. The frightening militarization has featured everything from armored Humvees and tanks rolling down the streets, to helmeted officers flanked shoulder-to-shoulder behind

body-length armored shields, to snipers in camouflage fatigues training their M16 rifles on marchers through night-vision scopes, to the use of teargas, rubber bullets, smoke bombs and flash grenades to disperse demonstrators. What are we to make of such a disturbing show of force on the part of local, state and federal authorities? To Cheryl K. Chumley it is merely further evidence of a burgeoning abuse of power on the part of a government already hell bent on trampling its citizens' Constitutional

rights. In her book, Police State U.S.A.: How Orwell's Nightmare Is Becoming Our Reality, the veteran journalist indicts present-day America as a "total surveillance society." She argues that tyrannical rule has come as a consequence of the Patriot Act's creation of secret data collection centers and the employment of the IRS, NSA phone taps, drones, tracking devices, warrantless searches, traffic light cameras and the like to nefarious ends. For example, the author cites the case of Scotts-

dale, Arizona, whose city council approved the purchase of a building to house its police investigative unit, "but refused to disclose the facility's location" in order to "protect the lives" of detectives working undercover. She says it's certifiably scary, when the nation has arrived at a point where taxpayers are no longer privy to such previously public information. In a timely chapter devoted to "The Rise of Militarized Police," Ms. Chumley states that the technology cops now have at their disposal "is

the stuff of science fiction," like guns that fire darts embedded with a GPS. Though such draconian measures should supposedly be of no concern to the law-abiding, it's still of little comfort when you think of the seemingly neverending state of siege of for folks in Ferguson trying to exercise their First Amendment rights. Food for thought for anyone who fervently believes our inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness comes from God, not the government.



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