

Missed connections

by peter darbyshire

I lost my job but the government found me a new one. Now the government pays me to pretend I'm a travelling businessman. I fly around the country to imaginary meetings. It's part of a project to make it look like the economy is doing well. I buy unsold seats on airplanes with fake company credit cards and tell my seat-mates about my imaginary businesses.

I tell people beside me on the red-eyes about my bioresearch firm in Houston.

I tell people beside me in the airport Starbucks about my contextual advertising firm in Toronto.

I tell people beside me at the airport urinals about my air freshener firm in Milwaukee.

I give them my email addresses and business cards, but none of these companies actually exist.

I see the same people on the same flights again and again. I see the same people sitting at the same airport gates again and again. We introduce ourselves to each other again and again, and pretend we've never met. We buy each other drinks and sleep with each other in hotel airports. We tell each other about our imaginary families in our imaginary homes. We hold each other in the dark and weep.

We keep the country running.

We are the economy.

