

Science Fiction

by stephen hastings-king

The metastasis of the national security state has resulted in an everywhere invisible war.

For too long it was at the edges of everyday life. It defined enemies and moved to eliminate them in the name of preserving continuity.

But it confused itself with continuity. It confused itself with what it was established to defend.

In the beginning it monitored enemies that were outside. But the outside kept expanding to include everywhere the system was not; every place, every channel.

In this way, the system performed its confusion.

We knew it was happening. But it continued for so long that we forgot.

The crisis was a change in the weather of communication. The change in the weather of communication eroded consent for what had been.

The national security system sensed in this a threat. It reacted as a system as an almost thinking thing. This almost thinking replicated in the mind of every agent.

First the system declared a state of emergency. Then the system declared itself secret. What was secret kept expanding.

By assembling lists of the first to disappear we learned that political dissent and acts of war were equivalent.

By assembling lists of the next to disappear we learned that to tell what was happening around us was to reveal what was secret.

This is how we discovered that the system had declared war on us.

People continued disappearing. Then we remembered that we are monitored.

We were driven underground, reduced to calling each other phone booth to phone booth, each a relic of by-gone days of anonymity. But those lines were monitored too.

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Now few of us are left.

This is the story of the metastasis of the national security state. It declared itself to be invisible only to replicate in every subsystem. Now it lives by continually expanding. What is inside is the history of its expansion. It is like any other cancer.

