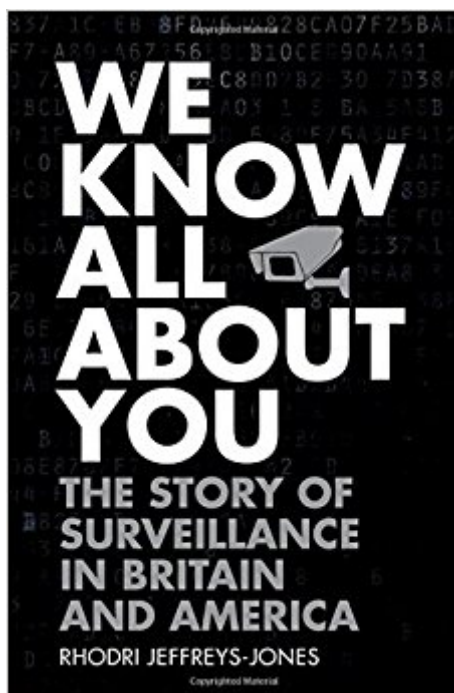


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We Know All About You: The Story Of Surveillance In Britain And America



Synopsis

This is the story of surveillance in Britain and the United States, from the detective agencies of the late nineteenth century to 'wikileaks' and CIA whistleblower Edward Snowden in the twenty-first. Written by prize-winning historian and intelligence expert Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones, it is the first full overview of its kind. Delving into the roles of credit agencies, private detectives, and phone-hacking journalists as well as agencies like the FBI and NSA in the USA and GCHQ and MI5 in the UK, Jeffreys-Jones highlights malpractices such as the blacklist and illegal electronic interceptions. He demonstrates that several presidents - Franklin D. Roosevelt, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon - conducted various forms of political surveillance, and also how British agencies have been under a constant cloud of suspicion for similar reasons. Continuing with an account of the 1970s leaks that revealed how the FBI and CIA kept tabs on anti-Vietnam War protestors, he assesses the reform impulse of this era - an impulse that began in America and only gradually spread to Britain. The end of the Cold War further at the end of the 1980s then undermined confidence in the need for state surveillance still further, but it was to return with a vengeance after 9/11. What emerges is a story in which governments habitually abuse their surveillance powers once granted, demonstrating the need for proper controls in this area. But, as Jeffreys-Jones makes clear, this is not simply a story of the Orwellian state. While private sector firms have sometimes acted as a brake on surveillance by the state (particularly in the electronic era), they have also often engaged in dubious surveillance practices of their own. Oversight and regulation, he argues, therefore need to be universal and not simply concentrate on the threat to the individual posed by the agencies of government.

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Customer Reviews

No challenge is greater in the democratic nations than preserving privacy and civil liberties in this rush toward greater security at all costs. Over the years, Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones has proven his ability to grapple with this struggle between the forces of privacy, on the one hand, and security, on the other hand. With this new book, he offers an exceptionally insightful examination of how Britain and America have tried to cope with the threat of modern terrorism, as they have stumbled from a devotion to security, then to privacy, and back to security again, seeking the elusive Golden Mean between these two values that would protect democratic principles while defeating the ruthless enemies of liberty. The challenge continues and in this readable volume Jeffreys-Jones helps clarify the pathways ahead with his usual wisdom and reliable analysis. * Loch K. Johnson, author of National Security Intelligence * We live in an age George Orwell predicted, yet we hardly understand it. Thankfully, Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones does. With style and wit, intelligence and humanity, he analyses the role of state surveillance but also reveals the more pervasive crisis of private snooping. A book of insight and importance, We Know All About You is the definitive history of surveillance in Britain and America. * Andrew Preston, Cambridge University * Fascinating. * Times Higher Education Supplement * Rigorous and highly readable. * Ian Cobain, The Guardian * A brilliant and well-researched book. Entertaining and engaging, it tells the story of surveillance...in a compelling way. Highly recommended. * Catherine Balavage, Frost Magazine * Thought-provoking... We Know challenges us to re-assess our notions and attitudes towards mass surveillance. * Lorraine Chimbaga, Society for Computers and Law *

Rhodri Jeffreys-Jones is Emeritus Professor of American History at the University of Edinburgh and has held postdoctoral fellowships at Harvard, the Free University of Berlin, and Toronto. The founder of the Scottish Association for the Study of America, of which is he the current honorary president, he has also published widely on intelligence history, including The CIA and American Democracy (1989), The FBI: A History (2007), and In Spies We Trust: The Story of Western Intelligence, the last of these also published by Oxford University Press (2013). He was the winner of the 2014 Neustadt Prize for the best UK book on American politics with The American Left: Its Impact on Politics and Society (2013).

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