

“It doesn’t have a deadbolt, Mom,” she said, and she shushed her from the kitchen. Halfway through the meal, her mom asked what she was doing on her computer with all these videos of the war.

“It’s called OSINT,” she said.

“Ocean?”

“OSINT. Open-source intelligence.”

“What do you mean, intelligence?”

“Like, spies. But not for a government. Open-source. Spies for...everyone.”

“And this is legal?”

“I mean, it’s not *il*legal.”

“And where do you find this footage?”

“Everywhere,” she said. “Social media, mostly. People find it on Telegram or TikTok or WhatsApp or whatever. Two or three people share it, it starts to get exposure, somebody from the Project sees the hashtag and shares it with the group. Then I find out where it is, who took it. What happened. It’s like being a detective.”

Her mom asked her to explain geolocation.

“There are clues in every image, the architecture, the vegetation, the angle of the light.”

Street signs made it almost comically easy. Radio towers and power lines to match horizons. License plates, clothing, hairstyles. You could use advertisements to find seasons. You could use weather to find times and dates. Munitions, too, left an easily interpretable signature—“blast effects,” they called them, pointing out a path back to the source. The problem was never not having enough information, but having too much—how to parse the important from the irrelevant, how to endure the modern world’s torrent and profusion of data. She got good at it fast.

“You know the people in this Project?”

“No,” she said.

“They’re Americans?”

“Some of them. People from all over the world.”