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Sommario/riassunto	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 whistle-blower Edward Snowden in the twenty-first. Written by 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.
