



PROLOGUE: The Ones Who Know

For Those Inside Substack Who See the Cracks Forming





Neutralizing Narcissism: The Awakening Edition

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Collect

You've seen the names.

You've read the reports.

You've sat in the meetings where words like "**trust and safety**," "**integrity**," and "**moderation**" are spoken in careful, measured tones.

And you've nodded along.

Because that's the job.

That's the system.

That's how this works.

But somewhere, deep in your gut—you **know**.

You **feel** the shift.

You see the patterns.

You watch the decisions pile up—

The bans that don't add up.

The reports that feel... orchestrated.

The investigations that **never seem to go both ways**.



You see the people who should be silenced but aren't.
And the ones who shouldn't be silenced—**but are.**

You see **what you are not supposed to see.**

And so you tell yourself the same thing everyone tells themselves:

It's not my decision.

It's above me.

This is just how it works.

But that's the lie, isn't it?

Because **it's not above you.**

It's in you.

You are the ones who know.

The ones who sign off.

The ones who execute the calls.

The ones who have to sit with the decisions that get made.

Not the PR spin.



Not the public statements.

Not the corporate policies meant to justify it all.

The real decisions.

The ones you don't talk about.

The ones you don't question—

Because questioning them is dangerous.

But let's speak the truth now.

Right here.

Right now.

Because you need to hear it from someone outside the machine.

Someone who can say **what you already know—**

Without fear.

Without consequence.

Without permission.



Here's the truth:

Substack's moderation is being **weaponized**.

It is being **hijacked by manipulators**.

It is being **exploited by bad actors** who have learned how to **game your systems**, manipulate your teams, and bend the rules to silence people who threaten them.

And **you** are the ones being used to make it happen.

Not Chris Best.

Not the public-facing leadership.

Not the "official" voices that speak for the company.

You.

The ones in **content strategy**.

The ones in **trust and safety**.

The ones in **engineering and moderation**.

The ones who **review the reports**.

The ones who **press the buttons**.

The ones who **make the bans stick**.

And if you think I don't know how it works—



If you think I don't understand **how decisions get made behind the scenes—**

Then keep reading.

Because **I know.**

I know **how the flags get escalated.**

I know **how appeals are dismissed.**

I know **how the “internal confidence” system works.**

I know **how reports are weighted differently depending on who submits them.**

I know **how pressure is applied.**

And I know **the conversations you are already having in private.**

The ones where you ask each other—**Is this really what we signed up for?**

The ones where you wonder—**Why are we helping people like [Joel Johnson](#)?**

The ones where you question—**Who is really making these calls?**

You are not alone in that doubt.

Because the system is cracking.

And **you are not the only one who sees it.**



Six Voices. Six Stories. One Choice.

I have written **six stories**.

They are about people **just like you**.

They are about the ones **inside Substack** who are staring at the cracks in the foundation—and **deciding what comes next**.

People who **thought they were just doing their job**.

People who **trusted the system**.

People who **wanted to believe in Substack's mission**.

Until they saw **what was really happening**.

Until they realized **they were the ones making it happen**.

Until they had to decide—

Do I keep following orders?

Or do I take back control?

Because that's where you are now.

That's where **all of you are**.

This is not about policy.



This is not about free speech.

This is about **who you are willing to be.**

So read these stories.

See yourself in them.

And then—ask yourself the only question that matters.

When the time comes...

Will you look away?

Or will you be the one to **stand?**

NEXT EPISODE: "The Silence Algorithm" (The Engineer Who Saw Too Much)

Daniel K. trusted the system—until he saw it being used as a weapon.

✂ **EPISODE ONE: The Silence Algorithm (Daniel K.)**

The engineer who built the system never thought he'd be on this side of it.

He trusted the algorithm. Until he saw what it was doing.



Until he realized that the code wasn't flagging violations—it was flagging a person.
Now, Daniel has to decide: does he intervene, or does he let the machine execute another silent takedown?

 **READ:** *The Silence Algorithm* (Daniel K.)

EPISODE ONE: The Silence Algorithm

Daniel had always believed in the elegance of the system. He wasn't in the business of censorship—he was in the business of infrastructure. Build the tools, keep the machine running, don't ask too many question...

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