

Truth, as a Dance, is a Shape that can't be Confined. *

So even my Pa carries a phone these days, and he never ever did, unless it was a major trip (and then only after Uncle Jol gave him his old one) usually just using friends' phones to ring home and check in with mum. (His mates used to tell him he was the only person they knew without a phone, then remind him that that was because he had a PA and used theirs!)

He loved the anonymity of the city and the phone-less distance of being out of contact - though Mum simply rung his mates to speak to him.

These days we all need to have phones with us to allow us access into shops, transport and parks. Sure they do give us all a modicum of confidence as the app stays "green" but we all know there are hacked devices out there.

For my age group there is a much lesser risk of course, but we could still transport and transmit a new variant home to the 'olds' without knowing it, if we didn't take the tests, the ever evolving tests. The app must have been updated near on 20 times the past few years as Covid 19 progresses to C23.

Flare ups seem worse in winter, like common colds and flu, and although combined meds and treatment have advanced, a 'positive' can spell disaster for some in a family, usually the 'olds'.

It seems the antibodies from a particular strain stick around for maybe a year for most of us. I myself have tested positive to C19, 20, 21 through to C24 - nearly the full set.

I step into the Off Licence, just as a guy tries to 'shadow' me in, but the shop 'sensor' picks up 2 people and only one phone; the display goes RED. Which one of us caused this?

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Walking in the park, with the clearer blue skies, we each suddenly get a buzz/ ping and immediately head for space as sure enough our screens flash red, our blue tooth turn crimson, then fade to green as we distance ourselves from a phone, a person who has been 'marked'.

But how many still have no phone, how many have the 'cracked' app. Such is the risk in the city.

The accepted wisdom is now that a sustained exposure to a 'marked' phone 'marks' us, so we all are now getting used to a sort of St Vitus Dance when out in public.

With friends, and at home, we turn off our phones, but there is talk that an aggregate 'no network time' of over 10 hours a week, will render us 'marked' anyway, so the ubiquitous search for charging our devices continue.

My Uncle Jol in the country does seem to have avoided some of that however, as he got a 'bad network' cert, the mobile coverage still being flakey up North where he lives. He though, being a 'high-risker' rarely now comes to the City and even gave me his LFC membership card, as he can now no longer risk going to the match.

The latest medical advances though are continuing and various vaccinations are now being offered routinely, along with flu vaccines, but he still does not fully trust some of the releases; their efficiency or safety, especially since his bad reaction to the simple flu vaccine he got, just prior to the original Covid outbreak.

We listened to the birds and people's laughter under the yellow sun, and head for the Serpentine to watch Dad swim his early swim with the ducks and geese before work.

Not that much has changed.

jol wardle

* Inspired by watching a performance capture of Revisor, created by award-winning dance-theatre makers Crystal Pite and Jonathon Young and based on Nikolai Gogol's play The Government Inspector. (shown on BBC 4 May 25th, 2020)