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Ransomware Attacks Are Testing Resolve of Cities Across America.

HOUSTON — At the public library in Wilmer, Tex., books were checked out not with the beeps of bar code readers but with the scratches of pen on notebook paper. Out on the street, police officers were literally writing tickets — by hand. When the entire computer network that keeps the small town's bureaucracy afloat was recently hacked, Wilmer was thrown into the digital Dark Ages.

"It's weird," said Jennifer Dominguez, a library assistant. "We've gone old school."

This has been the summer of crippling ransomware attacks. Wilmer — a town of almost 5,000 people just south of Dallas — is one of 22 cities across Texas that are simultaneously [being held hostage for millions of dollars](#) after a sophisticated hacker, perhaps a group of them, infiltrated their computer systems and encrypted their data. The attack instigated a statewide disaster-style response that includes the National Guard and a widening F.B.I. inquiry.

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By Manny Fernandez, David E. Sanger and Marina Trahan Martinez

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