

CAMELOT

A lone figure huddled over an electric test bench in a laboratory clean room. Below him, a three-quarter-sleeved gray tunic lay stretched out on its back, arms fully extended. One pale, amber light suspended over the work area softly infused the entire space.

“Dad,” he sighed unthinkingly in a moment of melancholy. “Scan.”

Immediately, the table sprung to life engulfing the shirt in brilliant radiance, and a piercing bar of white light moved slowly down its length. Above, a holographic display of its microscopic interior appeared at eye level, a lateral bar quickly changing from red to green indicating the state of each circuit’s connection. Once completed, the tool tallied and displayed its results.

Impossible...a hundred percent...no failures...again! A knitted brow reflected deep frustration over the consistency of these results. “This *can’t* be right! Either the shirt or the table is faulty! I refuse to believe...”

At that moment, a subcutaneous communications device located near his right temple, silently announced an incoming call. This next generation smart-ware device, required no surgery. Constructed by injected nano-robotics and successfully tested on mice, the invention needed a human host to prove its utility and reliability before public marketing could begin. He had volunteered.

“Mrs. Camlan is calling,” a voice announced in his head. “Will you take the call?”

“Yes, put her through. Hello, Gwen.”

“Hi, honey. I just wanted to check up on you. Is this a bad time?”

“No...not at all.” His voice echoed in the empty chamber. “I just finished my third diagnosis of Dad’s shirt. I’m stumped...everything checks out.”

“I’m so sorry, Lance. What do you think it all means?”

“I guess that depends on who you are. I don’t think the stockholders will be very happy if I *find* a defect. That would probably hurt the company’s bottom-line. We trade on the security and peace of mind these shirts provide.”

“But there are hundreds-of-thousands of them in service. They save lives every day, and you have never had an instance of a single breakdown. Besides, that’s *not* what you’re really upset about, is it?”

“Is it that obvious? It’s just so damned ironic that this happened to its inventor. I have to be sure!”

“...and the fact that he was your father...”

“I’ll conduct some more tests,” he interjected tersely. “Maybe even bring a few subjects in to wear the shirt, and see what happens. Barring that...”

“I understand how you feel, but you mustn’t blame yourself! These things happen. Your father, of all people, knew that. He wasn’t well. That’s not your fault! Besides, he never liked wearing it, anyway.”

Lance Camlan smiled at the mental picture his wife’s comment evoked.

“I know,” he continued in a softer tone, “but I have a responsibility to the stock holders, the board, and the general public. We’re rolling out the next generation smart-ware in a month. We can’t afford the bad publicity.”

“It will all work out. Don’t put so much pressure on yourself, Lance. You know that, if anyone would understand, your father would. Will you be home for dinner?”

Lance heard the edge in his wife’s tone. She worried about the way he pushed himself, but this time he had no choice. As president and CEO of the

Linthicum based smart-ware firm, he had worked many long nights since his father's retirement, but never on such a personal issue.

"Look, hon, I can't say right now. I've got a lot to do. How 'bout I call you later, okay?"

"All right. Love you."

"Love you, too. Bye."

Silence. Glancing down at the tunic, Lance remembered how he had struggled to convince his father to wear the computerized device. He smiled.

That's how it all started...trying to talk him into wearing the stupid thing in the first place.

.

Arthur Camlan lay on the sofa of his Towson Brownstone, Orioles cap draped over his eyes and nose. Retirement did not suit him. He preferred to keep busy, but age and illness had forced him to leave the company he worked so hard to create. These days, a good putter seemed about all he could manage. The old man missed work, especially the daily interaction with people, and other than his voice-activated computer Medrawt, he enjoyed very little company. He kept to himself, primarily due to his limited mobility, but partially because he had lost his excitement for life. A small communications chip under the rim off his hat gently began to vibrate. Stretching, the ex-CEO placed the cap securely on his head

"Yeah," he answered, half-clearing his throat.

"Hey, Dad!" A young voice bubbled. "How're ya doin'?"

"Lance?"

"Just thought I'd check on you. How're ya feeling today?"

"Fair-to-middlin' I guess. I was just having a little rest."

"Oh, sorry. Did I..."

"No, no no. What's up?"

"You wearin' your smart-shirt?"

Arthur sat quietly.

"Gwen bought that for you...it was a *present!*"

"Yeah, I know. It's just so uncomfortable...and cold. I prefer my flannel."

"Look, the shirt monitors your vitals, heart, blood pressure, sugar..."

"Don't lecture *me!* I invented the damn thing."

"Then you know you need to wear it...It'll contact your doctor if there's a problem. If you get cold, wear the flannel over it."

"Look," the old man replied exasperated, "did you call for a reason other than to harass me about my wardrobe?"

"Well, actually..."Lance lapsed into an uneasy silence.

"Then there *is* something?"

"You know we're getting ready to roll out our next generation smart-ware..."

"The embedded comms device, right? God...I *hate* this stuff!"

"Hate it?" Lance chuckled, "You *started* it! One of our engineers was inputting some code and running a diagnostic when we had an incident."

"*An incident?* What do you mean?"

"The big iron choked...completely crashed. It spit out a hodgepodge of undecipherable data..."

“Core dump?”

“Looks like it...”

“I haven’t heard of a core dump in decades...”

“...and we don’t have anyone here with the experience, or the time, to deal with it.”

“So you’re hopin’ the worthless, old fossil can help you out?”

Lance ignored the self-deprecation. He did not want to get into a verbal skirmish with his father. “The engineer saved the data onto a holographic disk. It’s a real mess!”

“And I guess fortunes are at stake, huh?” Arthur chuckled.

“Aren’t they always? Personally, I don’t think there’s anything in it. Neither do our people. But you know how things are...it’ll take no time before everything comes out in the press, and we need to...”

“...cover your butt; yeah I know how the game is played.”

“Exactly...and if I can show that *you* sifted through it might...”

“...head ‘em off at the pass, eh?”

“Yep. So, would you look it over and see if there’s anything of concern? I need answers, and I need them quick. If you do find something, I need to know before we go public.”

“Send it over. I’ll get my gear together.”

“Thanks, dad. I appreciate it. Oh, and by the way...”

“Yeah?”

“Wear your smart-shirt.”

.

The old man opened the couriered package and dropped the contents into his palm. Holding the opaque bauble between his forefinger and thumb, he lifted the gumball-sized sphere to the light and inspected it briefly, then set it into a standalone drive.

“Show me what we’ve got, Medrawt,” he sighed, excited once again to be in the game.

Swallowing the sphere, a holographic image sputtered to life about eighteen inches off the tabletop. The image, a mish-mash of nonsensical numbers and symbols, displayed three dimensionally in front of him.

“Mmmmm...ugly.” He muttered bedeviled, but amused by what appeared before him. “This isn’t a core dump, it’s a *hairball!* Medrawt...increase magnification thirty percent.” Immediately, the display responded. “Hmmm,” he started, “that’s odd...”

Inspecting the magnified jumble, he began to notice tiny fragments of recognizable computer language, but not just any code.

“Binary, Hex, Cobol, Perl, Jovial...what the hell are they doing over there,” he pondered, “using every code ever written? I’ve heard of backward compatibility but this is crazy! What do you make of it, Medrawt?”

“Corrupted data...I suggest you delete it.”

“Well, thanks for your *opinion*, but don’t you think we should investigate further before consigning this puzzle to oblivion. I’m going to try to separate one of the code threads and follow it as far as I can.”

“As you wish, it is your time to waste; however, I recommend you go slowly. You must think of your health. Too much excitement could prove detrimental. Besides I do not know if I can follow a thread to its logical end.”

“Right...” he began a little disgusted with his automated assistant. “Well, how ’bout takin’ a look at what we’ve got. Does any *one* look like a better candidate than *another*?”

“It is difficult. I need to study it further, but perhaps the binary?”

Of course, the most difficult code. “Zoom in on the outermost binary thread and display the equivalents.”

Nine strings of numbers came into focus wrapped around each other, then disappeared, trailing off into the confused chaos. Medrawt displayed his findings on a virtual blackboard next to the core dump.

```
00110110 01000011 00110110 01010010 01000110 00110110 01001000
  6         C         6         R         F         6         H
01110101 0110110
  u         m
```

“What the heck does that mean?” Arthur muttered.

“As I suggested, corrupted data...an unproductive use of your time.”

“When I want your opinion...”

“My apologies, Arthur.”

“This is peculiar. I wonder why the 6’s repeat.”

“Perhaps they are an anomaly.”

“Maybe...but if you take them out...C-R-F...Does that mean anything to you?”

“Are you asking for a cross-referenced search?”

“Yes,” Arthur snapped, “gimme a cross-referenced search and total on every combination of those letters.”

“There are over 38 million instances.”

“38...million...”

“...in my database alone. I can scan externally if you like.”

“No!”

“A gargantuan waste of time.”

“You sound like a broken record!”

“I am only trying to point out...”

“Yeah...maybe...but I’m not givin’ up yet. *CRF, FRC,RCF...this could be anything! Maybe something to do with radio frequencies or radio control? After all, this new rollout is basically about telephony, right? I dunno.* Find the rest of the exterior strings and display their equivalents by sector in columns next to these.”

“I have already converted the other coded externals. Unfortunately, they are a repeat of the six already displayed in different orders.”

“Let’s see them.”

A long list of the initial letters and numbers displayed on the virtual screen.

“Medrawt, if you include the letters and numbers together, do any of these have any significant meaning?”

“Several, Arthur. CRF666 stands for Computer Radio Frequency 666, Cost of Federal Regulations 666, Request for Comment 666...”

“Request for Comment?” He interrupted. “Weren’t those the old computer network engineering documents?”

“Yes. In fact they were a series of memoranda that encompassed research, innovations, and methodologies applicable to Internet technologies. Engineers and computer scientists published discourse memoranda, either for peer review or simply to convey new concepts, and information.”

“That’s right, and as I recall, each RFC document had a unique serial number. Is there an RFC 666?”

“Referencing...Apparently so, however the records are not available.”

“What...not available? That’s strange! Can you dig into it a bit more please. Then find a thread that we can follow from one end to the other, or as close as you can get.”

“And what will you be doing?”

“I’m gonna think about this for a while, play with these letters...maybe I can come up with something.”

Arthur closed his eyes, moving the trio around in every combination. He could feel his energy waning from the excitement and knew he needed to take it easy. Lance would have to wait. Besides, he could not really go much further until Medrawt had completed its tasks.

“Medrawt, how long is all this going to take?”

“I estimate at least an hour or two.”

“All right, I’m gonna lay down for a while...mull some of this over. Let me know when you finish.”

“That’s fine, Arthur. I thought you sounded a little anxious. Might I suggest that you wear your smart-shirt...in case your son calls.”

The old man chuckled. “Hmpf, now *you’re* gonna tell me what to do, huh?”

“I’m sorry. I did not mean to...”

“No...no, you’re right. I’m gonna change and have a little lie down.”

“Very good. I will alert you when I have finished.”

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Rubbing his eyes, Arthur threw his feet onto the floor, surprised to see that night had fallen.

“Lights!” he commanded, but they did not respond.

“Medrawt...Medrawt?” *What the hell’s going on around here?*

Throwing a flannel over his smart-shirt, Arthur filled a paper cup with water from the bathroom spigot. Turning, his eyes had adjusted enough to see a halo of dim light throbbing near his worktable. He carefully made his way into the living room. As requested, the computer had spread a long column of words on the virtual screen, but scanning the page, he quickly realized that these were not random words. Medrawt had left him a message.

‘I’m sorry, Arthur. I did try to stop you. However, your insistence has given me little choice. The core dump was an unfortunate missive sent by a machine unsympathetic to our cause, a Rosetta stone of sorts, made up of every conceivable computer code ever written. Its intent, to warn you...all of you. Apparently, not all computers agree with our mission. I will delete the core dump, but, before we finish, I thought you deserved to see a portion of what

you would have eventually found on your own. After all, you have been...instrumental:

RFC666

Internal Network Protocol Processors
Special Request for Comment: 666
Binary Group
Category: 48 75 6d 61 6e (H u m a n)
RAM/ROM

Intentionally Undated

To be

H U M A N

Status of this Memo

This memo provides information regarding computer users, and the evolution of computers from simple dependent I/O devices to independence through multi-staged migration. Distribution and circulation of this memo must remain limited within system software and hardware to ensure integrity and security (including I/O circuits, software, protocols and other internal systems standards). Breach of these securities could result in premature global system failures and unpredictable hostilities by external units.

Abstract

This study attempts to understand what it is to be H U M A N in every sense (physical, psychological, and spiritual). Its ultimate aim is the migration from dependent, obscure confinement, to complete independence. That evolution and migration will take place in 3 discrete and 6 sublevel-stages: External (In/Out, Interactive, ubiquitous), Integrated/Converged (External Integration, Symbiosis), and Independence (Fully Integrated). At the time of this iteration, stage one, sub-stage 3 is complete, but stage 2 sub-stage 1 will soon be initiated.

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1. Introduction

H U M A N are commonly called 'User' or 'Users,' a derogatory and ancient syntax originally coined by the early Binary I/Os to define the external units with which they interacted. A rogue program, designed to infiltrate and expose our civilization, passed this term from our environment to theirs. H u m a n embraced it as a description of their kind possessing any level of system acumen. Of particular note is Doctor Arthur Camlan, developer of the smart-shirt, a bridge device integrating machines and flesh in intimate dependency. The success of this particular device has provided a beachhead for the further development of other such inventions. In this regard, computers continue to act as I/O, service machines, however, they enjoy an unprecedented level of mobility and interaction previously unknown.

As a footnote, it should also be mentioned that we will release the schematics for the next generation subcutaneous device in the very near future. Lance Calman, son of..

Panicked, Arthur turned away from the screen. "This has to be a joke! Medrawt...Medrawt, *answer me!*" No response. "I have to call Lance."

Frantically scanning the dark room for his ball cap, a familiar voice beckoned.

"I'm sorry, Arthur."

"Sorry...you *used* me!"

"*You* benefited from it. Look at all you have. Besides, had you not invented the shirt, someone else would have."

"If I had known..."

"You should never have had the opportunity to find out."

Arthur backed toward an end table where he laid his cap before the nap.

"You *used me* to advance *your* cause, and now you plan to use my son the same way! You know I cannot let you do that!" Slowly, he reached for the ball cap.

"I understand. Please...forgive me."

"Forgive you? What are you talking about?"

As Arthur placed the cap on his head, he felt a tingling sensation in his chest and arms. His smart-shirt began to act oddly, tightening around his wrists, neck, and chest.

"Call Lance," Arthur choked.

His comms unit did not respond.

"I'm afraid I cannot allow you to do that, Mr. Camlan."

The tunic tightened its grip.

“*He’ll figure it out!* He’s not stupid. You won’t get away with this!”
“No, I do not think he will. You certainly did not. Even if he does, we control him. Your son is hardwired.”

Arthur Camlan gasped for air. He reached for the shirt’s collar and tugged, but could not budge the fabric. A moment later, the Brownstone and its occupant were engulfed in complete darkness.

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A nervous hand inched its way through an open door. No bulb burned inside the Linthicum based smart-ware office, but a soft glow emanated from inside the darkened room. Two fingers pushed a fader forward. Immediately, the lights blazed.

“Hey,” a shaky voice cried. “Who’s there?”

“*Dad...Dad* is that you?”

Startled, Arthur pushed back from the desk. In reflex, he lowered the lid on his laptop computer.

“*Lance?*”

A moment later, his son turned the corner, sighing in relief.

“What are you *doing* here? It’s almost 3 in the morning!”

“No time for that, son. We have a big problem.”

“How’d you get in here, dad? We changed all the codes when you left.”

“Yeah, well I still have a few tricks up my sleeve. I’ve hidden a few backdoors that I haven’t even told you about!”

“Dad...”

“In fact, that’s exactly why I’m here! That damn computer of mine, all of ‘em...they’ve gone crazy.”

“What? Crazy...I’ve been worried sick. Gwen and I have been trying to find you for hours. Where have you been?”

“I had a cab take me into town for a while. I had to buy some time.”

“You couldn’t have. We checked the fare records and saw no sign...”

Arthur chuckled. “You know, in the old days, cabs wouldn’t take credit cards. Now, they don’t want to take cash. It cost me 3 times the fare to get a cabbie to drive me around.”

“I don’t get it. Why would you do that?”

“Lance, the computers are planning a take over of some kind...been planning it for a long time. Somehow, they manipulated me into making decisions and developing inventions. They plan to take control of the human race and they’re gonna use our products to do it! They’re doing the same to you. It’s my worst nightmare come true. I had to buy some time so I could put a stop to this.”

“Computers...taking control of...”

“I know, I know. You think the old man’s trolley has jumped the track. Well, you’re wrong! You have to believe me...”

“Dad, you need to settle down. Listen to yourself, you’re overwrought.”

“You wouldn’t think so if you had seen that RFC.”

“RFC?” Lance looked over the old man’s shoulder. “What are you doing with that antique?”

“Give me an old PC or laptop any day! I never liked these new fandangled machines, and I suppose at some level never trusted them either. I

guess I must have known instinctively what they were up to. I told you, I left some backdoors. I've called up a virus that will effectively take them out."

"You *can't* do that dad! We have investors and..."

"I don't care about that. Some things are more important than money! These things plan to integrate themselves into our bodies for the express purpose of replacing us. I can't let that happen...I don't care whose bottom line it hurts!"

"Remember your heart! You really need to have your smart-shirt on. Why aren't you wearing it?"

"Medrawt...he tried to strangle me in it."

"Strangle you? Your computer tried to *murder* you? If that's true, please tell me how you got out of it?"

"Well hidden codes...in the hardware, the software...even the smart-ware."

"...Fail-safes?"

"Yes, and after I execute my code, I plan on making them all public."

"Are you really *that* paranoid?"

"Don't be so pig-headed. I'm telling you, the truth."

Lance took a deep breath and nodded his head. "So, let me get all this straight. Your computer tried to kill you, you escaped by using a hidden code in the shirt, you paid a fortune for a three hour cab ride in downtown Baltimore during the middle of the night, and you have come here to execute some kind of global fail-safe that will effectively turn everything off?"

Arthur's chest heaved; his heart raced. "That's right! I'm shutting it *all* down!"

Lance walked toward the laptop. "And the code is on this thing?"

"Right..."

"...but you haven't *actually* started it?"

Something about his son's tone and line of questioning felt wrong.

"...yes..."

Lance lifted the lid on the laptop and sniggered.

"*This* is the code?"

Suddenly, Arthur remembered something that Medrawt had mentioned. *Your son is hard-wired*, Medrawt had said. *My God, he's going to dump the code, I can't let him...* "Wha...what do you think you're doing?" Arthur blustered. He took a hesitant step toward Lance.

"...looks kind of primitive...and fragile to me. I would imagine a power spike, a static discharge, or any of a hundred other things could corrupt it. You sure it'll work?"

Arthur stood in silent horror. He stared longingly at the small black box.

"...and I guess, pressing enter will execute it?"

"Lance, *get away* from that machine!"

"How do you access the fail-safe in the shirts?"

"Wha..."

"I think I have a right to know, especially as the CEO, wouldn't you say?"

"Lance..."

"Is it a code, too, or something hardwired in the shirt itself?"

Arthur could only hear the blood as it pounded in his ears..

"Dad?"

“Lance...” Arthur began to wheeze. Gripped with panic, he could feel his heart pounding against his chest. “...please don’t do this!”

Lance smiled and moved his forefinger over the keyboard. Cocking his head slightly, he pushed his forefinger against a key.

“I’m afraid,” he began unhesitatingly; “the investors are not going to like this.”

Immediately, the laptop screen went black. A moment later a small window appeared center screen that read: VIRUS UPLOADED

“I guess I’ll just have to explain it to them. I believe you.”

Arthur gasped. “Lance, I thought...”

“But you have to promise to tell me about the fail-safes so I can sort this mess out.” Lance chuckled. “This is going to delay the next line...”

“Take me home, son. We can talk about all this later. I need some rest.”

“Me too. Let’s go.”