

Distant Work

A man wearing a black hoodie and black jeans sat at the desk in a truck, watching the coding generate, reflexively typing as if he were a percussionist timing his cues. The green text on the screen stood out in the silvery blue area beside the browns and yellows. Everything had been set: he had planted signalware in the device of a man of interest. All that he needed now was to isolate the program.

The programmer looked at his watch. Just about noon. He then opened his GameBoy Advance SP, starting up a video game. After all, he expected his job to take quite a while. On occasion, the screen on his device illuminated as he wanted to focus on the coding. The green text accented his sweater as he watched for his cue. Upon entering a command, his computer transmitted random sequences.

Focussing on his game, he set up his progress in its duel. After only a few short turns, he saw that he was past security. Furthermore, he was aware of his target's location. Thanks to his friend's signal jammer, he couldn't be precisely located. Upon entering the program, a series of nodes appeared, causing him to type as if he had to play a complex melody. The nodes in the algorithm either seemed to fall or explode, one by one, until a message popped up: "Malfunction".

That was it: the server short-circuited. That caused the hacker to smile. As if on cue, the cover lifted, and the owner spoke, "Right on time. What can I get you?"

"A can of Pepsi and a hot dog with diced tomatoes and sliced pickles," a voice on the other side answered.

"Water and a gourmet sausage," spoke another voice, which was gruff.

The hacker went over to help, and met surprise. There stood a young man in a black suit with white shirt and plain black tie. Standing with him was a tall but slim man dressed like a biker.

"I didn't know you worked here," the gruff man commented.

"I don't. I'm just a friend." The hacker handed the pair their drinks.

"How do you know him?" the young man asked.

"He's my boyfriend."

"And yet, there's a lot he doesn't know about me." The hacker placed his arms on the counter as his friend gave the pair their hot dogs. "And you are?"

"Denholme," answered the young man. "I... am a student of his..."

"Isn't it too soon to be jealous? Besides, he's only eighteen."

"Well, you must be doing well for yourself," the owner weighed in, noting the look of Denholme's suit.

"I found good teachers."

"You should learn about circuitry. It might come in handy."

"Well, I know *he* does," Denholme responded, looking at the owner, Shaun. "I still don't know what career I want, but I've learned more this past year than in all of high school." He paid Shaun for his items, and so did his teacher. "What brought you here? And I know Shaun here is open for shady people."

"Then, you know I was here for a shady job. Think before asking that kind of thing in public."

"Hope to see you around." Denholme expected that he overstayed his welcome. So, he departed, his teacher following.