



pearl harbor dot com

It used to take an entire
nation to wage a war.
Today it takes only
one man.

Free Distribution Version

A Novel By
Winn Schwartau

pearl harbor dot com

Taki Homosoto survived the hell of Hiroshima.

Now, more than 50 years later,
the time has come for the Americans
to feel the flames of his revenge.

Miles Foster, a brilliant ex-NSA analyst
with a taste for the bizarre, comes from a
checkered organized crime background with a
very personal agenda.

Tucker Macy Starre is an eccentric, but talented
writer with vengeful feelings of his own after
suffering a heartbreaking personal loss.

He is convinced that catastrophic computer
failures are part of a Bigger Picture.

Homosoto's personal army of
terrorists and intelligence agents
are pitted against the U.S. Government
and a network of somewhat reluctant allies-
invisible and anonymous hackers.

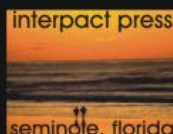
The devastating climax of this one man's plan...

this powerful, bitter survivor of ayamachi,

The Great Mistake,

is certain to bring global chaos
and economic meltdown.

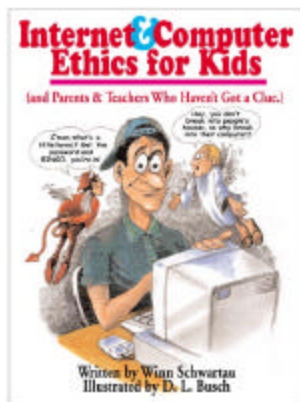
**A terrifying,
thought provoking tale...**





BIOGRAPHY: WINN SCHWARTAU

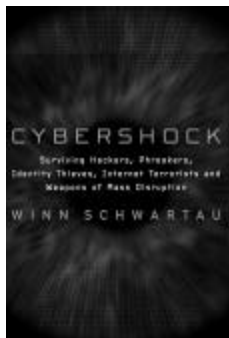
- Winn Schwartau balances his time between writing, lecturing, and building corporate and national security awareness programs and consulting to multinational organizations and governments worldwide.
- President of Interpact, Inc. www.interpactinc.com. Interpact develops innovative and entertaining information security awareness programs for private, public and government organizations. The goal is to educate business, government and home computer users through entertaining materials, thus achieving a higher level of security through cooperation.
- Founder NiceKids.Net, www.nicekids.net, a cyber-ethics web site for kids, families and teachers. He is the author of **“Internet and Computer Ethics for Kids (and Parents and Teachers Without a Clue).”** (2001/2002). This hit book has received rave reviews and has also been called *“The best security book ever written.”* (Dr. Fred Cohen, all.net) It is being adopted by schools and corporations across the country.
- In 2002, he was honored as a **“Power Thinker”** and named one of the 50 most powerful people in networking by Network World.



- Founder of the influential InfowarCon conferences, www.infowarcon.com, which has established itself as the premier international event on information warfare and Critical Infrastructure Protection, and Infowar.Com (www.infowar.com). He is one of the country's leading experts on information security, infrastructure protection and electronic privacy.
- Often referred to as "**the civilian architect of information warfare**," he coined the term "**Electronic Pearl Harbor**" and was the Project Lead of the **Manhattan Cyber Project Information Warfare and Electronic Civil Defense Team**.



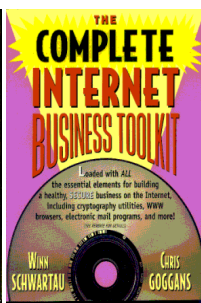
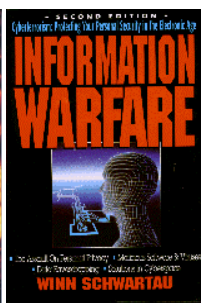
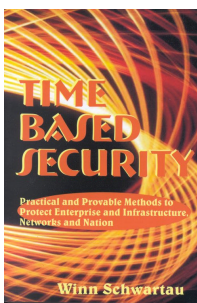
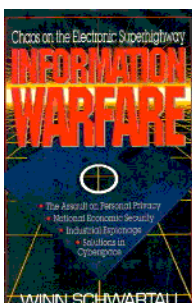
Mr. Schwartzau's latest book (2002) "**Pearl Harbor Dot Com**" is a compelling fictional story about a Cyberterrorist attack on the United States. It underscores the need for cooperation and security awareness among all sectors of the United States, and indeed the world. It is based upon his prophetic 1991 novel, "**Terminal Compromise**".



Schwartzau's hit "**Cybershock**" (2000, 2001) is a non-technical look at hackers, hacking and how important security is to families, companies and nations. It is meant for the average computer user or for organizations to help make their staffs aware of security concerns in the workplace.

The principles he developed in **"Time Based Security,"** (1999, 2001) have redefined how security is measured, and employs means to quantify network protection, detection and reaction processes.

His first non-fiction book, **"Information Warfare: Chaos on the Electronic Superhighway** (1994, 1996, 1997) brought the concepts of Infowar and Cyberterrorism out into the open. He called for the creation of a **National Information Policy, a Constitution in Cyberspace and an Electronic Bill of Rights.** The sequels, **"Information Warfare: Cyberterrorism, Second Edition,"** were released in 1997 and 1998.



"The Complete Internet Business Toolkit" (1996) is one of the first books to ever be banned from export out of the United States. He was a contributor to all three of AFCEA's **Cyberwar Books** (**Ethical Conundra of Information Warfare, Something Other Than War** and **The Carbon Unit as Target**) and several international works on CyberWar and Espionage.

His other popular writings include **"CyberChrist Meets Lady Luck"** and **"CyberChrist Bites the Big Apple,"** which cover underground hacker events, **"Firewalls 101"** (DPI Press), **Information Warfare**, (Schaffer/Poeschel, Germany), **"Introduction to Internet Security"** (DGI/ MecklerMedia), and chapters for **Internet and Internetworking Security Handbook** (Auerbach). He is currently writing **two more books.**

With thousands of credits to his name, Schwartau writes on security, information warfare, privacy, culture and how they all fit together. He consults with private and government organizations around the world, constantly pushing the envelope of understanding and thought.

His often controversial writing, interviews and profiles have appeared in Orbis, Wired, NY Times, Information Week, Network World, ComputerWorld, Network Security, St. Petersburg Times, Internet World, Virus Bulletin, Security Management, Infoworld, PC Week, plus dozens of magazines around the world. Although not a hacker, he has been the popular host of DefCon's Hacker Jeopardy for nine years.

- **Contributing Editor:** Infosecurity Magazine
- **Contributing Editor:** Journal of Information Warfare
- **Editorial Board Advisor:** Network Security Magazine, (Elsevier), U.K.
- **Contributor and Columnist:** Network World (1994 -)
- **Consulting Security Expert:** Giga Information Group
- **Advisory Board Member:** Milcom Technologies
- **Advisory Board Member:** Click2Send
- **Contributing Editor:** CartaCapital, Brazil
- **Contributing Editor:** Availability.Com
- **Advisory Board Member:** 1GlobalCity.Com, Inc
- **Member, Editorial Board of Advisors:** InfoSecurity News. 1990 -
- **Publisher and Founder:** Security Insider Report (1992 - sold 1997)
- **Contributing Editor:** Secure Computing Online (Scandinavia) www.secure-computing.com
- **Contributing Columnist:** PlanetIT, CMP Publications
- **Advisory Board Member:** CipherTrust www.ciphertrust.com
- **Advisory Board Member:** SSI, www.SecureSoftSystems.com
- **Former Member, Board of Directors:** Tritheum Technologies, (company sold 11/98)

- **Radio Show Host:** "On the Line" by New Media Entertainment (1998-1999)
- **Member, Board of Directors:** HomeCom, Inc. Atlanta, GA (1996-1997)
- **Member, Board of Advisors, IBIT:** International Banking Information Technology, Liechtenstein (1995-1997)
- **Technologist Advisor:** National Computer Security Association (1990-1997)
- **Contributing Editor:** Internet World (1994-1996)
- **Security Technologist:** Int'l Security Systems Symposium (1994-1998).
- **Commentary Editor and Columnist:** "Security Insider," Security Technology News, Phillips Publications. (1992-1995)
- **Member, Editorial Board of Advisors:** Crisis Magazine. (1988-1994)
- **Former Architectural Security Consultant to Hughes STX:** Enterprise security network architectures, design and implementation.

Expert: As an acknowledged global expert in the field of information security, Mr. Schwartau has testified before Congress, advised committees and has consulted as an expert witness. He has appeared regularly on popular US, European and Asian television shows, (**CNN, BBC, ITV, ABC, CBS, NBC, CNBC**), as well as hundreds of radio shows nationwide. He has been featured in dozens of documentaries including that have been aired on **The Learning Channel, Discovery Channel, A&E, History, BBC, CBC, Encounters, Now It Can Be Told** among others.

Mr. Schwartau's prior company developed the COMPSEC security technology, which is the foundation of Novel's C2 secure Netware. This work has received a coveted slot on the National Computer Security Center's (NSA's) Evaluated Product List. He also led the development of the ENIGMA and ENIX.SYS security systems.

Speaker: Mr. Schwartau is a popular and entertaining keynote speaker and interactive seminar leader who always keeps his US, European and International audiences awake and alert with thought provoking insights and commentary.



Gaming: A big fan of gaming as an educational tool, he has created and runs various CyberWar, CyberEthical and other interactive

training and awareness games for governments, schools and commercial clients for training and awareness.

Recent Appearances: USAR, CERT, LACERA, Banking Association, Institute for Defense Analysis, Reed/Elsevier, UK, White Collar Crimes Center, West Point, ICTF-Holland, CitiCorp, DIA, UBS International, SUN-Microsystems Security Tour. NASA, JWTC, FBI, NATO, Sandia National Labs, Naval Postgraduate School, Swedish Government, SCIP France, IIR Australia, National Defense University, Dutch Police, Too Many Financial Organizations To Recall, US Air Force Academy, Information Warfare Conferences, Electronic Funds Transfer Assoc., ISACA, Military Intelligence, Cooper's and Lybrand, Florida Law Enforcement, ASIS, IBM, ISSA, JWAC, Aerospace Industries Assoc., Society for Competitive Intelligence, RACF, Federal Law Enforcement Training Center, International Virus Bulletin Conference, Open Sources Solutions, American Computer Telecommunications Association, Computer Security Institute, Federal Communications Conference, MIS Training Institute, ISSS, NCSA, civic groups and Chambers of Commerce.

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Pearl Harbor Dot Com

Winn Schwartau

"Electronic Pearl Harbor"

Winn Schwartau to Congress on June 27, 1991

"Electronic Pearl Harbor"

CIA Director John Deutch to Congress, June 26, 1996

"Digital Pearl Harbor"

U.S. Cyber Czar Richard Clark, December 8, 2000

On June 27, 1991 I was asked to report to the Congressional Subcommittee on Technology and Competitiveness, Committee on Science, Space and Technology about the state of security in the private sector and government. The following quotes (available from the committee as well) sum it all up.

"Government and commercial computer systems are so poorly protected today they can essentially be considered defenseless - an Electronic Pearl Harbor waiting to happen. As a result of inadequate security planning on the part of both the government and the private sector, the privacy of most Americans has virtually disappeared."

Pearl Harbor Dot Com

By Winn Schwartau

Cover Art by Sherra Schwartau
(Winn's Wife)

Published by Interpact Press

This novel is a work of fiction. Mostly. Hopefully. Any references to real people are purely coincidental, other than famous people who are 'fair game'.

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A Few Words From The Author

July, 1991: In writing a book like this, it is often difficult to distinguish fact from fiction.

That is because the fiction is all too probable and the facts may be unbelievable. Maybe it doesn't matter and they're the same after all. Other than a few well-known names and incidents, the events in this book are fictional, to the best of my knowledge.

As I wrote this tale, I was endlessly coming up with new methods, new tactics, and new ways to wage computer warfare. I found that if this story was to be told, I had to accept the fact that it would always be unfinished. The battle of the computers is one without an end in sight.

This story is an attempt to merge the facts as they are with the possibilities. The delineation between fact and fiction is clouded because the fiction of yesterday is the fact, the news, of today. I expect that distinction to become hazier over the next few years.

The construction of the model that gave birth to this tale was the culmination of many years of work, with a fictional narrative being the last thing in my mind. That was an accident necessitated by a need to reach the largest possible audience.

The reader will soon know why.

Winn Schwartau
July, 1991

December, 2001: I originally wrote this book in 1989-90 with the title *Terminal Compromise*. A lot of folks called me nuts, paranoid and a fear monger among other unprintables.

Even though there was a limited private distribution of only two thousand copies, it received very favorable reviews from those prescient enough to understand that I was not crazy.

Pearl Harbor Dot Com is roughly the same story, similar characters, but has been thoroughly updated to a post Y2K world.

Since then, I have enjoyed reworking the story and the characters, never quite satisfied. In late August 2001 my agent, editor and wife said, *enough is enough!* But then came September 11, 2001, a day that changed everything for us all.

Pearl Harbor Dot Com does not play off of that horrific day, nor was the plot or story changed afterward. All similarities are purely coincidental. We chose to let events stand as they were written and engage general, non-technical readers, hopefully to make them aware of just how fragile our Networked World really is.

I hope you enjoy the story as much as I did creating it. I also hope this story never comes to pass. Please heed its warnings.

Before

Prologue

Monday, August 6, 1945. Japan

The moment that Shinzo Ito, the 5th grade instructor entered the sparse brick-walled classroom, his students came to order, interrupting their fervent discussion about the impending end of the war.

“We will be victorious!” One yelled.

“No doubt about it.” Another child agreed, nodding fervently.

“My father is killing the enemy every day.”

“The Americans will soon die . . .”

“Enough! It is time for study. Enough!” Ito clapped his hands loudly and the disciplined school children found their places in the old wooden chairs, many held together with tape wrapped around broken legs and desk arms.

The children of Japan were well acquainted with sacrifice and pain. The hardened young faces in Ito's classroom echoed the pain of seeing their families wrenched apart. They stayed tough out of necessity; to survive and make it through the next day, the next week; in order to uphold the honor due family and country.

The fathers of these children had gone to war; many had not come home. Many of those who had come home had done so in pieces; others, unrecognizable. But when these men had gone off to war, both they and their families knew that they might never return. They were all prepared to make the Supreme Sacrifice for their country.

In this classroom, as in classrooms across Japan, the sons and daughters of kamikazes were treated with near reverence. It was widely believed that their fathers' honor had been handed down to them upon the successful completion of their mission. Compensation of a sort for the children's realization that they'd never see their fathers again.

Taki Homosoto, a short and pudgy 11-year-old boy who sat in the front row of this classroom, was one such child. His smooth skinned round face was filled with determination, his pitch black eyes penetrating. His father had been a kamikaze pilot and although stoic in outward appearance, Taki hurt

deeply, and he knew he would feel the unfairness of the loss forever.

Taki spoke with authority about the matters of sacrifice, of the war, about American atrocities. "They torture our soldiers with unthinkable pain." Even Shinzo Ito listened. "We will defeat the white faces. If they invade our shores, millions of us will crush them and drown them in the seas." His convincing voice resonated from the bare concrete floor to the cracking ceiling plaster and back. The students nodded in agreement with the finality of Taki's prognostication.

As Ito-San began the day's lecture on mathematics, Taki let his mind drift. He imagined the vengeance he would wreak on America if he had the choice. How he would make every American suffer the same way Japan's families had suffered. He smiled to himself at the thought of seeing dead Americans in the streets of their devastated cities.

Ito-San droned on about equations when, at 8:15 A.M., the Hiroshima radio station, NHK, rang its old school bell. The tolls from the bell were barely noticed by the students or the teachers in the Honkawa School. It was part of a warning system that announced impending attacks from the air, but it had been so overused that it was mostly ignored. Taki, though, was awakened from his daydreams and looked out the window toward the Aioi Bridge. His ears perked and his eyes scanned the clear skies over downtown Hiroshima. He was sure he heard something . . .

First came the blinding flash of light, the light of ten thousand suns. Then, long seconds later, the first sensation of motion in the school building. Blindness was instant for those who saw the sky ignite. In the air was the noise of a thousand trains at once. In seconds the old brick schoolhouse lay in rubble.

The United States of America had just dropped the Atomic Bomb on Hiroshima, Japan. An event that would soon be known throughout Japan as *ayamachi* - the Great Mistake.

Tuesday, August 7, 1945

Taki Homosoto slowly opened his eyes. He knew he was lying on his back, but all else was a clutter of confusion. He saw a dark ceiling. Where, he didn't know. He turned his head and saw he was on a cot, maybe a bed, in a long corridor with many others around him. The room reeked of human waste, of death.

"Ah . . .you are awake. It has been much time." The voice came from behind him. He turned his head rapidly and realized he shouldn't have. The pain speared him from his neck to the base of his spine. Taki grimaced, but said nothing as he examined the figure in the white coat. "You are a very lucky young man, not many made it," he continued.

What was he talking about . . .made it? Who? Taki wanted to speak, but his mouth couldn't. When he tried, only a slight gurgling noise ushered from his throat. And the pain . . .it was everywhere at once . . .all over . . .he wanted to cry for help, but was unable. The pain overtook Taki Homosoto, and the vision of the doctor faded into darkness.

Twenty hours later Taki reawoke. Had he been awake earlier . . .or had that been a dream? The doctor. . .no he was in school and the earthquake . . .yes, the earthquake . . .why don't I remember? I was knocked out. Of course. As his eyes adjusted to the room, he saw things that made him realize that he was not dreaming; it was all too real. The other cots, so many of them, stretching in every direction; the constant cries of pain and the continuous sighs of death.

Taki tried to cry out to a figure walking nearby, but he could only make a low-pitched moan. Then he noticed something odd . . .an odd smell. One he didn't recognize. It was foul . . . the stench of burned . . .burned what? The odor made him sick. He tried to breathe through his mouth, but the awful odor still penetrated his glands.

From around him came a din of incomprehensible babbling, the sounds of agony. In a far corner of the room, a woman's voice screamed "*Eraiyo!*" - "the pain is unbearable!" From the cot next to Taki, an old man's voice begged in a whisper, "end my misery". As he listened, Taki began to feel

fortunate; he wanted to scream, but the guilt of surviving kept him silent. His pain wasn't really all that bad. Not really.

Finally, the doctor - was it the same doctor? - appeared over his bed again. "I hope you'll stay with us for a few minutes?" The doctor smiled. Taki responded with a grunt and raising and lowering his eyelids.

"Let me just say that you are in very good condition - much better than the others," the exhausted doctor said, gesturing across the room. "I don't mean to sound cruel, but we do need your bed for those more seriously hurt."

A quizzical look crossed Taki's face. The doctor sounded truly distraught. What had happened?

Soon Taki knew. America had used a terrible new weapon upon the people of Japan. A weapon which turned the sky to fire and melted its victims; which poisoned the water, sickening the living and making those who seem well drop in their steps. Almost half of the people of Hiroshima had died as a result of America's shameful use of the weapon; as a result of America's evil.

Taki helped at the Communications Hospital in what was left of downtown Hiroshima. When he wasn't tending to the dying, he moved the dead to the exits so the bodies could be cremated in the pyres that lit the streets at night, the one way to insure eternal salvation. He helped distribute the kanpan and cold rice balls to the haggard, overworked doctors, and to survivors who were able to eat.

Each day, he walked the streets and the rubble of what once was Hiroshima looking for food, supplies, anything that could help. Each day he fueled his hate and his loathing for Americans. They had wrought this suffering by using their pikadon - their flash-boom weapon - on civilians, women and children. He saw death, terrible, ugly death, everywhere; from Hijiya Hill to the bridges across the wide Motoyas River. Bodies, some burnt beyond recognition. Others, the walking dead, with decaying flesh falling from their arms and faces. And the children, tiny children, just dropping in their steps to die alone. These images became indelibly etched into Taki's mind.

The Aioi bridge had become an impromptu symbol for hatred against the Americans. Taki crossed the remnants of the

old stone bridge, which would have been the hypocenter of the blast if the Enola Gay hadn't missed its target by 800 feet. He came upon a rowdy crowd of a few dozen people. Hanging on a stone post in the middle of the crowd was the body of a man in an American military uniform. An American POW. The crowd, women in bloodstained kimonos and mompei held their nearly naked children close to their bodies and hurled rocks and vicious insults at the lifeless body.

Taki was mesmerized by the scene. Intense hatred and fear washed over him and huge tears streamed down his cheeks. Without thinking, Taki joined in the carnage against the lifeless American body. He threw rocks at the head, the body, and the legs. He threw rocks and yelled.

"Die, die . . . mongrel, die! Die a thousand deaths."

He threw rocks and yelled at the remains of the dead serviceman until his arms and lungs ached as the tears of rage continued down his face to fall in a tiny puddle by his bare feet.

He had felt abandoned when his father died. But now Taki was really alone, for the first time in his life. His family dead, even his little sister. Taki Homosoto was now a *hibakusha*, a survivor of Hiroshima, an embarrassing and dishonorable fact he would desperately try to conceal for the rest of his life. All because of the Americans.

The Americans.

Who Am I and Why Am I Here?
A Personal Introduction and Pre-Eulogy
By Tucker Macy Starre

You'll get used to me. You really will. I'm not as crusty as I might seem. But then again, you might find me so annoying that readers of this useless excuse for a tabloid will cancel their subscriptions and call up the New York Times in desperation. Good choice. I wouldn't read me if I had the option. I'm not the professorial type that my publisher would have you believe, either.

My accidental rise to fifteen minutes of fame was a freak of nature. Sagan and Azimov are already dead. James Gleik from Time is sedated and in extended convalescence after the Virtual Reality machine he was reviewing burnt out the vast majority of his cranial synapses. According to the designers, (who are terribly sorry to have utterly destroyed all mental capacity of one of America's better intellects and science writers,) a "software glitch" caused a feedback mechanism to induce a euphoric vegetative state. There's nothing left to do except monitor life signs for the next forty years.

But wait here; more about me.

The apish officials at Columbia University scratched their butts in unison and fired me when my first and only book, "Tea Leaves and Technology" hit the bestseller list. It seems they had a teensy weensy problem: I had been teaching graduate level courses and molding young, impressionable minds without so much as a degree of my own or a shred of teaching credentials. Twenty years of accolades at that esteemed University in my file and they still can't figure it out. So be it.

So, unless you've been locked inside a Tibetan monastery, you know what happened to me last year – Jesus! CNN's rating went up 2.3 points for a month. I freely admit I had my own minor mental set backs and some folks say I even got a bit testy, but don't listen to their nasty back-biting jealousy; they're full of excrement of choice! I've always said what was on my mind. It's just that since. . . well, since that day I guess I've had a bit more to say and I've been given the forum to say what was on my mind - and yeah, well - maybe they're right.

But to hell with all that.

For some unfathomable reason, this sorry ass paper thinks I'm redeemable. I tell them that they're making a terrible mistake, and only their sad-sack lawyer agrees with me. We've argued and I've given them every reason to send me on my way, back to the solitude of damnation where I existed for fifteen months, three weeks, two days and three hours, (approximately) but here I am anyway. They didn't buy it. Thought I was faking Turrette's syndrome, too, if you can believe that.

And here I sit, waiting for my bowels to beg me to hasten down the threadbare carpets of these mildewed offices to the stain encrusted tiles in the rarely cleaned toilet stalls.

It is now my God-forsaken task to educate the masses of sweat who read this rag in-between pushes and shoves on the "E-train." I frankly don't believe many of you have the least bit of interest or intellectual capacity to read anything I write in the coming weeks and months, or, God-forbid - years.

Now for a favor. Please don't read my columns. No matter how good they are, no matter how bad they are. Just don't read them. And if any of you have been taught how to make the pen meet the paper, please, write a letter to my editor, Trixie Bixby, (no kidding) and tell her "Tucker Macy Starre sucks the big one and I would consider it a personal favor if you'd fire his ugly ass. Sincerely, Your Name."

I've sworn off of technology, no matter what they say, and if the mongrel hoards who defile the streets of this concrete sewer we call a City in their pursuit of wealth do listen to anything I say or write, it's your own damn fault. To hell with technology. Who needs it? Not me. A return to the Middle Ages, Inquisition is far better than what we have wrought today.

Hear me now or hear me later: Technology is a sure-fire road to eternal obliteration – The Bomb notwithstanding.

As you can see, I have nothing positive to say, and I will enjoin myself to rankle your soul at every turn. Some things are better left unsaid – and I swear to say them anyway.

Hoping this is the last thing I ever write for the New York Register, I bid you "adios!" and remain snidely yours

Tucker Macy Starre.

Semi-sorta-kind-quasi-techno-writer (journalist)

Three Years Ago

Miles Foster viciously screamed and relentlessly pounded his near-bloody knuckles on the Government Issue metal desk while Bill Pearlman calmly kept notes of his rantings. The balding bureaucratic intelligence officer, reminiscent of a tired accountant, had seen employees crack before, but he never would have expected this of Miles Foster, one of the best mathematicians at the secretive National Security Agency. A true crypto-geek if there ever was one. Such a shame to see a mind go just like that. Snap!

Miles' olive complexion turned red as his anger intensified. He turned as if looking for something to throw, or tear up or wreak havoc upon.

Pearlman looked bored. "Are you through?"

"Goddamned right I'm through!" Foster ripped his NSA ID badge from his pocket, tearing the carefully selected Pierre Cardin shirt in the process. "I'm outta here." He abruptly turned, slammed the door open, stormed out to find that most of the staffers in the open office areas were craning their necks to see and hear the commotion in their Chief's office.

He stopped in his tracks, made a "V" for Victory sign with his right hand, waved and walked leisurely to the elevator bank. He pushed the 'down' button and brushed back his thick wavy black hair in the reflection of the polished stainless steel elevator doors. In a matter of seconds they opened, and Foster was greeted by two armed security guards who escorted him away.

Thousands of disk drives rapidly spun causing the football field sized Computer Room C-12 to gently whirl and drone with a life of its own. The light blue walls and specially fitted natural daylight bulbs tried but failed to offset the constant urgency filling the room: computer operators pushed buttons, changed tapes and stared at the dozens of video screens day and night, day after day.

Rack upon rack of foreboding electronic equipment ringed the walls. Transparent smoked-glass protected the front of the disk drives and impossibly large digital memory banks of the impeccably neat and tightly arranged six-foot high cabinets, lined up row after row for as far as the eye could see. At one

end of the room sat a distended U-shaped computer, 76 feet long on each leg. Made by Intel, the massively parallel Paragon contains tens of thousands of smaller computers that are intricately designed to work in digital harmony, simultaneously attacking many of the world's most daunting problems. Hundreds of thousands of blinking lights cover the Paragon's dark Plexiglas panels to show which of the smaller computers are communicating with the others and which are working hard to solve the complex calculations that some distant secret analyst has requested. A rat's nest of wires exited from the rear of each rack to disappear into an under-the-floor labyrinth of cables and conduits, magically connected, somehow permitting everything to work just as it should.

Part of the unacknowledged Echelon project, from C-12, NSA officials could dial up any major computer system - the IRS, the national medical data bank and credit corporations, FBI and police records - within the United States, and most around the world. They could tap into and record any telephone or cellular or satellite communication on the planet - invisibly. And if the conversation was encrypted, and if it was deemed to be of enough national security significance, they could apply the smartest computers to unscramble the words or text and find out what was so important and why cryptography was used. The ultimate hack. Into anything. Anything. Anyplace. Anytime.

Computer Room C-12 was classified above Top Secret. It and Echelon's very existence were denied by its owners, only known to a very few of the nation's top policy makers. Congress knew nothing of it, and the President learned of its existence only after it had been completed, black-funded as a non-line-item of the federal budget. Computer Room C-12 was one of only two electronic doors into the National Data Base - a digital repository containing the sum total knowledge and working profiles of every man, woman and child in the United States. It also stored the sum total of every intercepted domestic and international telephone conversation since 1993 when a now-antique version of C-12 first was put into operation. And it was only getting more powerful day by day. All of this, all of this power, for one man to control. One man, Marshall Lockridge, the Director of the National Security

Agency. To everyone in official Washington, they called him DIRNSA.

Four floors above room C-12, Miles Foster found himself locked alone in a room without windows. This room, which he'd never seen until today, contained a gray metal table, four matching metal chairs, and, he was sure, a couple cameras and microphones hidden behind the gray walls. He had been held there for at least six hours, maybe more; they had taken his watch to distort his time perception.

All this because he wanted to resign his position as a secure communications expert with the National Security Agency, S Group. A position that had given him daily access to room C-12. Within two minutes of announcing his intention, Bill Pearlman, his boss, set a chain of events in action.

Foster's office was immediately sealed and an armed guard without a sense of humor was placed there to insure no one attempted to get in. His computer was disconnected from the internal networks, and his remote user passwords were instantly deactivated. Within seconds of his resignation, Miles Foster no longer had any access to NSA computers. Within minutes of his rantings in Bill Pearlman's office he sat in the debriefing room where he had sporadically answered probing questions asked by an endless stream of Internal Affairs Security Officers. They wouldn't agree with the choice of words, but Miles Foster knew he was essentially under house arrest.

"So, tell us again, why did you quit?" yet another IAS man abruptly blurted out even before settling down in one of the old, World War II-vintage chairs.

"I've told you a hundred times and you have it on tape a hundred times," Miles said, the disgust in his voice obvious and intentional. He paced the room rapidly, his trim five foot eight body building up a mild sheen from the exercise. "I really don't want to go through it again."

"Tough shit. You haven't told me yet. I want to hear it.

Miles stopped to turn and face his inquisitor. "What are you looking for? Tell me what it is and I'll give it back to you, word for word. Is that what you want?" He held his arms up in frustration.

"The truth," the IAS man said quietly but forcefully.

Miles sighed. He was tired and desperately wanted a cigarette. But he had prepared himself for this eventuality: serious interrogation.

“O.K., O.K.” he sighed, feigning resignation. “I quit 'cause I got sick of the shit. Pure and simple. I like my work; I don't like the bureaucracy that goes with it. That's it. After over 10 years here, I expected some sort of recognition other than an annual cost of living increase. I want to go private, where I'll be appreciated. Maybe even make some money.”

The IAS man didn't look convinced. “What single event made you quit? Why this morning, and not yesterday or tomorrow, or the next day, or next week? Why today?”

“Like I said, I got back another 'don't call us, we'll call you' response on my Chaotic-Crypto proposal. They said, 'Not yet practical' which was total bullshit, and they set it up for another review in 18 months. That was it. Finis! The end, the proverbial straw that you've been looking for. Is that what you want?” His voice rose in both pitch and volume.

“What do you hope to do in the private sector? Most of your work is classified.” The IAS man lit a cigarette, blowing the smoke deliberately in Miles' face. “You just can't up and take it with you.”

“Who needs it? I got it all in my head,” Miles said smirking and jamming a forefinger into his temple. “Right here, spookeroo, and there's nothing you can do about it.” Miles remembered with fondness that much of what he knew would have been classified, if he had reported it. But he hadn't.

“There are plenty of defense guys who do crypto and need a good comm. guy. I think the military call it the revolving door.” Miles said smugly. “And the Internet is still in desperate need of security. And as long as room C-12 can crack PGP, Blowfish, the AES and RSA in seconds, I think the private sector wouldn't mind my help.”

“That's classified.”

“So fucking what?” Miles snorted.

“You'd go straight to jail . . . and even your Mafia family won't be able to help you,” the IAS man hissed to put pressure on Miles to see if he cracks. Standard technique.

For a moment, Miles was livid. Then, collecting himself, he smiled with complete control. "There's no such thing as the Mafia. It's just business."

The final approval to release Miles was made by Marshall Lockridge himself.

"How long have y'all held him?" The silver-haired Lockridge drawled leisurely into his STU-III secure telephone. Lockridge sat behind his impeccably neat highly polished mahogany desk, sorting through notes while speaking. Shelves wrapped around two walls, sparsely filled with books and displayed a wide assortment of pre-Columbian figurines and pottery. Lockridge's vanity wall was filled knee-high to ceiling with pictures of him shaking hands with every high profile Washington name since the 1960's. Those pictures with a President were tactfully placed smack dab in the middle - each one enlarged.

"Going on thirty hours, sir."

"And what have y'all learned?"

"Nothing much, sir. He's sticking by the fed up with government and want to make some money explanation."

"How's he holding up?"

"He's resilient as all hell. Doesn't seem too tired even though he hasn't eaten much. Keeps pacing around . . . almost makes us nervous the way he never stops moving, but I think we could get to him in another day or two. He wasn't trained for this kind of thing . . ."

"OK, boys. Let him go," Lockridge said with Southern aristocratic authority. "I know Foster. He wants the money. Let him go."

"Sir?"

"And don't bother with any surveillance. I do not want him followed in any way whatsoever," Lockridge said insistently. "Am I clear? Foster isn't worth the time or energy."

"Yes sir." The voice itself seemed to stand at attention.

In two days, Miles Foster had hung out his shingle as a communications and security consultant, willing to work for the highest bidder or his daily rate - whichever was higher. Like half of those who live within driving distance of the

Capitol, he was now a Beltway Bandit, a simultaneously endearing and self-deprecating title given to those who make their living selling products or services to the Federal Government. Miles was ex-NSA and that was always impressive to potential clients. He let it be known that his services would now be available to the private sector, at the going rates.

Miles knew he would get work, but his value would decrease with time as his knowledge of recent NSA secrets dimmed, so he needed to begin soon. Get a few clients and build a reputation.

To accelerate the process of getting work, Miles changed his dating habits. Normally, Miles would only date women whom he knew he could bed down. He kept track of their menstrual cycles to make sure they wouldn't waste his time. If he thought a particular female had extraordinary oral sex skills, he would make sure to seduce her when she had her period. Increased the odds of a good blowjob. Now, though, Miles restricted his dating to those who could help start his career in the private sector. "Fuck the secretary to get to the boss!" he bragged unabashedly.

This philosophy in mind, he dragged himself to many of the social functions that grease the wheels of motion in Washington. The elaborate affairs, often at the expense of government contractors and lobbyists, were a highly visible yet totally legal way to schmooze and booze with the influential in the nation's capital.

The better parties, the ones for generals, for movers and for shakers, for dignitaries and others of immediate importance, were graced with a generous sprinkling of strikingly beautiful women. They were paid for by the hosts, for the pleasure of the their guests. The Washington culture requires that such services be discreetly handled. Expense reports and billings cite French Caterers, C.T. Temps, Formal Rentals and countless other harmless, innocuously named companies which divulge nothing of the real services provided.

Infrastructure Defense Systems, Inc. held one of the better parties in an elegant old 2 story brick Georgetown home on quiet tree-lined street a couple of blocks from Wisconsin Avenue. They were desperate for business and would do

anything to survive. A former embassy from a now defunct republic, the spotless house was appointed with a strikingly southern ante-bellum flair; four Ionic columns, hand carved white shutters, overly large French windows and a sharply pitched tile roof. The inside was a statement to taste and money. Mirror finish parquet floors covered by overpriced yet elegant Persian rugs, real crystal chandeliers, exquisite 18th century French furniture and gold brocade curtains that sell for \$300 per yard. Money and class oozed from every pore of the decor, the professional butlers and the hosts.

This was the style of life to which Miles aspired. On his government salary he couldn't afford the \$2500 Italian suits he craved and which perfectly fit his well-toned athletic body. But his family had connections, and he paid less. Considerably less. So he had a closet full.

The hot September night was punctuated with an occasional breeze. The breaths of relief from Washington's muggy, swamp-like summer air were welcomed by those party-goers braving the heat in the manicured gardens outside, rather than staying in the refreshing luxury of the air conditioned indoors.

A stand-up affair with a hundred or so Pentagon types attending, the party began at seven; and unless tradition was broken, it would be over by 10 as the last of the girls found her way into a waiting black limousine with her partner for the night. Straight politics, Miles thought.

As 9:30 neared, Miles felt he had accomplished most of what he had set out to do: meet people and sell himself. He hadn't, though, figured out how he was going to get laid.

And then, as he sipped his third Glen Fetitch on the rocks, he spotted a woman whom he hadn't yet seen that evening. She looked aimlessly through the French doors at the backyard flora. Maybe she had just arrived, maybe she was leftovers. Whatever, it was getting late, and he shouldn't let a perfectly good woman go to waste.

Miles sauntered over to her and introduced himself. "Hi, I'm Miles Foster." His dark face grinned wide, deep dimples in force, as she turned toward him, smiling and inviting. She eyed him up and down; from his wildly controlled black hair without a part, to his well-toned but not hulkish upper body all

the way to his \$1,000 loafers. He felt like he was being stripped naked by her scanning gaze and he liked the way it felt.

"I'm Stephanie. Stephanie Perkins," she cooed, her eyes still ripping the clothes off of his body. She extended her small hand, which Miles took and, returning a gaze into her eyes, gently kissed.

"Where are we going tonight?" he asked, as if they were long time friends.

"Surprise me."

Stephanie Perkins was gorgeous. Stunning even. And tiny. At barely five feet, she wore high heels, which gave her a statuesque pose. She wore her full-bodied shimmering auburn hair just below her shoulders. Angelic even. Perfectly formed full lips and prominent cheekbones underscored her dreamy brown eyes. She wore a lot of makeup, but it was applied in the most careful manner, accentuating her natural beauty. Her strapless and backless full-length black cocktail gown let only the mildly diamond studded tips of her black shoes peek through. The dress plunged deeply, to just above her navel, leaving little to the imagination. Her sumptuous and perfectly shaped firm body held the dress in place. Miles wanted her. Very badly.

By 10:30 he had nicknamed her Perky because the tips of her breasts stood at constant attention. By 11:30 they were on their way to Miles' Foggy Bottom apartment overlooking the Potomac. At 2:00 AM Miles was quite satisfied with his performance, and so, for that matter, was Perky.

Their weekend together was heaven in bed; playing, making love, giggling, ordering in Chinese and pizza. Playing more, watching I Love Lucy reruns, drinking champagne, and making love. Miles bounced quarters on her taut stomach and cracked breakfast eggs on her exquisitely tight derriere. She was quickly ending up in Miles' Top Ten list of women.

"You could become quite addicting," Miles said to her after an exhausting romp in his hanging chair which had precisely placed holes for specific types of physical contact.

"It's important to do what you're good at," she retorted with a big squeeze of her newfound lover.

That got him thinking. "What is it you do, anyway?" He asked innocently. It had never occurred to him to ask in the last two days of endless pleasure.

"I guess you could say I'm a lobbyist, sort of."

"For who?"

"Oh, a couple of big companies, electronics, manufacturing, nothing special." She took her hands and held Miles' head to kiss him deeply. He responded and didn't ask any more questions. She responded back, never asked Miles what he did, and he didn't notice the omission. She already knew everything she had to know.

"Meeting take only about 1 hour. Perhaps little longer," said the thickly accented Japanese in a staccato voice. "You fly here tomorrow?" For \$25,000 Miles could certainly find the time for one meeting, even if it was half way around the world.

He felt very much uninformed in the taxi on his way to Dulles Airport. The call came on Monday, the morning that Perky said she had to get to work. She would see him again in a couple of days, she promised.

"What should I bring . . . what do you need me to do.?" Miles asked a flurry of questions.

"Everything will be clear when you arrive, Mr. Foster. We have transferred the money to your account at Riggs Bank."

"But I didn't give you my account number." Miles protested.

"Will you be able to make the meeting?"

Miles agreed to the deal knowing nothing more than he was being flown to Tokyo Japan, first class, by a mystery man who had prepaid him \$25,000 for a 1-hour meeting. Not a bad start, he thought. His reputation had obviously preceded him.

A couple of hours out of Washington one of the overly attractive female flight attendants came up to him. "Mr. Foster?"

"Yes?" He said, looking up from his copy of the Washington Post.

"I believe you dropped this?" She handed Miles a large sealed envelope and smiled for a few seconds longer than necessary to promote good public relations. He'd never seen it

before, but his name had been written across the front with a large black marker.

“Thank you,” Miles said, dimples deep, holding his eyes on hers longer than mere politeness required. When she left, he opened the strange envelope. Inside there was a single sheet of paper.

MR. FOSTER,

WELCOME TO JAPAN.

YOU WILL BE MET AT THE NARITA AIRPORT BY
MY DRIVER AND CAR. THEY ARE AT YOUR
DISPOSAL. WE WILL MEET IN MY OFFICE AT
8:00 AM, THURSDAY.

ALL ARRANGEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE FOR YOUR
PLEASURES.

RESPECTFULLY
TAKI HOMOSOTO

Great. The guy had class. Super. But that's two days away. In the meantime Miles Foster had more important things to do. He had not yet successfully seduced an on-duty female flight attendant. After dinner, he asked for a couple of blankets.

“Chilly?”

“No, it's these perpetual erections I get when I sleep.” Miles' cobalt blue eyes sparkled as he feigned discomfort. “I hate falling asleep on a plane. Just hate it. I could get excited and that would put a perfectly good hard-on gone to waste?”

The Boeing 777 landed, eighteen hours and one day later in Tokyo. Miles' membership in the Miles High Club was accepted.

Miles did spend some of the flight working, though. He used his laptop computer and the in-flight Internet services to study up on Homosoto. He was surprised to learn that his host was wealthy beyond reason.

The company's Web site bragged with incredible images of the green mirror-glass monolithic that was both tribute to and headquarters of OSO Industries, towering 71 stories over downtown Tokyo.

OSO was the preeminent model of a true global conglomerate. They owned banks and financial companies in both major and emerging economies. Its semiconductor and electronics products were household words.

From its humble beginnings as a tire-retreading business in 1946, Taki Homosoto had woven an incredibly complex web of corporate influence, political power and not just a little intrigue. That's what happens when you run a \$70 Billion empire, which spreads across 5 continents, 142 countries, and employs a half a million people.

But, there was little about the man, Taki Homosoto, to be found. Not on the Net, not on Lexis/Nexis or any other of the myriad databases he had access to. All except for the ones in C-12 and that bothered Foster. He surfed and fingered and searched for anything he could find, and there was nothing beyond references to Homosoto's chairmanship and a few words about the founding of OSO Industries. What was the man hiding and what was his interest in Foster?

He spent the next two days enjoying Tokyo with that question in the back of his mind, but he did find distractions. As promised, he was supplied with the finest luxuries Japan had to offer, including an unlimited supply of locally flavored women. Jet lag notwithstanding, Miles Foster sampled more than his fair share - all at his host's expense.

When Foster entered the OSO building lobby, he immediately understood the wisdom in awarding its designer, the celebrated by I.M. Pei, yet another accolade for this incredible architectural statement. The aroma of fresh air, sparkling water and ozone permeated the setting. The lobby's immense atrium vaulting 700 feet skyward inspired total and immediate awe. Plants, trees over 200 feet tall, and waterfalls graced the indoor forest. A portion of the lobby was a miniature replica of the Ging Sha forest, fashioned with thousands of Bonsai trees - all the while inside of the downtown Tokyo biosphere.

On a clear day from the executive offices on the 66th floor, the view reached as far as the Pacific and it was from these lofty reaches that of the OSO Building that Homosoto ran his empire.

Miles's driver escorted him to the subtle but extensive security check by the private elevator to the 66th floor. Several uniformed guards indicated he should place his briefcase on the X-ray machine's conveyor belt and then walk through the body scanner, which Miles recognized from his years at the NSA.

Fabulously expensive and thorough, his entire body was silently analyzed for metal objects, sniffed for explosives, and photographed from all possible angles in wavelengths from the infrared to the ultraviolet and beyond. His name and these scans were then stored and compared to a database of 'undesirables' - from OSO's perspective. If only airport security was this good, Foster thought to himself as he waved mischievously at the mirrored wall of the scanner.

In addition, a unique camera photographed the under the skin capillary structure of every visitor's face. As unique as a fingerprint, this biometric identification system insured that no one passed through security wearing a disguise or by having had plastic surgery. Security knew who Foster was long before he showed them his driver's picture ID.

He was escorted to one of the two private rounded glass elevator cages that delivered a select few to the aerie of the 66th floor, just as fifty-two other similar elevators delivered thousands of OSO workers to their respective floors and jobs each day. Miles studied the model forest below and imagined he was an astronaut being catapulted into orbit. Most impressive.

As he neared the end of his ride, Foster preened his bushy eyebrows looking in the mirror-like polished brass trim. He tugged at the perfectly formed knot in his tie and pulled the loose frocks of hair behind his ears. Then, he gave himself a dimpled smile of approval.

Still preening, the elevator came to rest. As the elevator doors opened, a short, rotund, but no doubt highly efficient middle-aged male secretary looked slightly amused to see Foster doing isometric neck and face exercises. He nonetheless greeted him with a deep, respectful bow.

"Ah, Mister Foster! Welcome to OSO. Please to step this way." Miles bowed ever so slightly in return. The secretary

interpreted this as American arrogance; the depth of a bow indicates the depth of respect.

They stepped into an obscenely large waiting room containing a variety of severe and obviously uncomfortable furniture. Aha! Miles thought. An art gallery, albeit a private one, for the eyes of his host and no one else. White-white walls climbing almost sixteen feet to a white-white ceiling, polished light-ash floors, recessed and indirect lighting to set off the displays properly. Miles didn't recognize much of the art, but given his host, it must have represented a sizable investment.

Miles was ushered across the vast floor to handsomely carved tall wooden double doors with almost garish gold hardware. His slight Japanese host tapped on the door almost inaudibly.

Automatically, the doors swung slowly open. Homosoto's office was a total contrast to his gallery. Miles first reaction was astonishment. It was slightly dizzying. The ceiling slanted to a height of over 25 feet at the outer walls, which were floor-to-ceiling glass. The immense room provided not only a spectacular view of Tokyo and 50 miles beyond, but also lent one the feeling of being outside.

The cherry wood walls underscored the Spartan nature of the room. Artwork, statues, figurines, all Japanese in style, sat on the few randomly placed flat surfaces. Intricately designed hand-woven Oriental rugs were scattered about. In one corner, there was a dining alcove, given privacy by simple rice paper panels for eating in *suhtahksi*: a small pit under the table for curling one's legs on the floor.

A conference table with 12 elegant but stark wooden chairs sat at the opposite end of the cavernous office. In the corner Homosoto's desk dominated a raised platform, overlooking an area devoid of chairs. People were meant to stand in his presence. The desk was large enough for four people, yet Homosoto, as he stood to greet Foster, appeared to dwarf the desk and every other part of his environment. Not in size, but in attitude. It was clear who was in command here.

Homosoto acknowledged Foster's presence with the briefest of nods, not even a bow. Stepping down from his dais, Foster noticed that Homosoto was short; no more than five foot

six, and figured him for the Napoleon complex: short and overcompensating.

Homosoto wore an expensive dark brown suit, a matching personality-less tie, and the omnipresent solid white starched shirt with no style. Despite the custom tailoring, it didn't fit Homosoto. Just like another cultural drab Japanese business uniform, he thought to himself with a mild smirk on his face.

On the heavy side, Homosoto walked slowly and deliberately, eyes forward looking straight at his guest. His large head was sparsely covered with little wisps of hair. Even though he was in his sixties, though, Homosoto's hair was still pitch black.

Miles noticed that his host's face was peppered with age spots; dark freckles, perhaps, or maybe carcinoma. His deep-set black eyes seemed to stare right through the object of his attention. Homosoto was obviously not the friendly type, more like a man on a mission.

Homosoto stood in front of Miles, and now bowed the most perfunctory of bows. Rudeness or arrogance, Miles thought to himself, and in return barely nodded his head in acknowledgment. The two were sizing each other up. Then, Homosoto indicated to his right a Western style sitting area with four plush black leather chairs, couch and small elegantly carved wooden table. This was the only comfortable place to rest in the entire room.

Miles picked a chair and sat down, placing his brief case next to it, and Homosoto sat directly opposite him, the bare table separating them.

"I hear you are the best." Homosoto said staring at Foster, wasting no time on small talk and bypassing all semblance of polite protocol.

Foster tapped his feet to an invisible rhythm. What a way to start. This guy obviously thinks he's hot shit. Well, maybe he is. First class, all expense paid trip to Tokyo, plus fees. In advance. Just for one conversation, and that hadn't been all. Don't forget the girls.

"That's what's your people tell you," Foster said with calm arrogance.

"Mr. Foster," Homosoto continued, his face still emotionless. "Are you as good as they say?"

Miles Foster defiantly spat out the one-word response. "Better."

Homosoto's eyes squinted. "Mr. Foster, if that is true, we can do business. But first, I must be convinced. I can assure you we know quite a bit about you already, otherwise you wouldn't be here."

"Yeah, so what do you know?"

Homosoto let a shimmer of a smile appear at the corners off his mouth. "Mr. Foster, tell me about your family."

Miles' neck reddened. "Listen! You called me, I didn't call you. All I ever knew about OSO was that you made ghetto blasters, TVs and vibrators. So therefore, you wanted me, not my family. So, keep my family out of it."

"I do not mean to offend," Homosoto said matter-of-factly. "I just am most curious why you didn't go to work for your family. They have money, influence. You would have been a very important man, and a very rich one. So, the prudent man must wonder why did you go to work for your Government? Aren't your family and your government, how shall I say, on opposite sides of the fence?"

Miles sat silent for a moment. He was prepared for a psyche-out from Homosoto, but he hadn't counted on his family being an issue. How much did Homosoto really know? Miles felt at a disadvantage - especially since the two of them were off to such a warm and cordial start.

"My family's got nothing to do with this or you. Clear?" Miles' feet beat to a faster tempo as he spoke.

"Oh, indeed they do, Mr. Foster. You know about honor I am sure." Homosoto sat rigid, looking for a reaction. "Being raised in Las Vegas, Mr. Foster as an only son in a family of six sisters means something. I do sympathize with your father's death in a supermarket robbery gone awry. But, I am curious Mr. Foster, what effect your homosexual uncle, Mario Dante, had on your upbringing? Didn't he want you working for the, how do I say this, the Family, at the casinos? Your mathematical skills were in demand by them, were they not?"

Foster tried to hide his mixture of shock and disgust. Not a damned bit of privacy for the average American true, but Homosoto had found other things no one - no one at all - should know. What else did he know? Did he know that when

Miles turned 13, gay Uncle Mario had thought it would be a good idea for Miles to become a man? A mere 60 miles from Las Vegas the country's only legal brothels were open for business. Uncle Mario wanted to make sure that Miles wasn't going to fool around with any of that street garbage or those convention girls. Miles would go first class from the very first.

That night, Uncle Mario drove fast, about 130 mph, in his Red Ferrari on Highway 10, heading west from Vegas. He drank Glen Fetitch, neat, and steered with only one hand, hardly looking at the road.

Of course, the inevitable occurred: flashing lights and a siren, a Nevada state trooper. After pulling over, Mario grinned, and sipped from his glass as the officer approached the driver's side of the Ferrari. Uncle Mario lowered the window. As the trooper bent over to look inside the flashy low-slung import, Mario pulled out a handgun from under the seat and stuck it into the cop's face.

"Listen asshole," Mario yelled, "I wasn't speeding. Was I? I don't want no problems with my insurance. I got a good driving record, y'know?"

The cop just laughed. "No sir, I wanted to give you a good citizenship citation, for your contributions to the public good."

"Good to see you still got a good sense 'a humor," Mario laughed as he shoved the gun back under the seat. Miles stared, dumbfounded, still squeezing his butt cheeks tight to avoid a nervous accident.

"Where you headed, Paysan?" the cop asked in good-buddy tones.

Mario laughed and pointed at Miles. "Out to see Marie LeVaux and company. 'Bout time the kid took a ride around the world, y'know what I mean?"

"Sheeeee-it! Uptown! Hey kid, ask for Michelle and take 2 from Column B, then do it once for me!" The cop leaned further in the window, smiling at Miles, who knew exactly what the two men were talking about. "I remember my first time. It was in a pick up truck, out in the desert. Went for-fucking-ever! Know what I mean?" The cop winked at Miles who was humiliated.

Then Mario gave the cop an envelope who laughed and said in a teasing voice, "Hey, Mario, take it a little easy out here, will you? At least on my watch, huh?"

"Yeah, sure. No problem. Ciao."

"Ciao."

In seconds Miles and Mario were again doing over 100 mph. The rest of the evening went as planned. When it was over, Miles had gotten his first taste of a woman, the obsession that would rule his life. Miles thanked his uncle in a way that brought tears to Mario's eyes. Miles said, "You know, Uncle Mario? When I grow up, I want to be just like you."

No, Homosoto couldn't know about that - but he wasn't going to ask. Got to get back in control here. Miles sat forward in the thickly padded chair to match Homosoto's stoic posture.

"Your intelligence is almost right, not completely right, but almost," Miles lied. "Out of courtesy for getting me laid last night, you should know that I never wanted to work for my family. Sure they wanted me, but I went to the feds cause they have the best computers, the biggest equipment and the most interesting work. Not much money, but I had financial backup when I needed it," Miles glared at his host.

Homosoto grinned and held up his hands in mock defense. "My apologies, Mr. Foster. I mean no disrespect. I just like to know who works for me."

"I don't work for you yet," Miles retorted, trying to reestablish his independence.

The corners of Homosoto's mouth cracked slightly. "But there is one thing I do not know, Mr. Foster. Why did you leave your post with the National Security Agency?"

Damned inquisitions, thought Miles, but he had prepared his pat answer that Homosoto could never crack. Only one other person knew the truth. "Cause I was working for a bunch of bungling, bureaucratic idiots. Whenever we had a good idea, it was either too novel, too expensive or needed additional study. Or it was relegated to a committee that might react in 2 years. "

For the first time, Homosoto relaxed somewhat, and leaned back in his chair. "What are your politics, Mr. Foster?"

“Huh? My politics? What the hell has that got to do with anything?” His feet were tapping a syncopated rhythm now.

“Just answer the question, please, Mr. Foster,” Homosoto quietly ordered. “I am paying for your time, am I not?”

Miles was incensed and let his feelings be known through his tone. “Republican, Democrat? What do you mean? I vote whomever I want. Period. I prefer Captain Kangaroo to Madonna. I hope she runs for something. Other than that, I don't play.”

“Don't play?” Homosoto briefly pondered the idiom. “Ah, so. Don't play. Don't get involved. Is that right?”

“Right. Politicians, they're all fucked,” Miles said as though he were preaching at an Irish tavern on St. Patrick's Day. “My rule is I vote for the stupidest, most incompetent asshole running for office. Any office. With any luck he'll win and really screw things up.”

Homosoto had hit one of Miles hot buttons and he smiled to himself. Politics. He listened attentively to Miles as stood up and carried on.

“That's about the only way to fix anything. First you have to fuck it up so bad, people will notice. Then it might get fixed. Create a crisis. Since the Government ignores whoever or whatever isn't squeaking the loudest, everything else goes to hell and back three times before they feel like dealing with it. That's the only way to get anything done. Make noise. Once you create a crisis. Jeez, just look at Reagan. 'The Evil Empire is coming to get us,' he swears. Four trillion dollars later he bankrupts the commies and nearly takes us down with them.” Miles frenetically paced in step to his intense words.

“And now they're sitting up there on Capital Hill wondering if there's any way we can get out of paying the national debt. Schmucks.”

The Yiddish idiom was lost on Homosoto, but not the rough meaning. “That's it?”

“No, it goes on. Terrorists on US soil in the mid '90's and a love affair between the FBI and Congress begins. Someone creates a crisis and then we do something. Scientists tell us we're burning a hole in the atmosphere for years, and until umpteen-zillion people in Florida get skin cancer, the politicians don't buy it - so they ignore it. Cigarettes. We allow the

Tobacco companies to kill a half a million a year with one of the world's most addictive drugs - nicotine - and the government subsidizes Tobacco farmers. It's hopeless."

"Those are your politics?"

"You bet they are. They work. If you really want to get something fixed, first fuck it up so bad that everyone knows it's broken - then every leech in Washington will be crawling up your ass trying to help you rebuild it and take credit. Politicians are like that." Miles looked behind him and sat back as if to catch his breath and his tapping feet temporarily were at rest after his rant.

"Very novel, Mr. Foster. Very novel and very cynical." Homosoto looked mildly amused.

"Not meant to be. Just true."

"It seems to me that you hold no particular allegiance. To anyone, or any political or religious group. Would that be a fair observation?"

"To me. That's my allegiance."

"Then, Mr. Foster, what does it take to make you a job offer? I am sure money isn't everything to a man like you." Homosoto leaned back. All ten of his fingers met, forming a tent as they performed push-ups on each other.

Miles leaned forward, glaring right into Homosoto's receptive eyes. "My greatest pleasure? A challenge. A great challenge. Yes, money is nice, but the thrill is the challenge. I spent years with people ignoring my advice, refusing to listen to me. And I was right so many times when they were wrong. And look how screwed up things have gotten. I would love to teach them a lesson." Over developed self-assurance oozed from every pore but it had no effect on Homosoto who already knew what kind of person Foster was, and how he would react. He had paid for complete psychological profiles on Foster.

"How unfortunate for them that they failed to recognize your abilities and let your skills serve them. Yes, indeed, how unfortunate," Homosoto said somberly.

"So," Miles said while his feet found a new, slower rhythm. "You seem to be asking a lot of questions, and getting a lot of answers. It is your dime, so I owe you something. But, Mr. Homosoto, I would like to know what you're looking for."

Homosoto rose slowly, using his arms to help lift himself out of the chair and stood behind it. Napoleon at work, needing to be above someone, making them look up to him. “You, Mr. Foster. You. You are what I have been looking for. And, if you do your job right - I am making the assumption you will accept - you will become wealthier than you ever dreamed. You will have an impact on civilization for generations to come. Your name will go down in history. Mr. Foster, your reputation precedes you.” He extended his hand to Foster. “Yes, I do believe we can do business.”

“OK, OK, so if I accept, what do I do?” said Miles, standing to shake Homosoto's outstretched hand.

“You, Mr. Foster, are going to lead an invasion of the United States of America.”

Week One

Chapter 1

Monday, January 4

Tucker Macy Starre knew she was coming. Like an Indian who puts his ear to the ground and senses a buffalo stampede thirty miles distant, he knew she was coming. The uneven wooden floors on the fourth floor of the century old building creaked endlessly; but especially when she was coming.

He lay on his back under a four-foot high metal contraption whose purpose wasn't immediately apparent. His legs angled sharply like an 'A' frame house, stretching the fabric of his faded jeans thin at the knees. His lanky arms were awkwardly enmeshed among the gears and mechanical arms that sprung out from all directions of the robotic creature. A golf club was held firmly in its rubber grip by a pair of vise-like fingers coming from the top of the device. Wires dangled and circuit boards hung exposed.

The floors of the *New York Register* creaked louder as she approached down the hallway outside his office. The unsightly stained carpet of some ancient shade of blue and unidentifiable musky odor worn thin from two decades of neglect did little more than stop the 'click-clicking' of human traffic. The creaking got louder still as her short two-hundred-forty pound bulk was mere steps away. Tucker busied himself further in his machine and the creaking stopped. He knew it was her approaching his office because her weight stretched the limits of the floor capacity more than anyone else at the paper. But even though Tucker would never admit it, he liked Trixie much too much to say anything.

"Morning Trix. Happy New Year," Tucker shouted happily into the underbelly of the contraption, stretching the word 'happy' into six syllables. "Did my favorite editor get lucky this holiday?" The constant audible cacophony from his office drove Trixie nuts; strains of Hendrix licks screaming from two bookshelf speakers, CNN blaring from a suspended TV monitor and his computer's impassive female voice competing for attention: "You have new mail. You have been ignoring your mail. Do not ignore your e-mail. You have new mail."

Trixie held her hands to ears, a pained expression covering her pale, freckled jocular face. The burning tip of her cigarette wobbled up and down as she spoke, a mere silly little millimeter away from singeing wayward shocks of her long flaming red hair, "Would you please turn down God's gift to deafness for a moment?" Trixie shouted, thick smoke exhaling from her mouth and both nostrils. "I don't know how you can stand it," she complained. The other reporters stood in their cubicles and stared to see what the commotion was.

"Good for the brain. Multi-tasking." Tucker bellowed back. Making a big show of it, he momentarily extricated his hands from the device and clapped his hands loudly - twice. Hendrix's *Foxy Lady* and the CNN announcer quickly faded into nothingness but the computer voice maintained its drone. "You have been ignoring your mail."

"Y'know, Trixie, that's not as easy as it looks." Tucker pushed the metal bridge piece of his thick, rose-tinted John Lennon glasses back up his nose and propelled his arms back into the innards of the machine as it continued to rigidly grasp the golf club.

"What's that?" Trixie asked much more softly with a display of relief now his office was acceptably calm. Excessive noise drove up her blood pressure and her doctor said to avoid tension and loud places it at all costs - and to lose at least a hundred pounds - and quit the damn smoking, already. It'll kill you! That meant no subways, lots of treadmill time and buying packs of Nicorette by the gross.

"Making the Clapper work. The commercial's a big lie. It took me the better part of a week to get the timing just right. I don't know how any septuagenarian will ever get one to work."

"And that's how you spend your days? With the Clapper?"

"And nights," Tucker wisecracked with false enthusiasm. "There's a great story in it. This Clapper thing - it's a conspiracy to drive people nuts. I found out that 43% of the mental patients at Mount Sinai hospital own the Clapper. Now what does that tell you?" In the few months Tucker had worked for her at the *Register*, she had become accustomed to his occasional inanities that often meandered conversations to the edge of absurdity.

Trixie Bixby tugged again at the ever present cigarette that was stuck to the gluey saliva on her lips and let a long dangling ash fall to one of the very few spots on Tucker's carpet that wasn't covered with books, magazines, assorted computer parts, tools or unopened boxes. She didn't even try to catch it with her hand. "How was your holiday?" she asked with a hint of sarcasm.

"Holiday?" Tucker chortled loudly. He made his left hand into a fist and held it in Trixie Bixby's direction. A small stub of a middle finger rose an inch above his knuckles. "Holiday this!" He added, waving his fist around before. "I finished the hacker book for Harper-Collins in a record three weeks, got absolutely no sleep when I normally need a solid nine hours a night, delivered every article you wanted - on time I might add - and for the first time in my life didn't have a Christmas Tree. It was wonderful. How was yours?"

Trixie stopped mid-inhale. She probably asked the wrong question.

Tucker realized by her silence he had been a bit harsh. She was just being friendly. "So, I decided to come back to work to take a well earned rest," he said, his sarcastic joviality switched back on.

Good, she thought. He's dealing with it better. She tilted her head sideways, her flaming red full-bodied hair falling to the side, too. "What the hell are you building this time?"

"I can't drive," said the late-thirty-something pony tailed science writer for the *New York Register* as he brushed at the splashes of hot solder sprinkled across his cheeks. "Cars or golf balls. This will solve one problem."

Trixie Bixby merely shook her head; his inventions-in-progress had quickly become the staple of water cooler conversation at the second-rate weekly New York paper; derision with respect. Tucker Macy Starre was the only nationally honored writer the *Register* had ever had. Despite his quirks, he brought respectability with him and everyone knew the *Register* desperately needed respectability.

She stood in the doorway to Tucker's office and casually looked for a place to put out the smoldering filter from her cigarette, but there were no ashtrays to be found; nor even one square inch of open space to lay it down.

Tucker's maelstrom of an office was aptly nicknamed "tornado alley" by the paper's staff in the first weeks he had come to the *Register*. It more resembled an electronics laboratory with computers and radios and assorted electronic equipment laying everywhere with no apparent concern for organization. The floor was haphazardly stacked with boxes of computer equipment and software, much of it unopened, ready to keel over at the slightest breath. Two walls of shelves overflowed with software, more software, books, and files in disarray. And then there were the broken pieces – kicked in monitors, or hacksawed hard drives - intentionally smashed or stomped on, left in the corner as a sobering memory that computer equipment, too, could be killed.

Trixie lit up another cigarette, stuffing the old used butt into the left pocket of her loud floral mou-mou. Got to give it to those fat Phillipinos and Tahitians; they know how to dress for comfort.

"Ouch!" Tucker let out a holler as several small blobs of molten solder dripped onto his nose. He yanked his arms out from the machine and ran his hands rapidly across the burning flesh. "Damn that hurts." He wiped his face with the sleeve of a well-worn denim work shirt.

"Serves you right," Trixie shouted back after taking another deep unhealthy drag on her cigarette. "This is a supposed to be a newspaper, not a 60's Retro-disco." Tucker picked up the soldering iron and carefully twisted it into place to make another connection within the bowels of the golf-club-wielding machine on wheels.

Trixie softened her rhetoric and calmly said, "Senator Taylor resigned an hour ago."

"No shit?" Tucker asked, looking over to Trixie, his eyes at her Reebok level. "This really is a Happy New Year." He grinned from ear to ear. After all, it was his fault.

The story of his wife's murder had made national headlines. *Sixty Minutes* did a segment on Cyber-stalking that focused on Tucker and his misfortunes. *Time*, *Newsweek* and most major media covered the Amanda Starre murder trial as well as the Taylor hearings. And so they had asked Tucker Macy Starre to testify a few weeks earlier.

The small fluorescent lit pale-gray government issue hearing room had seating for eighty, but was filled with more than two hundred spectators each jockeying for kneeling room on the fading linoleum floor. The low ceilings added to a feeling of claustrophobia brought on by electric heat adding to the mugginess of poor air conditioning and humidity control. TV Cameras and lights took up more even more space.

The Senator's dais was a simple row of covered folding tables. Tucker sat behind another cloth-draped table, facing the committee members, his long blondish hair flowing without restraint. His black and yellow Daffy Duck tie didn't quite match the casual, beige, camel hair jacket and creased blue jeans he wore to speak to Congress. He scratched at the 1/4" wide scarred white streak which ran from his temple down the side of his cheek, removed his round glasses and wiped the thick lenses with a tissue from his pocket. Tucker Macy Starre wasn't nervous in the least. He just wanted this hearing to get over with. He had never intended to become a reluctant national personality, but that's what happened anyway. He was prepared.

"I thank the committee for inviting me here today," Tucker began after being introduced by Senator Rickfield, another influential Senator on the committee. "You have my written comments for the record, but I will speak extemporaneously today, if I might." There were no objections, and he was asked to continue.

"As this committee knows, my life fell apart eighteen months ago. Cyber-stalking was the crime and my wife the victim." The photographers flashed their bulbs and the cameras zoomed in on the famous science writer who had simply disappeared shortly after his rise to fame began. "I was a teacher and writer, no more, no less, and led a simple, quiet life with Amanda who ran a small baby food company. I was another unknown writer until last year when for some unfathomable reason, *Tea Leaves and Technology* rang a chord and I was suddenly thrust into the limelight. I have never had any desire to be the news. We valued our privacy."

"What happened to us - to her," Tucker paused, a lump forming in his throat, "is an open book. From the trial, from the news accounts. Much of our life was opened to scrutiny as a

result, which was the exact opposite of what we had wanted.” He blinked hard several times to get the flashbulb spots out of his eyes and paused before addressing the committee again.

“Let me ask you something first, Senator Taylor,” Tucker posed to the committee chairman. “Do you or Congress really care about restoring some degree of personal privacy to Americans?”

“We like to think we can,” drawled the sixty-something white haired Senator Taylor, New Democrat from South Carolina, smiling for the cameras. “That’s why we asked y’all down here to testify.”

“Yes sir, I know that’s what you said. But how can you assure me, and the American people,” he said gesturing to the crowd, “that you won’t succumb to special interest groups who really don’t give a rat’s behind about individual privacy.” Tucker spoke precisely, unrushed, without any sense of ranting. He was indeed becoming the inquisitor, and the cameras were on him.

“Can you explain?” Senator Taylor’s wrinkled round face showed a mixture of confusion and consternation.

“I’d be happy to,” Tucker interrupted. “Do you believe, Senator, that the American people have the right to see their own credit files? The files upon which you and I and banks and Sears and landlords car dealerships make decisions about each of us?”

“Of course, I do. That’s the law.”

“Then could you please explain - any reason whatsoever - why Americans shouldn’t have the right to see their own medical files?”

Taylor leaned over to an aide, winced, and whispered privately while his hand covered the microphone.

“Should Americans have the right to know what information about them is held in computers by insurance companies and the airlines and credit card companies? Should Americans be able to see what information is contained on them about their buying habits and traveling habits? Should Americans be able to see what the computers say about them and should they be permitted to make corrections?” Tucker’s raspy voice rose in volume and filled the hearing room.

“Mr. Starre . . .”

“Is it fair that big marketing companies have a complete picture of every aspect of each of our lives and then sell that information to anyone who asks - and does so without our permission or knowledge? Is that the America you want, Mr. Taylor?”

“Mr. Starre, maybe you don't understand.” Taylor said, grabbing for his gavel, but the lights and cameras were focused on him, and he did have an image to maintain. His aide leaned in and whispered for him to cool his jets. Obviously this Starre character was a radical who would embarrass himself into obscurity. He was a blip on the radar screen of publicity, now in the waning seconds of his fifteen minutes of fame. Taylor put the gavel down.

“I understand, perfectly,” Tucker said firmly, but calmly, speaking only inches from the microphone. “Until a year and a half ago, I never really knew, noticed or thought about how much information is available to each of us electronically. After Mandi was murdered, though, I did start to think about it. The man who killed her knew more about her - and me - than we did.”

Tucker reached to his side and picked up a five-inch thick file folder bursting with papers. “This, Senator, is me.” He waved it in front of himself. “This is everything about me, everything that defines me as a person. At least everything I am permitted to see and acquire legally. This is my credit file, my FBI file, and so on. About three hundred pages worth.”

“Mr. Starre . . . ”

“I hired a private investigator and paid him \$500 to get this. All of this,” Tucker said louder with more vehemence, “for \$500 and it's legal.” Tucker waved the file and the flashbulbs erupted. “Is this the America you want Senator? If it is, please tell us now.” Tucker let the folder drop and slam loudly into the desk, the slapping sound stunning those who didn't see it coming.

“Mr. Starre, that is an entirely different matter.”

“Shouldn't Americans be entitled to own their name, Senator? Is there anything wrong with that Senator? May I please, and may all of these people here - may we please own our names? Will you give that to us? Please Senator?” Tucker wasn't mocking in any way; it was closer to pleading.

"Mr. Starre, please," implored Senator Taylor as if reprimanding a schoolboy. "This is silly. Of course your name is your name."

"And this," Tucker picked up another file, three times as thick. "Is you." He lifted it with both hands, positioning it for everyone and every camera to see. Again, the flashbulbs exploded in a concert of temporary blindness. "This is everything about you and your name."

Taylor's pudgy and wrinkled old jaw dropped and a few lucky photographers caught the moment.

"Let's see what we have here." Tucker placed the file down and opened it.

"Born, Leroy Alexander Jackson Taylor, May 2, 1943. Your father was a Tobacco farmer." The crowd ooh'd. A very politically incorrect thing to be these days.

"You had three sisters, one struck with polio. I am sorry Senator," he said, looking up with sincerity. The cameras raged again. Tucker pulled his sandy blond hair behind his ears and slowly turned the page. "Married to Martha Elizabeth Williams, June 14, 1963, two children, Robert and Sharon. Everyone knows that, don't they?" Taylor sat impassively. "Your Social security number is 112-37-7161, current address 161 Maple St., but wait . . . what's this, here's another address, a two bedroom condominium here in Washington . . . your wife's name is not on this one though."

The over-crowded hearing room was silent except for Tucker's resonant baritone voice booming over the speakers. His voice was bigger than his person. Taylor spoke nervously to an aide behind him and the other committee members held rapt attention as Tucker read more about Taylor. Some were nervous, too. Were they next?

"It seems, Senator you have invested significant money into one of your state's Tobacco farms."

"I did not!" Senator Taylor denied explosively.

Tucker remained calm. "Through several corporate shells, you do, sir . . . would you like to see the records?" Tucker held up several copies of the relevant documents, offering them around to the grab-happy press. "It is a complex arrangement, Senator, yes, but clear. Would you like to see them?" Tucker demanded again.

"That's perfectly legal, I have no control over them." Taylor said, his voice loud but cracking.

"And I believe you support government subsidies to that industry?"

"What is good for my state and my constituency," he said haltingly, trying to sound authoritative. Taylor was on the defensive; not his normal posture - especially with the media in full force.

Tucker ignored the comment and kept speaking.

"Your credit rating is excellent, I see here . . . that's nice," Tucker added sarcastically. A nervous titter rumbled throughout the room. "You order custom embroidered shirts from Lu Ling in Hong Hong, pay for them with American Express, \$145 each." Tucker looked at the Senator. "That's not bad; can I have their phone number?" The titter turned to laughter but Taylor did not join in. He was livid, eyes glaring menacingly at Starre.

Tucker continued to turn the pages and stopped, stroking the long white scar on his left cheek. The pause was effective. He looked back up at the committee dais. "What's this, Senator? Last month you spent \$2,200 at Don's Deli." Senator Taylor's hand instinctively went to his forehead - but he caught himself just in time, instead, a sigh of resignation overcoming his defiant features. Shit. Checkmate.

Only a couple of people in the audience noticed the Senator's reaction. Tucker continued slowly. "Hmmm . . .that's a lot of potato salad, Senator. If it's that expensive it must taste pretty darn good. So I looked for Don's Deli and couldn't find them in the phone book under delicatessen or restaurant."

"That's enough," Taylor said without enthusiasm, but loudly nonetheless.

"But I did find them elsewhere, and they don't serve pastrami on rye."

"Mr. Starre!" Taylor shouted.

"They serve Bambi on Silk for \$400, and a Delicious Doris is \$500 and Blond Sandwiches are \$1000."

"Mr. Starre!"

"What kind of deli is this?" Tucker asked innocently, his hands upturned. Taylor turned bright red, saying nothing.

The silent room waited for someone to break the incredible tension in the air. The cameras flashed and the vid-cams filmed.

Tucker broke the tension. "You see, Congressman. This is what it's really all about." Tucker stood, gathered his folders and walked out of the stunned hearing. Taylor leapt up and left as well, out a private door in the rear, and Senator Merrill Rickfield attempted to restore order.

Tucker Macy Starre was back.

He hadn't expected Taylor to resign. God, look what Clinton had gone through and survived. If Reagan invented the Teflon Presidency, Clinton had perfected it.

But as Trixie had said, Taylor resigned for "personal reasons."

"If you're through gloating with your success," Trixie said puffing away on the cigarette still stuck in the corner of her mouth, "I do need tomorrow's article." The computer's purring female voice announced, "Now you have lots of new mail."

"OK, I'll get to it," he grunted while twisting and turning some invisible screws and knobs inside the spidery robot-like device.

"Like now, " Trixie urged, smoke pouring from her face.

"Like how about an hour?" Tucker said casually with a smirk.

"You haven't begun it yet?" Trixie sounded exasperated. "Your reputation as the world's best procrastinator is understated."

"Never do today what you can put off till tomorrow." Tucker looked away from his handiwork and up at Trixie mischievously.

She glared at Tucker with mild disapproval. "And when am I supposed to edit it if you don't get it to me until press time?"

Tucker returned his focus to the underside of his machine. "Since when do you edit anything I write?" He jibed. Tucker was right. Trixie rarely made any substantive changes to his articles. As insulting as was his opening column last summer; as biting or insane as they might be – she rarely did more than

a cursory correction. Tucker was offensive when he wanted to be – but by God, he had a gift to rile up readers and get them to emotionally respond. Even hate mail is good. It means people are paying attention. Nonetheless, as editor, she should at least read his columns first.

“Do me a favor?” she said, absently looking for the ashtray that wasn't there.

“Yeah?”

“Go get a job.”

“First chance I get, but I have to take a nap first.” Trixie shook her head from side to side and walked out, holding three cigarette butts, searching for a place to dump them in the no-smoking newsroom of the *Register*.

Tucker looked to see if Trixie had left his den of iniquity, crawled out from under the contraption, and stretched his lean, almost skinny body. Nearly-forty aches and pains. And the bullets hadn't helped any, either. He brushed off small silvery bits of metal of hardened solder from his workshirt and jeans, ran his fingers back through his hair several times and retied it into a ponytail again. He clapped his hands twice, causing the din to return, this time with Led Zeppelin's “Whole Lotta Love” competing with CNN's International Report.

Tucker tiptoed daintily through the chaotic mess on the floor, limping slightly over to his old graffiti ridden wooden desk. He sat down and pulled up his left leg to massage the sore ankle. He twisted and rotated it, no longer cringing from the crackling sounds that emanated from his lower leg, but yet grimacing at the minor stab of pain. After putting it back down on the ground he rummaged on his desk till he found a keyboard hidden under a stack of papers sending them carelessly to either side, and placed it randomly on top of even more files. He intently typed away at high speed for fifteen minutes, pressed the Save and File buttons and got back down on the floor and went back to work at what he really wanted to do.

***In Cyberspace, You Are Guilty
Until Proven Innocent***

***by Tucker Macy Starre,
New York Register, January 4***

Imagine. Imagine that you are mindlessly driving down the street. Not a New York City street, but the street of any real town in America. Maybe on the way to an appointment to have your toenails clipped. Your taillight is out, but you don't know it. A siren wails behind you, the blue flashing lights reflect off your rear view mirror and into your eyes. So, as mandated by survival and the law you pull over.

The cop struts up friendly enough, but he's clearly in charge. "License and registration please." He goes back to his police car and enters the numbers into his remote computer terminal which is radio connected to the local precinct or township computers which is in turn connected to the county or state computer network which is in turn connected to the Federal computer networks. An instant national search on your name and plate and reggie from hither and yon to DC and back.

A couple of minutes later he returns, his holster is unsnapped and he is tensely holding the gun. He's not so friendly this time. "Get out of the car, please."

"Is something wrong, occifer?" This is a bad time for humor.

"Out of the car." You get out, and he says "Assume the position." You wisely refrain from saying in retort, "no, you assume the position," and the handcuffs are slapped on for a friendly drive to jail. Why? Because according to the computers, you are wanted for armed robbery in Colorado. The odds of you making your toenail appointment on time are non-existent. Now, after finding a lawyer, you have to prove that you are not wanted for armed robbery. Good luck if the computers say you are.

It's happened to me. I've walked up to an airline counter to pick up and pay for the tickets. "Sorry, sir, but you don't seem to have a reservation."

"But I made it myself."

"Sir, it's not in the computer."

And so it goes.

When someone makes a decision about you today; the mortgage company, VISA, an insurance company; a landlord; the cops - even direct mail marketing companies like Proctor and Gamble, they go to the computers to get the information by which they will make that decision.

They don't call you up or invite you don't to their office for a tea and a chat. They don't sit you down and check you out in person and ask, "Do you promise to pay us back on time, every single month from now through eternity?" No sir. They check the bloody computers and ASSUME that the contents are accurate, and then make their decisions based upon what they say; not what you say. Guilty Until Proven Innocent.

In 1995, DMV records from several states appeared on the Internet so anyone, anyone at all could dial them up and get the address and phone number of the pretty blond in the Jaguar with the license plate CUCME. Federal law is supposed to fix this situation, but the right inquiry and \$5 will get the same information anyway. For those of you who have followed my case, this is how my wife was killed.

So, I think I've come up with a solution. One which will get the attention of Congress and maybe, just maybe, they'll do something about it.

What we need is a CD-ROM disk, sell it, publish it on the Net - doesn't matter - which contains the complete files on every member of Congress, the Cabinet, senior officials throughout various agencies. Everything that is legal to acquire from the thousands of data bases across the country: Criminal and civil court cases; corporate ownership interests; telephone records; real estate holdings; medical files; credit profiles; video rentals; travel records; purchasing habits - you get the point.

The whole shebang.

Senator Taylor resigned as a result of legally accessible records which gave away some of his extra-curricular activities. His resignation strikes me as a pretty good first step in restoring personal privacy in this country. Don't let me know what you think of this idea - I can pretty well figure that out on my own.

Let the other 534 Congressmen know.

Chapter 2

Monday, January 4

<<Successful Logon to NEMO WebChat. 1024 Bit PGP Enabled. True VPN >>

1. PASSWORDS
2. NEW NETS
3. DANGER ZONES
4. CRACKING TOOLS
5. WHO'S NEW?
6. PHREAKING
7. CRYPTO
8. WHO'S HERE?
9. U.S. NETWORKS
10. INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS
11. FOR TRADE
12. FORTUNE 500 DOORKEYS

Twenty-one year old Steve Masucci, sitting in his poorly heated one-room fifth story Bronx walkup apartment clicked on (8) to see who else was 'on-line' now. The computer responded:

CONVERSATION PIT: LA CREME, RAMBO. DO YOU WANT TO JOIN IN?

Yes

WTF0?

Steve nodded at the screen: *What The Fuck? Over!* A phrase borrowed from the military. He took a deep swig of Jolt Cola, and placed it back on the cardboard boxes next to the luke-warm radiator that served as a poor man's desk. He typed into the WebChat.

Dudes! HNY!

HNY BACK TO YOU CAPTAIN! YOU EVER HEARD OF SPOOK? <<RAMBO>>

Yeah, he's 3lite. Sure.

KEEPS ASKING TO BE LET IN. HE BROUGHT US A CLEAN HACK INTO AMEX. WE CLEANED UP A FEW DEBTS FOR UNSUSPECTING CARD MEMBERS. HAPPY NEW YEAR. GOOD FUN. <<RAMBO>>

Careful! Remember the Masters of Destruction

YEAH, I KNOW. HE'S CLEAN. CHECKED HIM OUT. GOT GOOD GOVT STUFF. HE BROUGHT US THE NEWEST IRS RAS SIGN-ONS, 2 SIPRNET SUPERUSER PASSWORDS, AND, DIG THIS, THE KEYS TO CHOTS - THE BIG BRITISH DEFENSE NETWORK. YOU CAN ACTUALLY SEE THE PRIME MINISTER MAKE TYPING MISTAKES.

What you gonna do, boy? In them thar computers?

Being the oldest member of Nemo, he felt a responsibility to make sure the others avoided trouble and jail. Ethics counted. He believed in the old school hacker Code.

Steven Masucci, known as "KIRK, where no man has gone before" to fellow hackers, had avoided being nabbed by the Feds for breaking and entering Verizon computers only last year. He saw them coming, tracing his activities on-line, and disconnected seconds before they identified his electronic location, and by default, his physical address. He attended City University part time, and worked as a systems administrator at an Internet Service Provider most of the time. Free Internet access, but no hacking from there. He had plenty of other accounts around the country for that, many of them untraceable through anonymous servers. Kirk's reputation as a top hacker rivaled that of Eric Bloodaxe and Gooroo and Phiber Optic.

I FIGURE I'D GIVE A FEW FOLKS WHO NEED A TAX BREAK A BIG REFUND AND TELL THE BRITS THEY CAN HAVE CONNECTICUT BACK. <<LA CREME>>

Hey, it's not a pretty sight being woke up by an army of feds pointing Uzis at your head. Ask Bloodaxe. He knows.

La Creme's real name was Emilio Sanchez. He lived in the highly integrated, occasionally violent Washington Heights section of Manhattan. At only fifteen, he had been picked up by the Secret Service Electronic Crimes Task Force three times for stealing cellular phone ID numbers; cloning as it was known in the trade. But his age kept him out of trouble. His mother, a scrubwoman who worked nights, spoke little English and never understood what the agents were so upset about.

What's with this Chase asshole? Is it true? I read the article Starre wrote. Said that Chase claimed it was all an accident.

ACCIDENTAL ON PURPOSE MAYBE <<LA CREME>>

HOW MANY WAYS ARE THERE INFECT A PENTAGON COMPUTER WITH A STEALTHY ERASING VIRUS? ONE THAT I KNOW OF. THAT'S NO ACCIDENT. <<RAMBO>>

Rambo was an Italian American from Queens, and the most daring of the NEMO group of hackers. He'd helped out family expenses now and then by purchasing groceries on a purloined credit card number, but never for more than \$100; he, like Kirk, had ethics. However, the insurance company was still not paying for his father's disability, and he couldn't work, and well, you had to do what you had to do. Also twenty, he lived at home to take care of his partially paralyzed dad, and his mom was a subway token dispenser for the MTA.

No shit. Seems like he don't wanna live by the code. Must be some spoiled little brat getting too big for his britches

WE OUGHTA FIND HIS CANDY ASS AND SHOW HIM REAL LAW ENFORCEMENT. :-)
<<LA CREME>>

The Fibbies flipping out? Not that they can really do anything.

FUCK YES! A LOT OF DOORS HAVE BEEN CLOSED. THE NET'S SPHINCTER TIGHT. WE

DIDN'T LOSE EVERYTHING. THE DOORKEY
DOWNLOAD WILL UPDATE YOU. <<RAMBO>>

Will do. Any word on the new Central
Census Data Base? Everything about every
American stored in one computer. All of
their personal data, ripe for the
picking. Sounds like the kind of library
that would do the bad guys a lot of good.

CAN'T FIND A DOOR FROM THE INTERNET YET.
THE JUSTICE LINK WAS STILL GOOD YESTERDAY
AND THE FBI STILL HASN'T CHANGED A
PASSWORD, SO THAT SHOULD BE AN EASY OPEN
ONCE WE FIND THE FRONT DOOR. GIMME A
COUPLE OF DAYS AND WE SHOULD KNOW THE
PREZ'S JOCK SIZE. <<RAMBO>>

Zero! Ha! Keep me in mind.

All three of their screens announced a new visitor.

REPO MAN wants to join the conversation.
May he join?

They all hit yes. The NEMO WebChat Conversation Pit
was distributed democracy at work. Majority ruled as to who
could join into the conversation. Not like the impudent anarchy
of the Internet Relay Chat.

Tucker Macy Starre sat amidst a smorgasbord of techno-
clutter in the paneled basement of his Ossining, New York
home. The small two-story fixer-upper he bought with Amanda
the month before she was killed was never fixed-up. It only got
worse; in desperate need of a sanding and paint job, the peeling
white with black trim exterior got even less attention than the
weedy, overgrown lawn. Tucker's disappearance for the better
part of a year also included doing nothing productive around
the house. Who was he doing it for, anyway? She was gone.

He never did the remodeling she had wanted to do. He
didn't knock down the walls she wanted knocked down. He
never updated the circa 1962 Rob and Laura Petrie kitchen. He
had, though, turned the entire first floor into a giant adult toy
room with a multi-media center to die for, a four-person

Virtual Reality station, computers, and thirty or more scattered inventions in the process of being invented.

But the dank paneled basement beneath his living-toy-room was his office at home. The walls sweated, inviting poodle sized water bugs to share his space. The burnt sienna paisley shag rug needed to be scraped from the concrete floor and burned. Space heaters provided the only warmth, and the previous owner's discolored flowery couch sank to the floor when he sat on its rotting cushions. A small color TV set hung in the corner next to a garage sale stereo system. It was here Tucker spent much of his time.

They had bought on Hamilton Avenue, because it was about the only reasonably decent street they could afford and it offered an incredible view across the half-mile wide Hudson River to the Rockland County Palisade cliffs. The clincher was, their house sat forty-six feet from the walls of Sing Sing Prison and the guards looked down from seventy-foot high guard towers over their yard.

"What about privacy?" Tucker recalled Mandi asking when they first saw the house and made an offer a half-hour later.

"Oh, you mean . . ." Tucker teased, pretending to take off his clothes.

"Yes, of course." They had both enjoyed lovemaking on the roof of the same New York apartment on Riverside Drive they had rented since their college days. That apartment offered a view of the Hudson River, too, looking over at the New Jersey Palisades.

"We'll just have to give them cameras. That's all there is to it," Tucker threatened, for which he caught a loving punch in the arm. So part of Mandi's plan was to build a protected solarium which overlooked the river yet was carefully designed to avoid being the target of nearby binoculars. It was never built.

GENTLEMEN! <<REPO MAN>>

Tucker had first met Kirk, a friendly 'good' hacker, several years back at DefCon, the world's premier hacker convention held each year in Las Vegas. Tucker recalled that for some asinine reason, six-thousand hackers find that the most

propitious time to gather for their annual conference was in the crushing hundred-twenty-two degree heat of August that instantly sucks up every bit of moisture from your eyeballs. Most of the hackers felt he was OK - for an old guy.

YO, REPO-MAN! << LA CREME>>

Tucker was given the handle Repo Man by the hackers. Much better than "Reporter" one conspiracy minded hacker told him. Many are convinced that the US government and the aliens were double dealing the American public by not coming clean on the cattle mutilations and vast number of human abductions, so the moniker Repo Man, as in the cult alien film of the same title, stuck.

Kirk here. Nanu nanu.

WRONG STATION. YOU'RE TOO DAMNED YOUNG.
:-) << REPO MAN>>

You Rang?

YUP. HAVE YOU GUYS PLAYED WITH THE NEW
DGRAPH BETA VERSION? <<REPO MAN>>

Fucking awesome, but it does crash.

LEARNED HOW TO PROGRAM THAT SHIT FROM
GATES. <<RAMBO>>

Its virtuality is totally cool. With the
right VR visor it's like being there.
They're gonna make a shitload of money.

GOING PUBLIC. I BET YOU OWN A CHUNK REPO-
DUDE. <<LA CREME>>

I GOTTA BUY JUST LIKE YOU. NO INSIDER
DEALINGS ALLOWED. <<REPO MAN>>

RIGHT <<RAMBO>>

JUST SO LONG AS IT WORKS. <<REPO MAN>>

It'll put a hurting on Oracle and
Microsoft, serious time. It's like

walking through the Net and reaching out and taking what you want. Real touchy-feely. No keyboard. No mouse. Outrageously cool.

FYI. KYOTO ELECTRONICS JUST BOUGHT DGRAPH. <<REPO MAN>>

IS TROUBLEAUX STILL THERE? AND MAX? THEY MAKE GATES LOOK SENILE. <<LA CREME>>

YEAH. PART OF THE DEAL. TROUBLEAUX IS THE DARLING OF WALL STREET. <<REPO MAN>>

HEY MAN, HEARD ABOUT THE WAR? <<RAMBO>>

WHAT WAR? DID I MISS THE EVENING NEWS? <<REPO MAN>>

CLUELESS. :-) SOME DUDES ARE GETTING READY TO DECLARE WAR ON FRANCE. <<RAMBO>>

WHO? THE ESCARGOT POLICE? <<REPO MAN>>

LISTEN. SOME GUY CALLED THE SPOOK ESTABLISHED A BEACHHEAD IN FRANCE AND WANT TO LAUNCH THE FIRST ROCKETS ON NATIONAL TELEVISION. <<RAMBO>>

COOL <<LA CREME>>

ABSURD. WHY FRANCE? WHAT'S WRONG WITH RUSSIA OR SINGAPORE? <<REPO MAN>>

Tucker laughed out loud at the absurdity of a bunch of hackers declaring war on France, while Deaf Cat, sitting in his lap didn't stop her rhythmic purring. Totally deaf, albino and with feline AIDS, she was the most cuddly cat he had ever had.

THEY'RE PISSED OFF THAT THE FRENCH ADMITTED SPYING ON THE US FOR YEARS. HIDDEN MICROPHONES IN FIRST CLASS AIR FRANCE FLIGHTS. BREAKING INTO HOTEL ROOMS AND MAKING COPIES OF DISKS AND PAPERS. STEALING THE BOEING SECRETS DURING THE 777 DESIGN. SHIT LIKE THAT. <<LA CREME>>

SO SEND IN THE CIA. WHAT DO HACKERS CARE?
<<REPO MAN>>

HEY, WE'RE GOOD GUNG HO AMERICANS, TOO.
THEY SAY THAT THE FRENCH SPIED ON US FOR
SO LONG THEY SHOULD GET A LITTLE QUID PRO
QUO :-) <<RAMBO>>

THIS IS A JOKE, RIGHT? <<REPO MAN>>

Tucker thought it might be a total joke; they'd done it before, like the time a whole group of hackers decided to find out what the government knew about aliens. Project Green Cheese they had called it. Some hackers had allegedly broken into super-secret military bases that stored the extraterrestrials and the broken space ships. Urban lore had it that a few hackers simply disappeared. Some media people bought the story; Tucker's skepticism kept him from writing about it. Not skeptical about the alien-government thing, but about the hacker angle. It remained urban lore, often repeated, never confirmed. War on France. Had to be a joke.

NO, IT'S THEIR IDEA OF INFOWAR. COMPUTERS
BATTLING COMPUTERS, WITH THEM AT THE
CONTROLS. SPOOK SAYS HE INTO D'ASSAULT,
AURBUS, HALF OF THE GOVERNMENT, PEUGOT,
CIBI, EVERYWHERE. <<RAMBO>>

AND WHAT DO THEY PLAN TO DO? <<REPO MAN>>

I think it's nuts. They want to call a
press conference and do it on CNN. Openly
declare war.

AND WHAT THEN? AFTER THEY'RE DEAD?
<<REPO MAN>>

HEHEHEHEHE. :- (THEY'RE GONNA DOWNLOAD
ALL OF THE SECRETS THEY CAN FIND AND
PUBLISH THEM ON THE NET. COOL, HUH?
<<RAMBO>>

THAT'S ONE WAY TO LOOK AT IT. NOT THAT I
DON'T THINK IT'S AN INTERESTING CONCEPT,
AND MAYBE A FEW GOOD HACKERS COULD PULL

IT OFF. BUT THEY'D BE DEAD. I WAS
SERIOUS. <<REPO MAN>>

These guys weren't kidding. Dead was probably a preferable alternative to the kinds of trouble they would invite.

THE FBI IS GOING TO HANG EM? RIGHT.
<<RAMBO>>

NO. DGS. THE FRENCH CIA. THEY HAVE A
MOSSAD KIND OF ATTITUDE. IF YOU HURT MY
COUNTRY, I HURT YOU WORSE. <<REPO MAN>>

C'MON <<LA CREME>>

BESIDES. IT'S ILLEGAL AS HELL. <<REPO
MAN>>

No; we checked it out. There's no us law
about hacking a French computer.

US? YOU TOO KIRK? <<REPO MAN>>

BUSTED, MAN. :-) <<RAMBO>>

I didn't plan it. Just thought it would
be fun to hack the elevators at the
Eiffel tower. I can see it now: free fall
from 1000 feet and then the brakes slide
on - Bungy jumping in an erector set.

LISTEN. MY NEIGHBOR IS FBI AND I
GUARANTEE YOU IF THEY WANT TO ARREST YOU,
THEY'LL FIND A WAY. SOME OBSCURE
INTERPRETATION OF SOME BURIED WORDS AT
THE END OF A SUB-SECTION OF A SUB-CLAUSE:
THEY'LL GET YOU IF THEY WANT. AND ON TV
NO LESS? <<REPO MAN>>

BETTER THAN GERALDO OPENING AL CAPONE'S
VAULT. <<RAMBO>>

Maybe there was a story here, after all. At least a *Register* sort of story. "Hacker Teens Pound Paris." If he couldn't talk them out of it, then he was morally obligated, sort of, to report on it. At least he would have the complete back-story.

I WANT FRONT ROW SEATS. IT'LL PUT MY COLUMN ON THE FRONT PAGE AND MY SAT-MODEM WILL BE TALKING STRAIGHT TO THE COPY DESK. BUT THE HEADLINES WILL READ, "HACKERS ARRESTED FOR STUPID STUNT."
<<REPO MAN>>

YOU CAN'T TALK TO ME LIKE THAT! THIS IS THE INTERNET!!! <Big Grin> <<RAMBO>>

NOT SO HOT AN IDEA? <<LA CREME>>

GREAT FOR MY RATINGS. LOUSY FOR YOU. BESIDES, I CAN'T AFFORD TO LOSE YOU GUYS. YOU'RE MY SOURCES. <<REPO MAN>>

DON'T BREATHE A WORD. WE'D LOSE OUR 3LITE STATUS. <<LA CREME>>

DEAD, HUH. THAT TAKES SOME OF THE FUN OUT OF IT. GUESS I BETTER THINK ABOUT IT.
<<RAMBO>>

Yeah. Good idea. Glad you thought of it.

SOME PLAN, THOUGH, HUH? <<RAMBO>>

AND MY BOSS SAYS I' M A CONSPIRACY NUT.
<<REPO MAN>>

WTF0?

NEVER MIND. CIAO. <<REPO MAN>>

He had tomorrow's column now. For sure. Invade France. Deaf Cat reluctantly slipped to the floor as Tucker repositioned himself at his wobbly desk that was perched on four one-gallon paint cans. The legs of those cheap desks never seemed to last very long.

Cyber-Civil Disobedience
By Tucker Macy Starre

Damned fame. Tragedy breeds fame and who the hell needs it. But at least it does give me the occasional chance to

really say something totally outrageous and then see what happens.

In the question and answer period after a speech to 800 raving New York hackers last month, I offered the following bit of wisdom:

"If my generation had had the technical toys you guys have, the '80's never would have happened."

Forty some years ago, millions of Americans shouted their convictions and anti-war sentiments by marching in the streets and engaging in variously creative forms of civil disobedience. Anti-nuclear activists and environmentalists have maintained the tradition over the years while repeat offender anti-abortionists seemingly wear the badge of both misdemeanor and murder arrests with pride. But the visceral images of huge traffic-jamming Vietnam era protests broadcast live on the evening news will be the ones indelibly etched in our minds and history books.

Today, due to ever unpopular Washington policies and stances on issues such as gun control, eco-Green, abortion, and the taxation of Cyberspace, the Administration similarly invites demonstrable outcries, but with the modern twist of technology driven protest.

In April of 1993 the Clinton White House announced the Clipper Chip: perhaps the most loathed invention the US Government had ever sprung upon the American public. The last Administration considered banning private cryptographic schemes under the guise of anti-terrorist efforts. Tax the Net? Nah...

The US Post Office wants to get into the electronic mail business and there has been talk of outlawing private corporate email systems to maintain the government monopoly on speedy delivery of mail. Internet telephone and TV systems are under attack by powerful lobbies who feel threatened by teenagers making free international calls over the Net.

Despite repeated failed attempts at on-line censorship, the Far Right got Carnivore and is now pushing onerous anti-porn bills, which would criminalize the transmission of a picture of a girl in a bikini. This Administration's handling of Cyberspace is universally criticized from the boardroom to the university to

millions of on-line Compuserve and even pathetic AOL users. So what is a disgruntled citizenry to do?

Cyber-civil disobedience is timely, poignant and potentially highly effective.

In the 1970s, youthful and academic demographics flavored the anti-War movement: predictable looking people predictably demonstrating against government police, always aware that the TV cameras were rolling. Today, Administration policies are loathed by a wide cross section of America that crosses most social, economic and age barriers.

Back then a demonstration or protest required organization and the congregation of huge numbers of people, all within the limits of the necessary police permit. Signs and slogans and chants prefaced the occasional Mayor Daly-like headline grabbing overreactions. Today, the nether world of Cyberspace offers an unrestricted, unregulated and certainly unorganized refuse as a '00's alternative to conventional assembly. Cyberspace provides the ideal mechanism for Cyber-civil disobedience, the protest means of choice for the Information Age. Cyber-civil disobedience is waged by remote control, over vast distances, yet the effects can be highly focused against selected targets.

And, best yet, there isn't a policeman guarding each and every portal to the information superhighway waiting to haul a civil disobedient off to the slammer.

But Phil Zimmermann would probably disagree. Facing the potential of years in prison, in the early 90's he was under investigation for violating US export control laws which govern encryption schemes. Kelly Goen, in an apparent act of Cyber-civil disobedience, placed an electronic copy of Phil's PGP (Pretty Good Privacy) software encryption program on the Internet, resulting now in near universal availability of a virtually uncrackable coding method.

Cyber-civil disobedience aka Hactivism is easily disguised. If, for example, the electronic mail boxes of selected, and presumably offensive government services are overloaded with lengthy unnecessary garbage laden messages, they literally collapse under the weight of popular opinion. Such wide spread shrapnelling of targeted systems by millions of Cyber-civil disobedients have effectively shut down non-

critical electronic government services whose demise acts as highly visible media-magnets. Cyber-events are news and news spreads the word: the protesters need the publicity for enlistment of more sympathizers.

Rotary dial telephones that once used to ring in one's opinion are today replaced with millions of home PC's connected to millions of modems. Using a little piece of software known as an auto-dialer, it would only take a few thousand distant and invisible confederates to shut down a company's private telephone system or PBX. In a larger 'demonstration' of Cyber-civil disobedience, entire telephone exchanges would only be capable of responding to would be callers with, "All Circuits Are Busy."

With an electronic US population of an estimated 180 million, a high percentage of which are truly Cyber-aware, Cyber-civil disobedience is hitting our shores as it did in Europe, effectively shutting down portions of various governments for days at a time. Network systems have limited bandwidth; an obvious weak point that a Cyber-civil disobedient can easily exploit to the detriment of the service provider and its customers. Or as we saw begin with the DDoS attacks of February 2000, a handful of people can shut down the Internet's largest companies in seconds.

Whether it's Right to Lifers shutting down an abortion clinic's or extreme environmentalists striking in Cyberspace instead of the woods, or an angry public venting electronic frustration at its government, Cyber-civil disobedience within the power of millions.

*Technology is neither the sole problem (my neo-Ludditism aside) nor the sole solution. It's getting pretty damn near that time when we as a species have to grow up. Either learn the social graces and ethics of that which we have technically wrought... or quit building the s*** altogether.*

This is Tucker Macy Starre, reminding the Administration that for an Information Age population to aggressively voice its discontent, America doesn't have to take to the streets.

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Thanks!

