

LIFE'S ADVENTURES & VIDEO GAMES

By Richard Seaborne

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LIFE & THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY: HELL DIFFICULTY SAGA

Life & The Video Game Industry

COMPLETE BOOK-5

LIFE'S ADVENTURES & VIDEO GAMES

By Richard Seaborne

The Adventures of Rick Liberty, The Liberty Zone, The Hell Difficulty Saga, The Tech Zone, Tales and Lessons & Insights from the Video Game Industry, AI Demystified, and related stories, characters, content, books, podcasts, speech & narration, Videos, Human and AI Created + Edited Art and Images, AI Art Render Prompts + Editing + Modification, and Derivative Works are Copyright © 2021-2024 Richard Seaborne. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED!

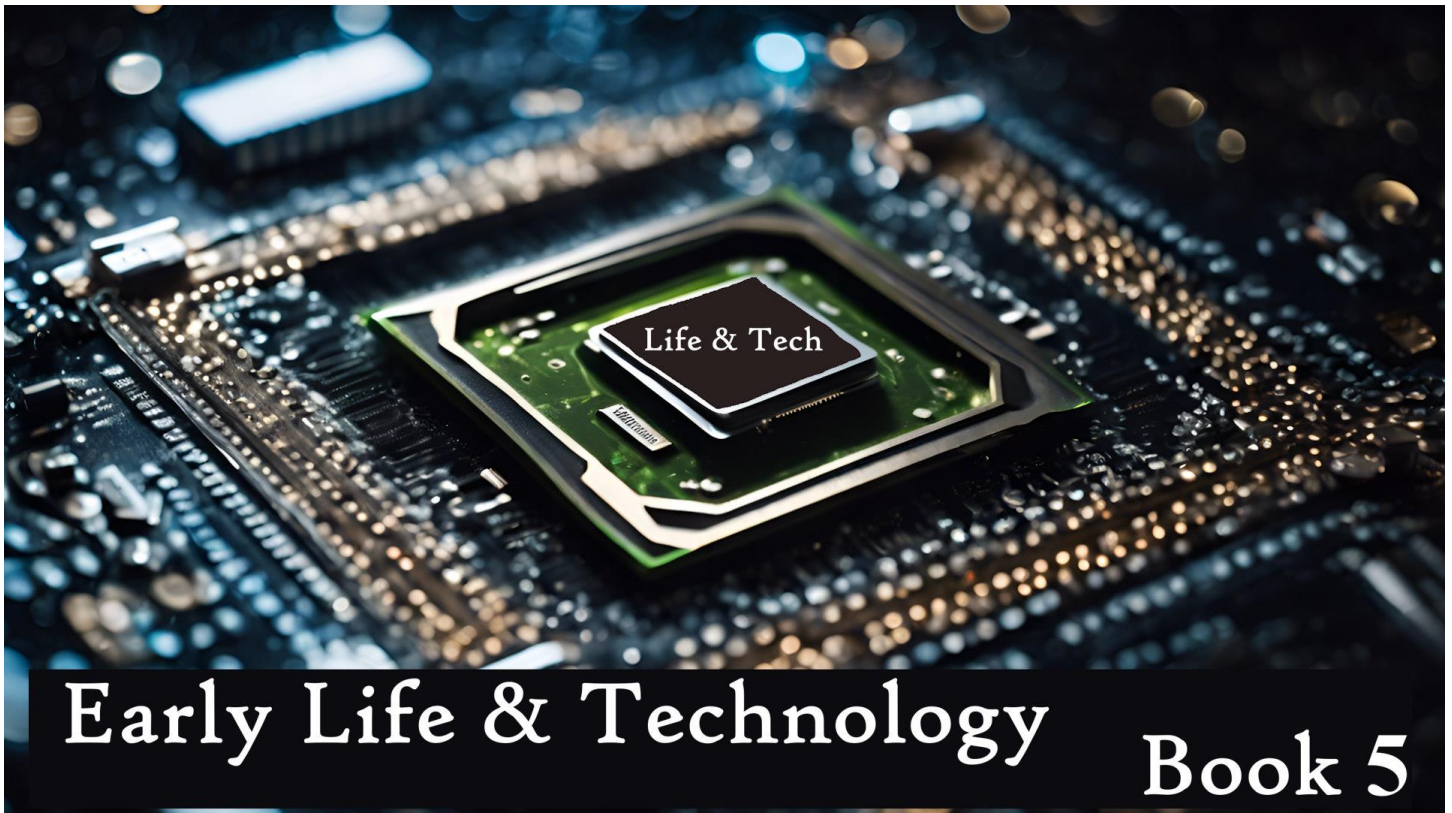
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Christianity, The Bible, The Old Testament, and Traditional Conservative Values
The Knights Templar Illuminati – Both Original Good Knights Templar + Branched Masonic Evil Illuminati
Heaven. Hell, Limbo, Celestial Beings, Planes of Existence, Faith, and Spiritual Concepts
National + World Governments and Billionaire Elites Control and Corruption of Religion & Humanity
Violence, Gore, and Death Descriptions and Visual Representations, including Human Abuse and Tragedy
Artificial Intelligence (AI) Generated Art, Music, and Spoken Voice, and
My Real-World Experiences in Life from Childhood to Adult, including Work in the Video Game Industry*

BOOK 5: LIFE AND THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY



LOCAL FILE:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E000 Rick000 Book05 Trailer Teaser Blast Splash Hell Difficulty Saga Adventures of Rick Liberty Tech Zone AI Demystified.mp4](#)

Rumble Playlist:

https://rumble.com/playlists/dK8qrv8V_to

YouTube Playlist:

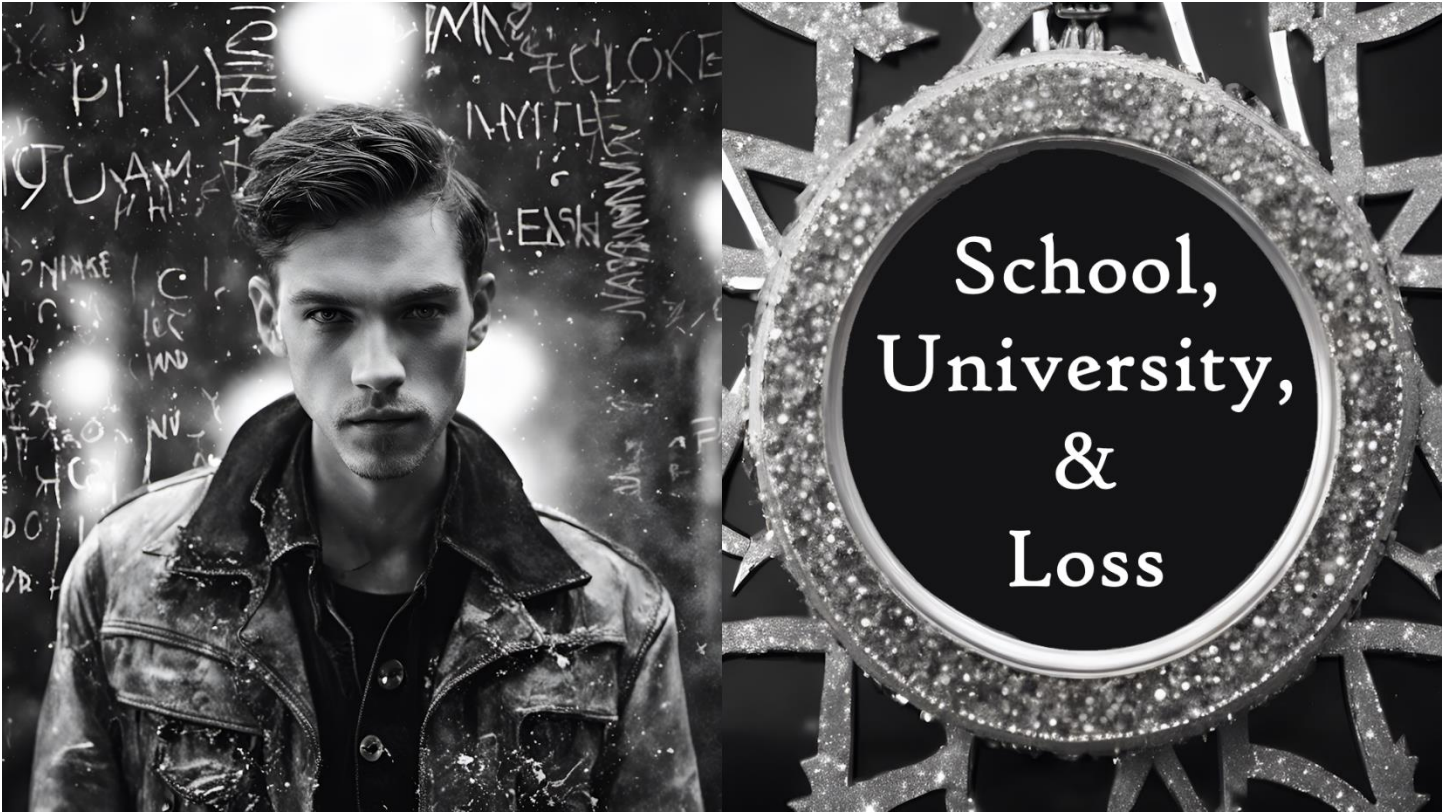
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3Ov-xrXhB_HdVKiNSAcDAxL_-F8wARQg

Description:

The Hell Difficulty Saga is the woeful tale of a man - Richard Seaborne – in his sunset years – suffering from dementia. He is locked away in a psychiatric prison for the criminally insane, but believes it is unjust. Richard is losing faith in the world and humanity, but sees himself as a modern-day Quixotic hero – named Rick Liberty – whom alone - can restore the world to morality and righteousness. He must be free of the Ward to save the world.

Richard recounts his life from childhood to retirement, to a panel of psychiatrists - in this fictional story – in hopes of being freed. He weaves elements of the real Richard Seaborne's autobiography, into his epic fantastical Quixotic adventure, where he fights the Devil, the Devil's Cult of Bael, and the Seven Princes of Hell's Puppets here on mortal earth (including the World Economic Forum / WEF, Gates, and Soros).

E177 SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY, SELF-TEACHING



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E177 School, University, and Self-Teaching Kleine Schule.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qcy-e177-school-university-and-self-teaching-kleine-schule.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/HU0TuKoIz8>

Description:

Richard shares stories from when he was in an accelerated education program called Kleine Schule (AKA Small School within a Larger School).

He tells tales of his leading student protests and wild adventures and experiences in California, including Racism against him.

"Small School" Kleine Schule Accelerated Program

Kleine Schule (KS):

Seventh grade was not good for me. I hated it with a passion.

Teachers were slow and clearly not well versed in the curriculum they taught.

Everyday brought boredom. I would wonder how people tolerated it and learned anything new given how simplistic the curriculum was.

I felt like seventh grade was a waste of time, and so my mind wandered, and I would write philosophical ideas down and distill them into one-liners or even slogans of wisdom (or so I thought); all those things are lost to the waste baskets of time.

I am not much of a hoarder, never was. So most anything I have is the result of someone else saving it for me that I could have it later in life, I forgot I had it in some storage bin somewhere out of sight, or I acquired it within the last decade at most. I wish I could go back in time and keep more things from my past, but that is a lesson learned too late in life.

Well, I learned of a special program called "Kleine Schule" (KS) which was German for "Small School", it was an experimental pilot education program that allowed students to assign their own work from a vast list of curriculums that spanned Science, Technology, English, and Math (STEM) and had its own computer and full access to the High School facilities including its library.

In fact, Kleine Schule was in a large multi-sectional building in the middle of the High School, and its students could attend High School classes even though they were so much younger. I was accepted into "Elementary Kleine Schule" (EKS) to begin at 8th grade. I would stay there until my senior year, where I had completed everything imaginable in the curriculum and so I attended random classes for the fun of it.

Elementary Kleine Schule (EKS) and The Protest:

While in Elementary Kleine Schule (EKS), an education program for gifted students to accelerate their learning through individual study at their own pace. I quickly excelled in the program; it was perfect for me.

I gathered the entire year's requirements and set out to complete it as fast as I could; it took me a few months, but I finished the year's work and passed all its tests. Kleine Schule normally asks you graduate to the next grade then regardless of your age, but I declined (no one does that they said!). Well, I did... I said I wanted to study my own areas of interest now that I did what I "had to do".

The EKS teachers agreed it was a fair position for me to study ahead if I did not distract others. I, too, agreed.

I pursued mostly computers and programming topics. I took Speech & Debate when I was in 8th grade and stayed in it all the way through my Senior year where I graduated with a National Forensics League Degree of Distinction and Double-Ruby recognition pin in addition to my HS Diploma (more on that later).

There was an Apple][in the EKS classroom available to use per a sign-up schedule, and so like everyone else I would sign up for allotted times. One day Mrs. Rivard, the EKS supervision teacher, came to me and said another student needed the computer and I must sacrifice my time slot because I am so advanced that I did not need it.

I was horrified that I was being punished by losing pre-scheduled computer time for being focused and working non-stop on my interests. I could not allow it!

Well, some background here - my mother worked then at Shugart which made Apple][floppy disc drives and hard disc drives, and she had a refurbished one that I'd loaned to the school so they could have more than just an old cassette tape to save/low files. If I could not use the computer that I helped improve then I would take my drive back; I informed the teacher and did so.

The school had no right to the floppy disc drive, and the teacher soon realized her actions had very unhappy unintended consequences. The fight escalated until she gave me detention.

I declined detention and walked out of EKS, out of the school, and to a bus stop and home. The teacher was flabbergasted and called my mother who supported my position and challenged the teacher for taking my assigned time away.

I returned to EKS the next day and told my tale to everyone in EKS and KS (older kids) what happened. I evangelized and inspired the younger EKS and the older KS students to revolt.

We all sat at our desks and would no longer do work. We wrote letters of our reasons to hate the school and what they did. We sowed contempt and discontent. We went out into the main High School during lunch to tell the story of abuse.

The fight for justice was on!

Things, however, went terribly bad when the principal and head of Kleine Schule showed up demanding to talk to the instigator (me). The KS head wielded a rolled-up flagpole like a weapon to intimidate as he waved it about yelling at me.

I told the KS head to "Honor the rules, honor the sign-up sheet, treat us like people. Only then we will stop. Only then!" He seemed shocked with my non-negotiable rigid vehemence. He left with the principal, leaving us to wonder what might come next.

Later that day the EKS teacher, Mrs. Rivard, came by wearing boards on front & back like an advertisement with words written on them saying "T.G.I.F. I am sorry". She verbally apologized and said she made a mistake.

I honored my words and we all returned to normalcy the next day, and the schedule was honored.

Speech and Debate, Public Speaking:

While attending Kleine Schule accelerated learning program and in my senior year I pursued mostly computers and programming topics but also pursued Speech and Debate. I am not sure why I wanted to gain public speaking skills but something in me called me to it.

I took Speech & Debate when I was in 8th grade and stayed in it all the way through my Senior year where I graduated with a National Forensics League Degree of Distinction and Double-Ruby recognition pin in addition to my HS Diploma.

At first, I found it was intimidating standing up in front of people and talking and asserting a position that may not necessarily be your own. Over time I learned from the debate teacher Mr. Bick that everyone is intimidated and afraid.

He told me that everyone makes mistakes and can look dumb. He asserted just getting out there and doing it was all I had to do. Success would follow. Practice and confidence. That was all it took he said.

He comforted that if people laughed at me then I should laugh back at them for being ignorant and dumb. He insisted they would do much worse themselves, but ignorantly they imagine they would be better at it.

Mr. Bick explained that people's arrogance protects them from the truth of their inabilities.

Golden Bear Forensic Institute in Berkeley, CA:

I was able to attend a 2-week Speech and Debate summer program, The Golden Bear Forensic Institute, hosted by the University of Berkeley for potential State and National Public Speaking champions. It was an honor to be invited to the program.

Of course, the program cost a lot of money. My parents worked with the school to find a way to cover the costs in addition to candy drives, car washes, and all sorts of school fundraising activities. Ultimately, I was able to attend the program.

The summer debate program was wild.

Everyone was assigned shared dormitory rooms normally used during the school year by college students. I had never stayed anywhere outside our house, Scotty's house, or a car. I certainly never stayed in a hotel or a dorm room. The dorm room was so much nicer than my bedroom or anything in San Martin.

Fellow Students Were Entitled:

Meeting lots of different people from all over California was intriguing and insightful. People came from all walks of life but there was one common theme to me – everyone had money (but me).

I saw my fellow students focus happily on the material and social activities afforded in the forensics institute. I always felt how lucky I was to be there and attend and saw how it was presumed and expected that they could attend.

I saw no one valued what they had whereas I valued it deeply and appreciated how much was needed for me to even be there.

They all seemed to be entitled and expecting that all things would be there for them whenever they wanted it. Such was never the case for me – not then and not now. Never...

Everyone Loved Games:

No matter how different my “colleagues” origins were they all loved to play games. We played card games. We played board games. We played word games. We played evenings until around midnight.

The next day we would rise and eat and attend the course.

Drive-By in Berkeley – Racism Against Me:

We had noticed the Arcade when arriving at Berkeley University. It was only a few blocks from the Berkeley main campus.

A friend of mine from High School that also attended the Golden Bear Forensic Institute joined me for a twilight walk to the Arcade in hopes of playing a few games that night.

It was a bad idea for two High School white boys to go out alone into the “hood” of Berzerkely (as some called it back then due to its extreme liberal crime drug abusing culture).

A gang of black hoodlums drove up right against the curb and waved an AK-47 Assault Rifle out their window and aimed it at us as they laughed hysterically and exclaimed that we Honkies (a derogatory slur against Caucasians) better dance and run.

The gang bangers were crazy! Even in San Martin I did not expect a drive-by with a rifle!!!

I could only conclude that there was literally nowhere in the world that was safe enough that you could ever let your guard down.

Back-of-the-bus and Class – Racism Against Me:

I had always heard of racism being inflicted on minorities. I had witness racism in San Martin often against “the cowboys” and “the Mexicans”. It was a crude distinction between illegal undocumented workers and poor citizens often out of work. I had accepted it was “the way it is” but did not like it.

It was typical for me to ride in the back of the bus on public transit and school buses alike. I even sat in the back of school classes for the same reason – I did not want to be noticed and wanted to see everyone else (and them not see me). The back of the bus and class was my preferred “go-to” location.

The Berkeley hoodlum Assault Rifle incident reminded me of when I was a kid visiting a friend of mine Scotty Shaddox in San Jose. I was riding public transit, sitting in the back of the bus as I always did.

A pair of older black teenagers glaring at me blurted out that I had better get in the front of the bus where I belonged and that I was taking “their seat” by being in the back.

Apparently, racism works both ways. They felt “they owned the back of the bus” and I should be “banished to the front of the bus”. It was inane!

I told them, “No, I am here.” Simple.

Well, it was not that simple. The biggest and oldest black boy screamed “Honky!” (a derogatory term akin to the ‘N’ word but for white people). He stood up and struck me square in the face and left my head ringing and my nose throbbing. He did not break my nose, but it sure felt like it.

I did not know what to do. They were big. There were two of them. No one on the bus said or did anything.

It was surreal that I was there alone on a bus full of people.

Immediately I understood –

Being with people does not mean they will help or protect you.

You are on your own even when surrounded by people.

You are alone in life.

To the Front of the Bus – Mankind is Inherently Evil:

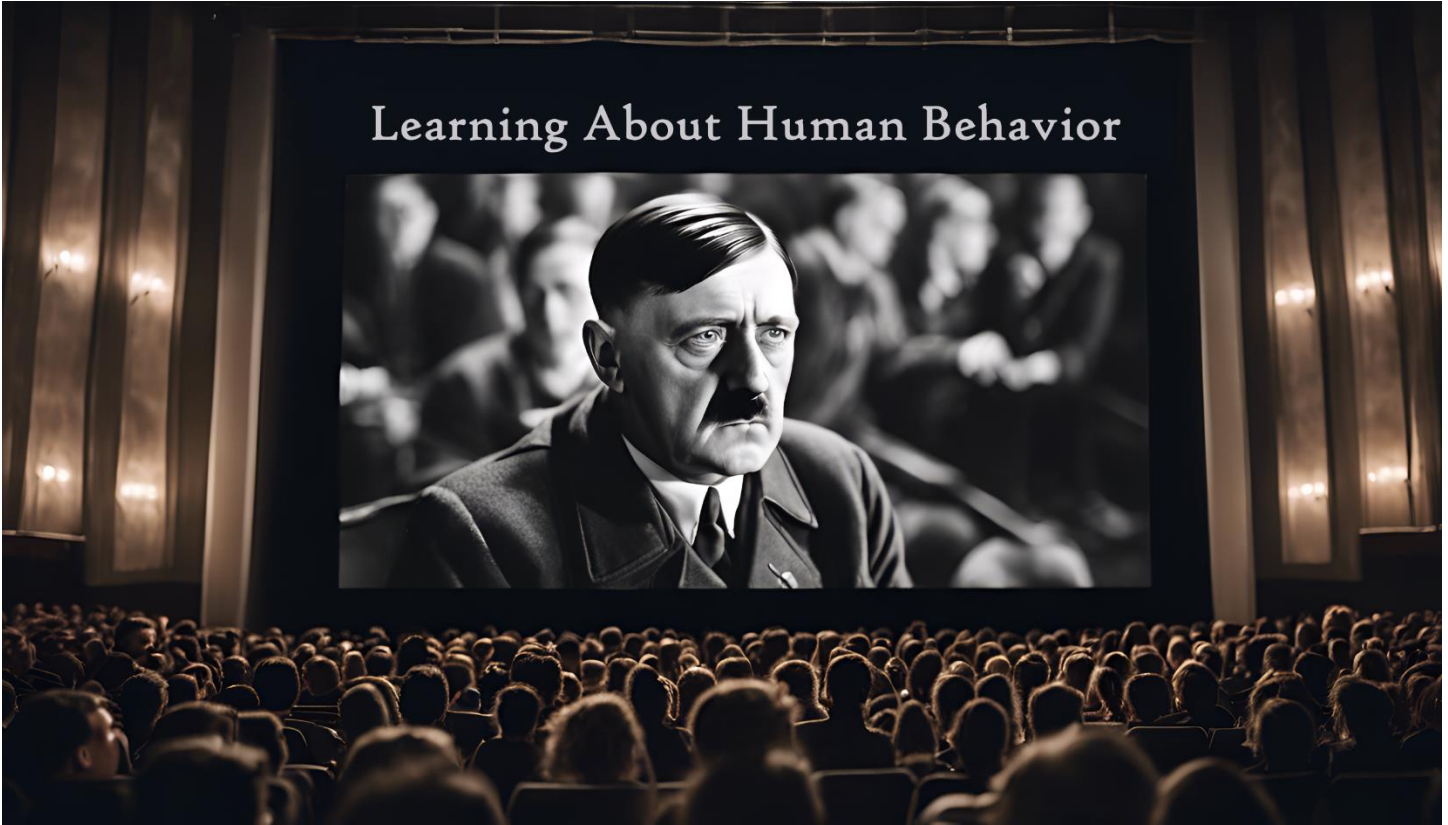
I had no choice but to lug my suitcase packed with my weekend clothes to the front of the bus after being punched and threatened. The younger of the two black boys kicked my leg as I walked by them as if I had not already been hurt enough.

Ego and body hurt I sat in my front seat wondering why they were so mean to me. I did nothing wrong. I said nothing. I did not even look at them until they began insulting me.

It was hard to see how completely unprovoked they would want to hurt me.

Their actions reinforced my innate belief that mankind was inherently evil. It was the only thing that explained their malicious actions against me I concluded.

E178 Learning About Human Behavior



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E178 Learning About Human Behavior and Adolf Hitler.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qdtm-e178-learning-about-human-behavior-and-adolf-hitler.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/cP8bRNknw-I>

Description:

Richard recounts his experience learning about human behavior in Berkeley's Golden Bear Forensic Institute program.

He shares top takeaways from the course's education on public speaking, mock trials, mock congress, and debate.

Golden Bear Institute for Speech and Debate – Learned A Lot:

The Golden Bear Forensic Institute for Speech and Debate was excellent. I learned so much from the course that I had never learned in my High School classes.

The Institute did not focus on the mechanics of speech or debate. They did not focus on research techniques. They did not focus on style or presentation.

They DID focus on strategy, knowing your judges and jury, and human psychology in terms of influence and manipulation.

It was all the stuff no one ever taught me. In some ways it was power over people through words and logical reasoning.

Know thy Judge:

It stuck with me - ever since they said it – “Know thy Judge!”

What watch or shoes or clothes or hat are your judges wearing? Do they have glasses? Do they have a folder or notepad or binder or a scrap of paper? Do they have well kempt hair and makeup or are they “natural”? Where are they on the Attraction scale for others?

All these questions and so many more were intended to provide insight on the psychology of a judge so the speaker could tailor their wording and message to whatever was the most receptive to the judge.

The goal was not to lie but to “package” the arguments in a way the judge(s) would appreciate and agree with. The same thing can be said in “nice palatable” or in “disagreeable undesirable” ways.

Another analogy was you need to put the grit of the argument in between two sweet bread slices like a sandwich packing fewer desirable things on the inside. Heh, or it is like wrapping a pet’s pill in meat or cheese.

The key they stressed was to find what your judge(s) like and craft your arguments around their preferences.

Adolf Reveal:

Throughout the Golden Bear Forensics Institute for Speech and Debate we were given lectures and shown videos of famous public speakers like Winston Churchill.

Every public figure had one or more insights to glean. Winston Churchill was noted for drinking from a glass of water with long pauses as a technique to buy time to think of a smarter answer than just responding quickly.

At the end of the summer program, they revealed the master of all the techniques taught was, in fact, Adolf Hitler.

They played videos of Hitler during speeches and marches. They showed how people reacted to his words even when he did not present well.

Influence over people in Speech and Debate was stated as –

Public speaking is NOT “how” you speak necessarily.

Public speaking is NOT “what” you say about the content.

Public speaking IS about presentation.

Public speaking IS about “the story”.

In other words -

Public Speaking was about passion, inflammatory words, incendiary analogs, and heart wrenching stories.

Adolf Hitler was not particularly charismatic in appearance or voice inflection. He was a small loud obnoxious screaming man, but he had passion and carried people along with his energy.

Adolf vilified categories of people and business. He inflamed people by citing how they did not have all they wanted and deserved. Hitler presented himself as defender of the underdog abused people, and that is what those people wanted to hear. He tied his arguments to “proof” in his *Mein Kampf* manifesto that he wrote while in jail as a gang leader.

The Institute detailed that Adolf Hitler employed an arsenal of public speaking and manipulation techniques to achieve his objectives. They stressed the teaching was not to make Adolf Hitler into anything but evil but stressed his methods should be understood both to defend against them and to use them as needed.

It was shocking to see so many student’s jaws drop as they saw Adolf Hitler was effectively their public speaking model.

In some ways, Berkeley was teaching people how to become Adolf Hitlers... Of course, they said akin to Wayne’s World “Not!” at the end - “So be like Hitler, **NOT!**”

Public Speaking would become a cornerstone of my professional career and storytelling.

School Board:

The High School decided it wanted to spend a lot of money on an Olympic Size swimming pool and upgrade its football and training equipment. There was no money for computers or debate or anything I was a part of.

Petition the school against new swimming pools and wasted resources. My memory is so faded here, but I had organized a petition and collected several hundred signatures to support my presentation at the Morgan Hill Unified School District Board Public Hearing. I recall standing resolutely arguing my case, and after dramatically slamming down my signed petition and with the local newspaper present, the audience stood and clapped and cheered. I knew I had won. The board agreed to avoid the Olympic size swimming pool and other wasteful investments; I just cannot recall much at all of it anymore...

Principal’s Advisory Committee:

Given my success in Speech & Debate, earning an advanced Degree of Distinction, and my relentless history of rebelling against the school a new principal in the school asked if I would join her new “Advisory Committee”? She wanted to hear the voices of the students, so all groups of people had influence on the school’s choices.

I was excited to be recognized and have an influential voice. It did not take but a few weeks to realize it was a façade the principal was using to send her messages out to the students. She did not want to hear what we had to say but rather wanted to twist what we said into what she wanted, thereby pushing her narrative above all else.

Disillusioned (again), I quit the committee and made sure the principal knew why. She did not care at all. She selected a sheeple “yes person” replacement and carried on without missing me at all.

I learned manipulation exists at all levels and you cannot trust people’s mission or vision statements. The truth was in actions not in words.

Sister Sandra Believed Good Things Will Come (but they never did for her):

My sister Sandra espoused that good things would come her way, and I believe she genuinely believed it to be true.

She struggled with depression at times in her life, and because she rarely had a good relationship if she had one at all she likewise did not have a meaningful family support.

I consider her life to have been one of tragedy for a multitude of reasons that I will not go into here, for she too may have led a life of ‘Hell Difficulty’ that culminated in her wandering her apartment aimlessly in her late forties - following an apparent earlier stroke; she died later that night.

I have always striven to learn things in my life through others where possible because I hoped to avoid mistakes and missteps by observing them instead of fumbling myself.

Despite Sandra’s challenging life and early demise, I learned things from her –

1. How blind faith can limit your future while you just wait for ‘good things’ to happen
2. How trust in ‘good things’ coming is misplaced without reason to believe it.
3. How believing soft skills like theatrical acting she enjoyed, Persuasion and Influence alone merited success and reward regardless of talent or training or practice.
4. How drinking alcohol to avoid depression was not a viable long-term solution.

It might sound like my sister waited around for her knight in shining armor or movie / music producer recognize her in the crowd and elevate her to rock stardom. In some ways she did, but I think she did all she knew how to do and was constrained by being human in the face of the Hellscape of her and my upbringing. More on that throughout my shared memories.

I think it is also important here to note that Sandra’s belief in her ‘good things coming’ was anchored around a delusional belief that she was ‘GREAT’ because she was destined to be ‘GREAT’, and the world would eventually recognize her grandeur and reward her for it.

And yet –

1. Sandra had been severely overweight throughout her life and was not pretty by traditional Western-European standards; she looked entirely fine and average outside her heavy weight.

She underwent surgery as an adult to reduce her stomach’s capacity with bands to control how much food she could eat and contain within her stomach all to reduce her weight, but it failed to ‘take’ and she ended up miserable with a small stomach unable to eat and still overweight.

2. She was an ‘okay’ High School and Community College actress but did not achieve great recognition in doing so, and she eventually churned out and gave up on it.
3. Her delusion of grandeur resulted in her having a demeanor that was off putting and necessitated she be ‘in charge’ in all relationships to the extent she was arguably domineering.
4. Consequently Sandra waited for her magical day of recognition, and wrote ‘positive affirmations’ on papers and even burned some in a ritual of hope and prayers that her ‘day would come’ sooner than later. Her ‘day’ never came.

Again – it is a tragedy. I speculate Sandra’s delusions were her own protection mechanism against the hellscape of her upbringing and of life in San Martin (like mine had been).

Put Yourself in the Path of Opportunity vs Waiting Around for Something to Happen:

Ever since being a young adult I concluded that it was rarely beneficial to sit idly by and wait for good things to come or opportunity to avail itself.

I have evangelized that it is –

IMPERATIVE to PUT YOURSELF IN THE PATH OF OPPORTUNITY.

Perhaps I gleaned my insight and motivation to push myself hard and always strive for greater things in contrast to my sister Sandra’s ‘wait for good things’ approach.

Whatever the reason that inspired my approach of watching for opportunity and crafting deliberate ways to put myself in its path.

I made sure opportunity and good things came to me by putting myself squarely in its path.

During professional counseling and guidance with employees I shared my views and belief that success came to those that put themselves in the path of opportunity whereas it may still come for the lucky few that just waited for fortune to land in their lap.

Therefore –

1. It is naïve and foolish to wait for opportunity because it is random and rare.
2. Success is probable by ensuring opportunity WILL cross your path so you can seize it.

Do Not Ask for Permission, Ask for Forgiveness – Take Risks to Innovate, Succeed:

I do not take credit for the adage ‘Do not ask for permission, instead ask for forgiveness’ but it has been a hallmark for my professional career.

I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to swing for the fences for a baseball homerun or take the leap of faith when there is just enough information to likely triumph.

Of course - management and leadership should be consulted when time permits but there are times that require quick action and decisions, and in those moments, heroes are created (or lost to never be recognized).

In those moments where opportunity or high risk are upon you and there is no time to seek consultation or formal approval, do not withdraw into your shell like a turtle or stick your head in the sand like an ostrich. No – instead you should make your own decision right there, right then to the best of your ability – and DO IT!

Simplified – Don’t ask for Permission, Ask for Forgiveness

1. **Take Risks to Innovate and Succeed.**
2. **Consult Leadership and Management when Time Permits**
3. **Do Not Wait for Permission to Seize Opportunity**

4. Ask for Forgiveness, not Permission in the ‘right here, right now’ opportunity moments

Some people might suggest consulting leadership or management is an optional step, and while that is literally true it is ill advised to circumvent people that influence or outright control your career when they legitimately could (and should) have been involved.

As I noted – I believe only in urgent pressing ‘right here, right now’ opportunity moments should leadership be bypassed.

During professional counseling and guidance with employees I shared my views and belief that success came to those that put themselves in the path of opportunity whereas it may still come for the lucky few that just waited for fortune to land in their lap. I stress those points -

- 1) Don’t ask for permission.
- 2) Ask for forgiveness.
- 3) Take initiative when you know enough to make a ‘most likely right’ decision.

Leadership Appearance while Buying Time with Feint Distractions – drink water:

Many times, in life I have found myself pausing to consider what someone has said or what to do in a situation.

It is difficult to take the time to ‘think’ without looking dumb or creating an awkward moment of silence or disengagement. Especially when you are the focus of everyone’s attention it can feel even more intimidating or embarrassing to ‘pause’ in front of ‘the tribe’.

Indeed – there are few things more embarrassing than talking and presenting like the brilliant leader you are, and then someone asks a question that there is a ‘better’ answer to if you could spend a few seconds or even ten seconds pondering about it.

Winston Churchill provided me with the tool to escape such moments throughout my life, ever since I attended Speech and Debate in Live Oak High School. Winston Churchill would take a pause as he reached slowly but gracefully to pick up an everyday ‘every man’s’ glass of water to take a long sipping drink from it.

People would relate to Churchill drinking from a common cup of water, just like they would do were they talking so much that their mouths would go dry. And while they naturally waited for Winston to finish his drink, he gained time to think and formulate the ‘better’ answer.

I used the ‘cup of drinking water’ feint to distract people throughout my career.

Lame Duck Deflection and Distraction:

Like Winston Churchill’s ‘cup of drinking water’ time buying technique was another technique I used and advised others to utilize – the ‘lame duck’ deflection and distraction.

I did not conceive the ‘Lame Duck’ technique. I was told that it originated from private companies contracting with the U.S. Military and recognized that top ‘brass’ military leadership invariably believe they have better ideas and know best what needs to be done to ‘improve’ whatever the private company pitched.

To satisfy executives whether it be from your company or the military, it remains the same –

Insert an obvious ‘bad design element’ or ‘easy improvement’ so executives can feel good about contributing and improving the product or operation.

...they felt good because they fixed something that you deliberately put in the design that was easy to find, and easy to fix. It was a subversive way – in my opinion - to ‘play’ bad and ignorant leadership.

Childhood Business and Leadership Focus:

Perhaps to keep myself forever occupied and focused on things outside my unpleasant homelife, I immersed myself in programming, writing stories, crafting and running Dungeons & Dragons adventure modules and campaigns, and cracking and hacking software. And I took on money-making chores and jobs as they came up.

Most of my ‘hobbies’ and interests ultimately was tied to making money or telling stories. Even programming was pursued so I could tell stories through computer games.

At school I was involved with several extracurricular activities too, including -

- 1) Debate Club.
- 2) Future business leaders of America (FBLA).
My mother and Sam mocked FBLA because it was management which they respected.
- 3) Chess club.
- 4) Computer club.
- 5) Dungeons & Dragons club.
- 6) Principal’s Advisory Committee.

‘Never, Ever, Ever Give Up’ and other great sayings – Winston Churchill:

I am surprised often to hear people vaguely recognize the Winston Churchill’s famous saying about never giving in. I, too, intuitively recall Churchill as saying “Never, ever, ever give up!”

Winston Churchill ‘s October 1941 speech about World War II declared –

"Never give in, never give in, never; never; never; never - in nothing, great or small, large or petty - never give in except to convictions of honor and good sense"

Churchill had another quote I valued and reinforces my ‘putting yourself in the path of opportunity’ perspective –

"The pessimist sees the problems in every opportunity. Whereas the optimist sees the opportunity in every problem"

E179 High School Classes [outside the Kleine Schule KS Program]



**Taking High School Classes
in Kleine Schule Program**

Local File:

[.\LibertyBooksVideos\E179 High School Classes outside the Kleine Schule KS Program.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qdu9-e179-high-school-classes-outside-the-kleine-schule-ks-program.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/xWrd1w62I2Y>

Description:

Richard reflects on how his body and brain have always ‘run hot’, as if they were overclocked like a microprocessor.

He recaps shaping moments during his computer programming Pascal class.

The Boiling “Bird” Beaker in AP Physics:

I took classes in the main High School, outside my Kleine Schule individual accelerated learning program. I mostly took Speech and Debate – and Advanced Placement (AP) courses. I was quite the spectacle...the little kid sitting in class, with the bigger older kids. ...but, well, there I was – none-the-less.

In AP Physics class I was playing around with a mercury filled "bird" beaker that when the mercury rose high enough would add sufficient weight to the head of the "bird" that it would lean over as if to eat from the table. Allowed to cool off again, the weight we re-distribute again, and the "bird" would return to its upright position.

Students were given Bunsen burners to heat the base of the "bird beaker" to see what temperatures would cause the "bird" to tilt completely, partially, hold a position, etc. It was a fun little exercise, and certainly was more fun than dissecting things in a biology class I took.

What was most intriguing was that I could just cup my hand around the bird beaker's base and the mercury would boil and shoot right to fill the head of the "bird" completely with no mercury visible in its tube "channel"; it freaked the other students as no other student's hands were apparently so "hot" though I did not feel hot to the touch.

The teacher was confounded admitting he had never seen anything like it and said there was some other explanation... He never shared what it might be.

I surmised my body just ran hot, or at least my hands did.

Boiling “Bird” Moral of the Story – I Was ‘Overclocked’ Like a Computer:

When I reflect on how my natural hand's body heat was so intense that it raised the 'bird' thermometer so high that it bubbled at its top making it tilt on its hinge and strike the tabletop with its mercury-filled hollowed head – it makes me feel there was more to my experience than I realized at the time.

It made me feel somehow special – that only I could make the bird mercury boil. No one else could.

There was a moral to the story.

In a strange way – in my imagination - I can draw a parallel to my hand's fiery heat to my uncommon intense drive and motivation, and apparent very high intelligence if not genius.

Much like a computer can have its central processing unit (CPU) or graphics processing unit (GPU) sped up beyond their official 'safe' operating speed. The result is usually a much faster computer. This technique is known as 'overclocking'.

'Overclocking' a computer gains operating speed at the risk of melting the tiny physical electrical gates inside the integrated circuit CPU and GPU chips. Overclocking literally makes the physical gates inside the chips flip on and off faster, and flipping the gates generates heat – a tiny amount of heat, but it adds up over time.

Not all CPUs and GPUs are manufactured perfectly the same, just like human brains. There are defects and small deviations that do not affect 'normal' performance. However, they are not tested and supporting of overclocking – and so 'overclocking' can destroy chips and computers they are inside.

I feel that my brain was 'overclocked' at birth and remained so throughout my life.

‘Overclocked’ Brain Boosted Success and Ego:

Being ‘overclocked’ made me feel that “I was special”, which was a key component of my ego and internal identity protection. I held onto the bird beaker boiling event for years as a physical reminder that I was not like other people.

I am convinced that my ‘overclocked’ brain directly translated into my ability to self-learn so many things easily and at such a young age and throughout my life.

I believe ‘overclocking’ my brain made me successful and consequently boosted my ego.

And that ego protected me from the hellscape of my childhood and young adult life.

But that same overclocked brain did melt some of my brain’s ‘gates’, and so my operating life expectancy has been compromised.

And so – I made it to orbit with my overclocked brain, but may burn up on re-entry because of its deleterious effects on my mind’s degeneration.

AP Pascal (Advanced Placement):

In my AP Pascal class, I found myself always well ahead of the teacher, Mr. Ting. He was a very smart man, had a math degree, but admitted he was usually a class or two ahead of the class in the local community Foothill College.

Mr. Ting’s honesty as a teacher was refreshing to me, and over time I grew to genuinely respect Mr. Ting. He even drove the car I would later buy because it was just so cool - A Toyota MR2; his license plate was "MR2TING"; just awesome!

I would stay after school sometimes and Mr. Ting and I would talk about algorithms & structures and programming ideas; I often thought he learned more from me than I from him, but I DID LEARN from him which was awesome.

After I had graduated, I would see Mr. Ting for dinner sometimes to talk about life's challenges and how things were going for my old High School and its teachers. I gave some guest appearances in Mr. Ting's class a published computer game maker, and even became a mentor to two of Mr. Ting's students. I am not sure quite when it happened, but I drifted away and did not re-connect with Mr. Ting after the mentorships ended.

Computer Languages and Hardware Architecture Fundamentally the Same:

It cannot be said enough how similar computer hardware and software architecture have remained fundamentally the same in terms of programming data structures and algorithms.

I believe the greatest computer evolution has revolved around foundation functionality that is inherited by new program code such that engineers today have very little understanding of how low-level machines work or how neuro-nets operate.

But engineers can accomplish amazing things by building from the engineering titans of the past that built those foundation classes and capabilities.

Although the syntax and labels and tools vary the core principles of computer design and programming languages are immensely similar. In many cases simple symbol substitution with syntax and grammar alterations done through computer AI or even simple macros can translate much of as a program to run on another machine entirely. This had been called cross-platform code in my era.

And so –

1. Computer languages are much like Human languages in that substituting syntax, grammar, or words – may ‘translate’ one language to another – it is the same for computer languages – with swapping syntax, grammar, and label substitution to “port” a program from one type of machine to another.
2. But computer languages are not ambiguous - or contain quasi or political views - or deliver halfhearted results or conclusions. They are objective, reliable, predictable...

Advanced InFix, PostFix Scientific Equation-Solving Calculator in High School:

In my High School Pascal programming class, we were assigned the task of programming a simple calculator such that the user could type simple equations like ‘2+2’ and the calculator would report ‘4’.

The required calculator functionality included addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. And importantly it had to adhere to left-to-right variable resolution while supporting multiplication/division priority over addition/subtraction and further proper parse parenthetical prioritization.

Of course – I was determined to over-deliver.

I created the basic calculator that did what was required. And then I upgraded it to an engineering scientific calculator with support for binary math and infix and postfix mathematical notations. I added numerous additional operators such as NOT, AND, OR, XOR, Exponents, and more.

Yea – I went to town to show off how amazing I was with my uber Engineering Scientific Calculator.

The instructor Mr. Ting was so impressed that we had an extensive discussion on how I used binary trees and recursion to manage equation operators and operands and traverse them for priority processing and equality.

It is especially ironic that I was so amazing with my uber Calculator because I have never considered myself ‘good at math’. I have been functional and capable at math, and have never been unable to figure out what I needed to with math.

Does that mean I am, apparently, good at math after all? Heh...who knows?

Quest for Bucks – Money was Important, Making Games was Important:

For my Pascal class Final, the teacher Mr. Ting had two elements –

1. A traditional written exam in-class
2. A program that highlighted data structures and algorithms and coding skills in Pascal

I aced the written exam, of course.

But the programming project was an opportunity to shine and make a game!

That is right! I was permitted to write a game for Pascal class Final.

I conceived and wrote –

Quest for Bucks!

Quest for Bucks was indicative of my true perspective in life – I needed to make money!

I would later in life conclude it was easier to make more money than to be hyper-critical saving it miserly. And **life** would be much **better WITH MONEY** than without it.

Mr. Ting and the class were suitably impressed if not outright jealous with praise and comments that I had no life and my game meant everything to me. It did not mean everything to me but it was important.

And to those classmates that recognized my achievement – thank you!

And to those jealous classmates that sought to diminish me – screw you!

The proof of my success and value is in my life's achievements. Not in classmate opinions.

What was *Quest for Bucks* like and how did it play?

Quest for Bucks was modeled after *Space Invaders* arcade game design but with falling dollar signs and suitcases of cash to be grabbed while evading the Cash Thieves and their Exclamation Points that would take money or end the game when you had no cash left.

Quest for Bucks game play represented a continuous race to make more money than was taken from you by the Cash Thieves.

The game had sound effects, synthesized background music, and graphics (albeit 'programmer art' quality which is not good at all – okay, it was ugly, but it did amazing things!).

Quest for Bucks – Making Money to Make Games and for Freedom and Power:

Given the theme of the game - the teacher asked me if I wanted to make a game or make money? What was more important to me?

It made me pause and think.

My answer surprised him and remained true throughout my life.

I think Quest for Bucks represented many of my views on money -

1. Earn More vs Spend Less.
2. Money gives you power.
3. Money can fund making games.
4. Therefore, Earn Money First to attain power and opportunity make games.

Mr. Ting marveled at my clarity of mind and ability to articulate it succinctly. In these moments he and I forged our bond that would extend outside of High School and my Pascal class. We would meet over Chinese dinners and talk about his teaching at High School and a local community college.

Mr. Ting and I would talk about my mentoring a few of his current students (something I volunteered to do out of my kindness and possibly a little bit of hubris that I was an engineering sensei).

What I did not tell Mr. Ting was how critical it was for me to get the heck out of San Martin's hellscape and secure my own personal freedom. As soon as I could afford to, I moved out of the San Martin house.

Making money gave me the power to pay my way out of San Martin and find the freedom I needed to maintain sanity and drive toward success.

I moved out right before I was eighteen years old just after I graduated High School, and never looked back.

Money is the Scorecard for Selfishness, and given Selfishness is Evil...:

It is curious that despite my extraordinary motivation to earn money and succeed that I in parallel observed how money was a measure of most people's selfishness. And over life I had concluded that selfishness is akin to evil.

Thus – Money is a measure of selfishness, and therefore Money is a measure of evil.

It is not like earning money is wicked or bad. It not like cash is bad. But how one sees money and uses money can shift its purpose from transactional barter units to systemic oppression through resource scarcity.

In summary -

- 1) Selfishness inherently takes from others to serve oneself.
- 2) Taking from others to solely benefit oneself is unkind if not wicked greed.
- 3) Therefore, Selfishness is the core of evil.
- 4) Money can be a corollary to selfishness (especially when hoarded or usury loans).
- 5) Therefore, Money is correlated to evil.
- 6) Making money off others in 'need' through loaned money that demands more money returned than was borrowed is called usury – and it is a damnable sin to hell.
- 7) Generating money through 'excess' charging beyond the cost of delivering the 'product' or 'service' such that wealth accumulates is profiting off others through material and staple survival extortion.
- 8) Therefore, individuals or companies that accumulate money through profiting off others through taking advantage of their disadvantaged situation or otherwise 'need' are inherently evil.
- 9) THEREFORE –

Money is a scorecard for evil.

E180 Unrecognized Discouraged Despite Achievements



Despair...
...Unrecognized Achievement

Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E180 Unrecognized Discouraged Despite Achievements.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qeix-e180-unrecognized-discouraged-despite-achievements.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/tBZJvUoJKxM>

Description:

Hear all about Richard's Philosophy teacher, Mr. Clampett.

Richard tells the tale why Clampett nicknamed him "Airborne"...

Discover the tragic backstory of 'The Bell Tower' that brought a Vietnam veteran to be a school teacher in rural Morgan Hill, California.

Richard also shares how his science projects and innovations were consistently dismissed as "done by someone else" because they assert that "no kid could have done what Richard had accomplished".

AP English, Literature, and Philosophy – and ‘O Captain!’ Clampett:

I took AP English, and had a teacher named Clampett. He was an ex-Vietnam vet turned schoolteacher. He rode a Harley, had medium long hair (which was exceedingly long for a schoolteacher back then almost inappropriate), and coached the football team. And he taught Advanced Placement English and Literature, which he hijacked for his personal psychotherapy humanities philosophy class. That’s right – he did not teach English or literature; he taught psychology and philosophy.

Clampett was an ex-Vietnam vet with commendations. He had learned three martial arts techniques - Karate, Tae Kwon Do, and Ju Jitsu. He was a trained military combatant and had survived numerous combats on his tours of duty, including stories of buddies being shot in firefights and even afterwards by an enemy feigning death so he could shoot several of Clampett’s teammates. Seeing his friends die bloodied horrible deaths and returning home to an America that disrespected him and chortled at his patriotism challenged Clampett’s faith in mankind.

When he returned to America he was ‘messed up’ with a lot of conflicting feelings about having his patriotism betrayed and seeing corrupt government and politicians thrive.

Yea – Clampett was jaded – to say the least.

And yet he loved literature and philosophy. He read voraciously all his life – even when in active duty. He had a thirst for knowledge and a deep sense of patriotism. He should have been the perfect soldier to defend America’s freedom and rights.

But the world hurt and crushed his ideals and took everything he valued away from him – his wife divorced him and took his daughter alleging Clampett was unstable following defending the country in Vietnam.

No one wanted to hire him at first when he returned from ‘Nam. But he was able to earn a teaching credential and because of his ‘hippy’ post-Vietnam image was hired as an instructor at UC Berkeley in California.

But for personal reasons explained later he left Berkeley to become a High School teacher in a remote rural area – Morgan Hill which also served San Martin (where I lived).

‘O Captain! My Captain!’ Clampett:

I loved how Mr. Clampett was so different than any teacher and bucked the system, and most of all stood for what he believed in. He had his negative quirks that got him into a lot of trouble. And in that way, he was a sort of martyr to me and my fellow students.

Clampett faced his own hardships and challenges and demons. As I grew to know him - I saw him more and more as a rare man that stood up for what he believed in regardless of what might happen to him. He proved that in Vietnam. He proved it in Berkeley. I witness it in Morgan Hill firsthand. And for all his integrity and fighting for right - he was beaten down for it – and beaten A LOT (more on that later).

In a lot of ways, he reminds me of Walt Whitman’s poem in tribute to the death of Lincoln in 1865 ‘*O Captain! My Captain!*’ where the dead president is elevated to martyrdom -

O Captain! My Captain! our fearful trip is done;
The ship has weather'd every rack, the prize we sought is won;
The port is near, the bells I hear, the people all exulting,
While follow eyes the steady keel, the vessel grim and daring:
But O heart! heart! heart!
O the bleeding drops of red,

Where on the deck my Captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

O Captain! My Captain! rise up and hear the bells;
Rise up—for you the flag is flung—for you the bugle trills;
For you bouquets and ribbon'd wreaths—for you the shores a-crowding;
For you they call, the swaying mass, their eager faces turning;
Here captain! dear father!
This arm beneath your head;
It is some dream that on the deck,
You've fallen cold and dead.

My Captain does not answer, his lips are pale and still;
My father does not feel my arm, he has no pulse nor will;
The ship is anchor'd safe and sound, its voyage closed and done;
From fearful trip, the victor ship, comes in with object won;
Exult, O shores, and ring, O bells!
But I, with mournful tread,
Walk the deck my captain lies,
Fallen cold and dead.

Clampett was my 'Lincoln' – a person willing to die for their unwavering values and integrity.

There were few people in my life I respected. And Clampett - and Mr. Ting - were some of those few rare people.

Clampett's Student Nicknames:

Clampett nicknamed students he liked or thought had high potential. There was "Hockey Puck", a girl with star athlete potential but did not take things too seriously and would like wash out at first pushback adversity. There was Quillo-Pad, a Chilean boy with fuzzy sponge-like afro hair; it was a better name than the one he started with which was "Whiteboard Eraser" or just "Eraser Head"; once he threatened to clean the class chalkboard with his hair.

I, too, was blessed with a nickname. I was "Airborne" instead of "Seaborne" because I would see things in books and topics no one else did or saw them in completely different obtuse or alien ways; "let's see what Airborne has to say..." he transitioned to me when he wanted a wild perspective from my "f'ed up imagination".

Well, we annoyed him a little bit by calling him "Jed" after the Beverly Hillbillies TV show's "Jed Clampett"; it was all we had to show our respect playing along and rib him a bit which I think he enjoyed the banter.

Clampett's Nicknames and The Sit-in:

Mr. Clampett was a well-respected teacher at UC Berkeley before he became a High School teacher in the Podunk farming ranch town of Morgan Hill, CA.

Anyone would wonder why a decorated Vietnam veteran become university instructor would abandon it all, and turn full hippy and start riding a Harley Davidson motorcycle and teach in a Podunk High School? Was it the stress from 'Nam?

Apparently not so – not 'Nam or anything like that - said Clampett. One day Clampett was not there, instead was the High School Principal. The principal explained "Mr. Clampett overstepped his bounds and authority as a teacher and has not properly covered the coursework as outlined in the curriculum.

Clampett is on suspension while we review his performance and possibility of returning to work within the school district." It was formal, damning, and completely WRONG! I could not stand for it, and so rallied students from lunch time and between classes.

I asked they spread my word - "TOMORROW AND EVERYDAY GOING FORWARD – WE WILL NOT ATTEND CLASS - UNTIL CLAMPETT IS BACK IN CLASS WITH US!" Powerful, simple. and RIGHT! I felt firmly – IT WAS THE RIGHT MESSAGE.

The next day maybe 90 or more students joined me sitting on the lawn in front of the school, and we sat there through the buses dropping kids off, through the first-class bell, and into the next class bell.

Then the principal arrived, worried local newspapers had been alerted, and asked what he could do to resolve things and asked who was in charge? many students pointed to me, and so I stood up and said "Me, I am responsible. And unless Mr. Clampett comes back, we won't either."

Kids cheered me though they were too timid to say the message themselves – but they would follow and support me.

Thankfully - it was enough.

The principal said he would ask Mr. Clampett back if we would go now back to class. We agreed and Clampett was back the next day. Turns out he was suspended because Hockey Puck's parents complained... that she should not have a name nickname 'Hockey Puck', and he should only use her real name – that her parents gave her.

The Bell Tower:

After Mr. Clampett had reclaimed his job following our sit-in for him, he celebrated that he must have done something right for the class to step up and say that we believed in him - in the face of "The Man".

Clampett had let his hair grow gruff, so he seemed a little more "REAL" than ever. He took in a deep breath, exhaled, then sighed.

"Let me tell you why I am so hard on you. Let me tell you why I stick names on you. I was an instructor at UC Berkeley after my Tour of Duty in Vietnam.

I saw some messed up stuff and Berkeley liked that I was authentic and had real-world credibility beyond my academic credentials. It was a win-win.

But a few years in I had a student that was like no other - she was perfect. Her mind could see things no one else did, and instantly. No problem, no concept eluded her for a blink of an eye. She was straight-As in every class in every school she had ever been in. Absolutely amazing!

Well, mid-way through the class she turned in an Exam that was awful, downright terrible; it was like she lost her mind, or something was going on in her life that messed with her ability on the assignment.

I went to her and asked if anything was wrong if she needed help? No, she replied. I do not know how I could do so badly... Tears flowed and she fled the room.

She did not appear in class the next day, but instead I was told later that she had gone to the Campus Bell Tower and leaped off its tower to her death. She left a suicide note that she could not face life as a failure...

I felt like I killed her by giving her an "F"; yes, I have her an "F" because it was that bad and she needed to know it.

I learned if you never learn how to cope with pain, with loss, with failure you will not have the skills to survive in the real world. This was her first time away from mommy and daddy, and she got one bad grade on one test; that was enough in her world to kill yourself.

I cannot let that happen again, and so I am a bit tough, and you will all get an "F" regardless of its justification. Your end grade will be fine, but this class is about living and staying alive and being better as you live it from insight and philosophy. If they fire me for that, then I will go away. Thanks guys, you really had my back."

I respected Clampett. His story was amazing, moving, and underscored the importance of helping other people be stronger and endure hardships.

It wasn't enough to just be strong yourself. You had to help other people be strong too.

Clampett's Fate:

I had learned from Mr. Ting that Clampett had lost his way with each successive class year being less and less special or unique, none worthy of his nicknames.

He lost faith in the future of Americans with the broken thinking caused by overprotective helicopter parents thinking shielding their children from adversity and easing their challenges was beneficial to them.

Instead, it vaccinated them against free independent thinking, limited them to mainstream ideology, and made them automatons blindly believing whatever mega-corporate or government-controlled media outlets tell them.

Of course, now I am sure he would include social media in his List of Social Evils bringing down American ideals. Apparently Clampett quit his job and has been seen drinking his life away in a local bar.

Wooden Computer:

During my 11th grade year at Live Oak High School, I was in the gifted and accelerated "small school" program Kleine Schule. Each year the High School hosted a Science Fair for its students for which I participated.

I had built an Apple][computer from parts acquired at a San Jose computer component shop for hobbyists called Ace Computers and Components into a wooden computer case I fashioned using simple tools like a saw, Dremel grinding and cutting tool, drill, screwdriver, etc.

I knew every component of the Apple][hardware and how they connected with each other. It struck me as odd that Apple deliberately designed the Apple keyboard to "wait" between keystrokes so the user could not just type ahead or as fast they could.

One to ever improve things, I replaced a resistor on the keyboard to reduce its arbitrary input lag for typists so I could type faster. It was a stupid design and so I replaced the resistor that regulated the delay. Easy and huge improvement.

One to ever improve things, I replaced a resistor on the Apple jerry rigged keyboard to reduce the arbitrary input lag for typists so I could type faster. It was a stupid design by Apple and so I replaced the resistor that regulated the delay more than tripled the speed I could type.

11th Grade Dual Laser Optical Disc Drive Original Design:

My mother worked for Optimem at the time. Optimem was dedicated to optical storage and were early pioneers of 12" write-once-read-mostly (WORM) laser discs. These were massive laser discs like the early "movie laser disc players" but

allowed computers to write data them to one time as a backup media but could be read as often as desired. Hence, its “Read Once and Read Mostly” moniker.

There were lots of optical technology books around our house because of my mother’s job. In boredom I would read them. They were like computer and programming books but different technology. It was like reading a fictional storybook to me but had real-world application.

For my 11th Grade Science Faire project I decided to design a “Dual Laser Optical Disc Drive” and make a program that would show it working graphically on the Apple II computer inside my homemade wooden computer case and setup. I figured both would be impressive to anyone given my age.

I acquired a programming middleware called Software Automated Mouth (SAM) which I integrated in my Dual Optical Laser Disc illustrative demo, so it spoke aloud everything in the demo. Judges were jaw dropped at the technology, the graphics, the spoken words from a computer in 1985...all created by an 11th grader!?

“NO WAY!!!!” they asserted. They alleged my parents did the project and I must have just watched. It was impossible they incredulously deemed that a kid could do such things. They basically said I was a liar and a cheat. They were wrong. I did everything without any help at all.

It did not matter that I could detail how the design relied on Faraday’s Laws on Light & Rotation and the properties of Polaroid plates filtering light according to clockwise or counterclockwise rotation which can be set by light striking a magnetized surface from light likewise polarized through a Polaroid plate.

Two lasers would fire simultaneously into a prism which directed the light into the appropriate Polaroid plate for 0 or 1 value bits which would polarize the laser “light” to rotate left or right and was reflected down to the disc media (using existing hard disc stepper motors and Constant Angular Velocity / CAV disc motors – Variable Angular Velocity was not a “thing” yet).

The polarized laser would hit the disc magnetic media and absorb its polarity. Reading was the same principle except lasers are fired onto a surface with low energy that picks up the polarity on the surface of the disc and its reflection is passed through two polaroid plates to see which one triggered “on” which would define the bit as 0 or 1 (off or on).

I showed the source code I wrote too.

Nothing! Absolutely Nothing could convince the rigid mindsets of these judges.

Punished for Being Smart:

I felt punished for being smart.

I could have done a simple “dumb” project at average intelligence capability and taken First Prize.

Instead, I designed a laser technology using complex optical science that considered variable vs constant angular momentum disc technologies that would become fundamental to many CDRW drives in the future. Even my Faraday approach became fundamental to modern DVD drives.

And for my “genius” I was awarded Honorable Mention.

There is No Justice. There is No Fair. There is Only What You Make Happen:

There was no justice. Much later in life the VP at Atari Steve Calfee would reinforce my view as he would tell me about bonuses – “Justice? Fair? There is no justice. There is no fair. There is only what you make happen.”

It did not matter than I could explain everything in immense detail (because I designed it!), the most I received was that honorable mention because “I deserved something” for learning it from my parents.

12th Grade Tupperware Robot:

Déjà vu! I experienced a similar Science Fair situation in 12th grade. I built a robot around an upside-down Tupperware rectangle bowl with cassette tape electric "rewind" flywheels as actual wheel treads for locomotion and turning ala a tank mobility and a electro-magnetic hook that raised/lowered via a thin cord wrapped around a floppy disc drive stepper-motor controlled spindle just like a winch, and atop the robot was a tiny Tupperware box with LEDs that flashed on and off randomly to look cool and according to buttons pressed on its ribbon-cable wired remote control.

Once more, the judges alleged there was no way a High School student could have made such a robot, and so they awarded me Second Place recognizing again that I understood everything perfectly and articulated the details clearly.

The judges recognized the amazing robot but asserted I must have had significant help and because I denied it, they would only consider Second Place at best.

Well, the local newspaper was so impressed they took photos and interviewed me for the next Sunday issue. Honeywell was so impressed they gave me a cash prize and said I should apply for work with them when I graduated college.

It made me happy that outside academia there were people that DID RECOGNIZE me for my talent.

Greatness Goes Unappreciated:

To this day I hold firmly that people cannot comprehend that there are extraordinary OTHER people that are far beyond their intelligence and capability. I was such a person and life repeatedly hurt me for being extraordinary.

Being extraordinary means... you will be extraordinarily hurt.

Greatness goes unappreciated everywhere. Great heart and compassion. Great intelligence and passion. Great creativity and ingenuity. Great looks and athleticism. And so forth.

Extraordinary talent is ignored or suppressed or abused because such people are misunderstood or victims of jealousy and envy.

My experience with my 11th Grade and 12th Grade science projects proved greatness is not recognized – and is, in fact, suppressed. I made a magneto-optic laser disc design with supporting computer demonstration and a remote-controlled mobile robot with a pulley magnetic arm.

And yet I was not recognized by the judges for what I had accomplished!

Instead – I was given “participation based rewards.”

Discouraged to Pursue Legal, Management, or Leadership Career:

My parents despised management, leadership, or anyone that had authority. They felt like they stole from the “worker” and did “nothing real” themselves. They were spiteful if not jealous. I never understood it and their arguments were always emotional.

Sam and my mother overtly and frequently would discourage me from pursuing being lawyer or manager or any leadership role. They called such jobs “leech jobs” over real working people.

There is not much professional support my parents gave to me beyond exposure to a computer and buying me a floppy disc drive (more on that later).

I had to reject and overcome the barrier they set for me to grow beyond the scope of what I could do entirely by myself.

7th Grade Algebra II:

My mother had decided to attend Gavlian college in evening classes to brush on her math skills. I discovered that I, too, could sign for classes at Gavlian college even though I was only in seventh grade.

I signed up and attended an Algebra II class at Gavlian college when I was in seventh grade because I was interested in it and it made me feel important and smart and special.

University – Insufferable and Boring:

I hedged my bets by still attending San Jose State University full-time while I wrote my first game. Later, however, I would steadily reduce my SJSU class load to further focus on my game making. Eventually I would quit entirely and not finish my degree, two and half years of credits completed only.

I did not quit university solely because of my focus on making games. I had numerous problems with San Jose State University faculty and deans throughout my time attending the university.

Boring Classes, Ineffective Instructors, and Waived Classes:

I was always so bored in classes. I wondered why I must sit in them. Why was there not a Kleine Schule option for universities? It all sucked to me. I hated it. I resented it. I found ways to play in class... I would listen to each instructor for holes in logic or inconsistencies in their points or examples. It was especially embarrassing for math or computer science where things are predominantly fixed, and so they just looked like ignorant fools in front of the entire class. Yes, I enjoyed exposing their ignorance for all to see. I was always asked to stay after class to receive a lecture on how I was hurting mine and others' educations...and sometimes was directed to go talk to the Dean of the respective department.

It came to head when the Computer Science Dean demanded I stop talking in class entirely or accept a class waiver, that stated my background should have been recognized and I should have had an A in AP Pascal and so that qualified me to waive the same Pascal class at SJSU. Well, I had been in that class and wanted an "A" not just a "Pass" waiver. Frustrated and reluctant, the Dean agreed to give me an "A" if I would not attend class at all. I agreed.

The Logic & Reasoning course I took was moronic to me. When the Final came, I finished it in about fifteen minutes, where it was expected to take about two hours. It was just like reading a simple list of items and concluding the logical results. Whatever! Easy! Well, the teacher and I never got along. And so, she declared in front of the class to embarrass me that she'd grade my paper right there and would I please wait. I did, and she admonished that I had 100% and would receive an "A". She pointed to the door, and I left.

My Public Speaking class was a joke. I had a Double-Ruby Degree of Distinction from the National Forensics League. I had been doing speech and debate in class and tournaments since 8th grade. It turned out the instructor had a Degree of Merit from the National Forensics League, an earned title perhaps 5% of the way to Distinction. We had numerous conflicts and I eventually escaped the class and the ineffective instructor of arrogance.

This was the lesson for my entire life – be bored, survive... learn everything myself.

E181 EMERGING PROFESSIONAL



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E181 Emerging Professional and Don Quixote Inspiration in Man of Lamancha.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qejq-e181-emerging-professional-and-don-quixote-inspiration-in-man-of-lamancha.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/sWXig42IKQU>

Description:

Richard shares the story of how he began programming out of curiosity but also to tell stories.

He envisioned telling stories through technology.

Hear how young Richard was undaunted despite repeated rejections, and how he held on to his ‘Impossible Dream’.

Professional Youth – Always Striving

Early Programming and Storytelling Starts:

My career was a wild ride from the start, being driven entirely by self-determination and self-teaching with the aid of mentors. In fact, although I just turned forty-nine years old myself (one year older than the age my sister died), I wrote several pen & paper Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Role Playing Game (RPG) adventure modules before the age of seventeen, had my first computer game published by eighteen, and put myself through college at San Jose State University while creating freelance computer games.

I admit there were quite a few failed attempts (okay, rejections!) along the way too, but I stayed at it since I was thirteen years old.

I never gave up! And I still do not give up!

Stories Through Technology (The Apple II):

I learned how to program by sneaking onto my stepfather's computer when I was around 4th grade. I would memorize where pencils or anything was, so I could replace them and not be noticed for having used the computer.

He purchased the computer, an Apple II, with a huge loan and so was highly protective of it; it was my parents' investment in their dream of becoming programmers. They strongly felt this new home computer was the future and their path to a better life (more money and more respect). Life would prove they were right. It was hard for them, but they eventually became programmers and rose to senior engineering positions. They despised the idea of management or leading teams, and so capped their careers as senior engineers.

The same was true of their learning to program - for me. Programming would be my path to a better life.

I was young and was apparently a technology sponge. I could absorb computer tech like learning a first language – it just happens, no effort, you just start talking. I just “started programming” without effort.

I could see code, software and hardware interfaces, soft switches, etc. only once and know it with full near-photographic recall. I saw correlations and connections instantly. It was like I was created for it. Everything just “was” and made complete sense. I could not understand why my parents struggled...

AppleSoft Basic Star Trek and Breakout:

At nine years old and the first real coding I ever did beyond playing around to teach myself how to modify the two games we had on cassette tape – Star Trek and Breakout.

I could not “win” playing Star Trek; the Klingons always blew up the Enterprise. But I discovered it was written in AppleSoft Basic. I was able to break into the Basic programming prompt, view and modify the source code, and try out my changes immediately. It was amazing!

Quickly I gave myself more photon torpedoes and phasers and shields so I could defeat the Klingons more easily. I changed how far and fast I the Enterprise could move. It was not major, but the changes were excited and made me feel so powerful and special.

Breakout was not the same kind of game. It did not have a “win” state but rather just kept adding more and more levels with more and more balls to hit with a paddle like Atari's original video game Pong. I made the paddle wider, made extra paddles move in synergy with the one the player controlled, I made more balls and made them move at different speeds. It was all about proving to myself that I could do anything I could imagine.

Learning in Utero (Cobol and Fortran):

My mother wondered because I was in utero when she was taking Cobol and Fortran classes in 1968, maybe there was some weird integration of that “thinking” into me by exposure in classes (in utero) or “chemical learning” imprints through her learning at the time. All of it seemed farfetched to me, but my mother has been “imaginative” in odd ways at times. And I cannot prove she is wrong...

Rejection, Dungeons & Dragons Modules and Unpublished “Learning” Games:

Many people found it hard to believe that I wrote my first computer game for the Apple II computer when I was 13 years old, which for the record was sadly not published. I called it Beneath Richard’s House, a simple text input adventure game. The player would enter multi-word commands and the game would parse the words to find nouns and verbs to decide what the player intended to do, e.g., walk north, go east, grab the rock, break vase, etc. As the player did these things the story would unfold. A simple but fun game on the computer that let me express my technical and creative writing skills.

As I wrote my computer games, I also wrote Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) adventure module “books” since I could tell much more elaborate stories in its medium. I ultimately submitted two adventure modules to TSR Hobbies, the maker of Dungeons & Dragons and publisher of Dragon Magazine, to be published. But they gave me rejection letters. I edited and resubmitted but received more rejection letters. I got more rejection than I can remember, and so I gave up on writing stories through Dungeons & Dragons.

I decided since I could write code and stories, I should merge them in a big way. I could write stories using technology!

I made Venture and Venture II, two adventure games across a wilderness graphic map fighting monsters, collecting loot, enlisting followers, and solving puzzles. I thought it was competitive with games on the market, and so tried extremely hard once more to get published...but this time my computer games!

I was 15.5 years old, recently acquired my driver’s license in California. I had done research on where Broderbund Software, a computer game publisher, was located. It was up to two hours away in Marin County.

With a friend, Jeff Lefferts, we journeyed there in my old ’68 Buick Electra (it was a huge gas guzzling tank of a car, a land “boat” as they used to call it).

A quick rejection the meeting was - two producers met us in the parking lot, gave us words of discouragement and a rejection letter. They said come back in YEARS when you have something they could publish.

They did not even provide suggestions on what could be improved or what could be done to get published.

They told us abundantly clearly – GO HOME! WE DO NOT WANT YOU OR YOUR GAME!

It was heartless, cruel, and eye opening...

People can be cruel no matter hard you work or try. People may not show compassion or consider the perspective of others, especially those they have power or influence over. People can be abusive without overtly intending to be so, but they are abusive just the same.

I guess it came down to this – “People Suck”. Or at least “Some People Suck”. And these producers.... sucked!

Week of Obtaining Driver's License Drove to San Jose to Buy Don Quixote VHS:

Because I had always valued the story of Don Quixote when I first saw the movie of it acted by Peter O'Toole and Sofia Loren. It inspired me to read the original Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, and learn whatever I could about his inspiring narrative. I went to 'I, Don Quixote' plays as well later in life.

When I first obtained my driver's license, I drove directly to a San Jose video tape retailer to buy the VHS movie of *Don Quixote*.

I felt like it was a major achievement! I had a driver's license and my inspirational story.

'Dream On', 'Man of Lamancha', "Don Quixote" Inspirational - Maximize Each Day:

Everyone has little things that inspire and motivate them. Some people aspire to become or attain something. Other people want to be adored and famous. Few seek to give and help others. Whatever the 'driving force' most people have something that keeps them going.

I found 'minor keys' moved me to 'feel' deeply and want to do great things. Somehow the sadness I heard in minor key music made me want to rise and overcome things – to overcome the sorrow or oppression the sad notes connoted.

Aerosmith's song '*Dream On*' was a sad song that moved me emotionally and made me want to achieve great things and likewise move the world's population in a similarly profound way.

Similarly – Don McLean's song '*American Pie*' with its lyrics "The Day the Music Died" that he wrote about the death of Buddy Holly in a plane crash 'touched my heart and soul'.

'Dream On' and 'American Pie' hopeful sorrow reminded me of Cervantes' book *Don Quixote* and Arthur Miller movie *Man of Lamancha* – they all inspired me to look to the future and maximize each day.

'Journey Onward, Experience More' to Succeed in Life, and Sam's Tombstone:

I loved a game series called *Ultima* was a computer role-playing (CRPG) game where the player went on quests to do good things and save the kingdom or world (as was typical in CRPGs).

In *Ultima* – there was a repeating theme and corresponding quote from its King Lord British –

"Journey Onward, Experience More."

Whenever things were especially trying or challenging for me, I would reflect on *Ultima IV: Quest of the Avatar* specifically because that release of the game was all about virtue and righteousness. And I would think of the virtues and supporting culture and ideologies – even if they were all in a fantasy world.

Simple things can pull you from deep holes in the ground or from the bottom of a well or out of a deep dank cave. It is important to hold onto them with all your strength because without them we become untethered and will most certainly go adrift and fail in life.

My stepfather Sam's tombstone reads 'Journey Onward, Experience More' because his daughter Joleen saw how much Sam grabbed and held onto that quote to the day he died.

Sam did not play *Ultima* but the quote resonated with him so much that his daughter felt he should take the quote with him into the afterlife and eternity.

Stack Your Quests:

I remember thinking how much more efficient it is to play adventure games when you plan ‘quest routes’ according to your assigned mission quests. I would strategize the most efficient way to achieve my goals and complete quests, and possibly exploit a design flaw or hole in the game by combining or completing quests in unanticipated order.

Simply –

‘Stack Quests’ in series so location and time proximity are maximized

E182 Writing and Typing and Competing with Teacher



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E182 Writing and Atypical Non-Standard Typing and Competing with Teacher.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qei8-e182-writing-and-atypical-non-standard-typing-and-competing-with-teacher.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/HkPjfDXTo64>

Description:

Richard tells his story of competing with his Typing Class teacher using his self-learned unconventional typing style against the teacher's traditional ASDF standard typing style...

Who wins?

Story writing on Electric Typewriter:

During my early self-teaching of programming my mother gave me her old electric typewriter as she did not need it anymore and she observed I enjoyed writing a lot.

She always encouraged academic things like writing, foreign languages, math, and later computer engineering and science. I used the typewriter to find creative outlet and escape from the world I lived in. I cannot say I wrote well, but I wrote every day.

Writing was a great way to express my emotions and get them out of my head. I would write stories that reflected my real world but with outcomes that I wanted. Some stories were complete fiction too, but most were influenced by my reality as I perceived it.

A consequence of typing my stories was that I self-taught myself to type accurately around 80 words per minute and mostly accurate at 110+ words per minute. On computers I could type and correct myself at a reliable 90-100 words per minute.

Typing Class – Rigid “Proper” Typing Technique:

Later in typing class (yes, there really were classes teaching how to type) I found my self-taught style of typing was far faster than anyone and more accurate as well.

The typing class teacher was a black woman with a chip on her shoulder. She defended teaching typing as an important thing for students. Apparently, her colleagues considered typing class below physical education in the academia pecking order.

The teacher did not like me much and lectured me at every turn about my hands not being in the proper position on “home keys” – left hand on “ASDF”, right hand on “;LKJ”. Use all fingers full range of motion to reach all keys from the “home” key hand position.

She was rigid in her typing technique and expected all students to emulate her method.

I tried to comply with her guidance, but it made me slower and less accurate. I was frustrated.

Why would a teacher ask me to do something less efficient and less accurate just because it is not the way she thinks it should be done!? She was unreasonable and wrong!

Typing Class Hurt My Typing – Made Me into Heavy Handed Typist:

Ironically, typing class was a negative influence on my typing skills because I had to learn to slam down hard on the keyboard to drive the mechanical typewriter levers to strike an ink ribbon to leave the imprinted ink covered letter on a page stuck in its paper roller.

The consequence of being taught to be a “heavy handed typist” has been the abuse and casualty keyboards not to mention those around witnessing my vehement typing style.

Forever more after my typing class I struck keys on computer keyboards with such force that they echoed shock waves all around – click, clack, pitter, patter, hit, slam, repeat endlessly on the keys like a woodpecker hammering away on a tree at remarkable speeds.

Typing Class Challenge “Who is the Fastest Typist?” (Teacher or Me):

The typing instructor challenged me so much that I was visibly annoyed.

Finally, I snapped at her – “I am a good typist. I am sure I type faster and more accurate than anyone here including you!”

The teacher was taken aback and accepted my challenge to my dismay, “Fine, let us put that to the test. For real. We will take an exercise at the back of the exercise book and compete to see who has the most words typed and least words mistyped.”

She set about to have the challenge right then and there in front of the class. She clearly expected to embarrass me.

Atypical Typing Style:

The typing teacher sat at her desk with her personal typewriter as I sat awaiting the “start” call from her.

“Let’s Start”, she exclaimed!

We were off.

I typed with my index finger and thumb per hand –
left index finger hovering over ‘E’ & ‘R’.
left thumb over ‘C’ & ‘V’ & “Space”.

right index finger over ‘L’ & ‘;’.
right thumb over ‘Space’ near ‘N’.

I had “exception” keys such as ‘Backspace’ which was typed with both right-hand right-most two fingers (excluding pinky).

My method of typing was bewildering to people.

With my index fingers and thumbs and an occasional upper-right keyboard region strike with my two smaller right-hand fingers jumping out as the rest of my hands continued to jump all over the keyboard in frenzied speed.

It made no sense to me that there was “only one typing style” that was acceptable.

Typing Class Challenge – Teacher Lost Who Was the Fastest Typist:

I was about to prove if my typing style could hold its own against the lofty Standard Typing Technique.

The typing teacher began typing as the Typing Challenge ensued.

My keys slammed and banged and echoed across the room.

Fellow students were excited and making all sorts of “oohs and ahhs” and snickers at me for my foolish conceit.

The typing exercise was done. I finished before the teacher completed the exercise herself.

The teacher was slightly more accurate than my 95% but only by a few percentage points. I argued a few points like that did not matter since I could fix them as I typed on a computer. The instructor declared she won the accuracy of typing despite my defense of computer typing vs manual typewriter typing.

The average “good typist” is types around 95% accuracy at 30-40 Words Per Minute.

The teacher hit the impressive speed of just over 50 Words Per Minute.

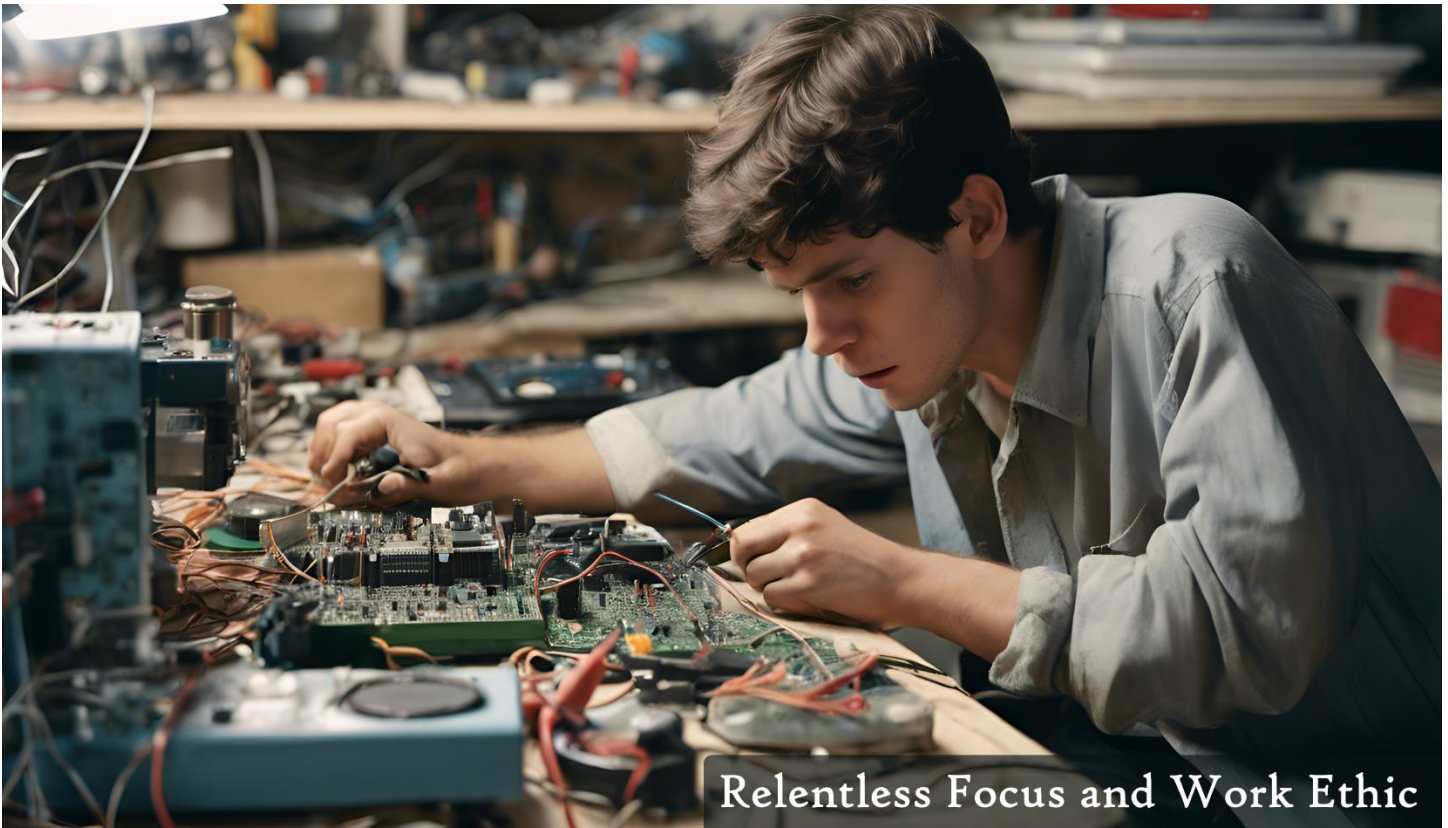
I finished at nearly 75 Words Per Minute.

By being close in accuracy and 50% faster the teacher had to reluctantly admit that I won the Challenge.

To this day I remain dismayed by the conceit held by ignorant so-called teachers that are more intent on forcing their ideas on you rather than just ensuring you learn how to succeed at their alleged domains of expertise.

But – to give recognition where it is due... The teacher did ultimately admit – that I won the Typing Challenge.

E183 Relentless Focus and Boundless Work Ethic



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E183 Relentless Focus and Boundless Work Ethic.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qft2-e183-relentless-focus-and-boundless-work-ethic.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/q0hQt0tbkOE>

Description:

Richard shares how he had a strong innate work ethic, but that he needed ways to decompress and recharge.

He tells tales of places he would go and things he would do – to escape the real world’s oppression and unhappiness.

Young Richard explains how he wishes his imaginary “Richard’s World” where things are the way he thinks they should be...could be real. He laments why there can’t be a real Mayberry town like a TV with Andry Griffith...?

Richard shares that his grandfather was the closest thing to a real father to him.

He tells tales of working as a teenager – where he learned a lot, but was also defrauded by an unscrupulous employer.

Richard discovers that he can control the weather itself...as an intern!

Money Was Important:

Although my parents managed to find ways to get things on-the-cheap all over. Most clothes and items were thrift store or second-hand items, and even those were hand-me-downs despite gender differences (sisters vs the only boy, me).

My mother would say to me, “Money is power.” Simple but to the point.

Money is important. Money is authority. Money is respect. Money is VERY IMPORTANT. As my mother said, “Money is power.

Boundless Work Ethic:

I was in accelerated learning programs in school. I was already a world-class hacker and cracker. I had written several RPG Adventure Modules and I self-published one. I was making one of my Adventure Modules into a computer game that would ultimately be published when I turned eighteen years old. I had made a Laser Disc Drive Design & Demo and an operational robot as school Science Projects earning newspaper articles recognition. I even collected thousands of aluminum cans in the Grand Canyon to earn money (and save the environment in the process).

All the while pursuing personal projects I also strove to learn how to program, about graphic and music theory, about user interface design, and all sorts of computer software things beyond academic stuff.

And I rode my motorcycle in the foothills and mountains of rural San Martin, Morgan Hill, and Gilroy. It was my primary non-work time.

Although I had a stepfather he was rarely engaged in my life. He was instrumental at times like introducing me to Dungeons & Dragons and taking me to a Fantasy Gaming Convention once.

He did not want me using the computer my parents purchased, but I did, and it was pivotal to my learning how to program and achieve all that I did. Whether intentional or not, his pursuit and passion for computer programming gave me the opportunity to seize for myself, and I did.

As a child I never stopped.

Like a shark feeding on knowledge, insight, and achievements I never ceased to move and drive forward without letting my past hold me back with its anchors.

Motorcycle “Escape” in the Hills and Mountains:

Riding my motorcycle in the hills and mountains was my primary “escape” from the harsh reality of San Martin and my family circumstance. I would ride to remote locations where it appeared no human had touched for years or decades, out in the middle of nowhere.

I would ride across fallen logs over ravines. I would race up cliffs so steep that only high speed zig-zagging could traverse them for otherwise the bike would flip over on itself trying to ride near vertical cliff walls. I would jump over small chasms. I would splash through creeks and river lets. I would slide and spin through mud and shallow puddles.

Once my motorcycle sunk in a mud puddle so deep the bike sunk to its seat. I had to get my mother to use her truck with a rope to pull my motorcycle free of the quicksand-like mud that sought to engulf my precious motorcycle. It took a week and a bit to clean and repair it from that “immersive” muddy experience.

Sometimes I would go so deep into the mountains that I would bring my pellet CO2 pistol in a sidearm holster (that I found when we moved into the San Martin house; the deputy that owned the house previously left the holster in the garage

along with miscellaneous live bullets and a badge – all of which I kept but the bullets which my stepfather Sam took). I would shoot my pistol in the wilderness as more practice than just at home.

Waterfall and Cistern Inspired Tower of Myraglen:

I would drive to a few special areas to “think”. One place was at the base of Mount Madonna – a beautiful cistern at the base of a waterfall that flowed down from an old, ruined estate’s stone foundation and walls making it all feel like a fantasy story’s castle nestled in the woods with a magical waterfall feeding the reflective waters below. This place was my inspiration for location for my first game - *The Tower of Myraglen*.

Motorcycle in the Wilds – Key to Escape, Freedom, and Sanity:

No matter the misadventures or triumphs on my motorcycle in the wilds, they were always magical and majestic – and FREE’ING!

My motorcycle was my key to ESCAPE and FREEDOM! To SANITY!

“Veg’ing Out” Sometimes:

There were many afternoons when I would return from school in San Martin and not be up to writing, programming, cracking, hacking, riding my motorcycle, playing a game, and certainly not more chores or “tasks”.

Sometimes I wanted time to “veg out” and do nothing at all.

“Down Times” Recharged Me and Reduced Stress:

I believe these “down times” were unintentionally recharge windows for me to cope with the problems facing me. And to have time to wash the stress off my mind enough so I could resume my passionate pursuits of story writing, programming, and riding horses and motorcycles.

Grandfather – Child One-Year Surrogate Father:

My biological father kidnapped me at six months old and abandoned me ever since.

As a young child, my grandfather shared a bedroom with me in a bunk bed for nearly a year as he recovered from a back injury trying to tame an unruly horse. He read stories to me, told tales of his own life, offered insight, and guided integrity. For that year, my grandfather was the closest thing to a “father” I ever had.

As I grew older, and we moved to San Martin my grandfather was rarely around. He had re-married and was living his life. I would see him at least a few times a year because I liked and respected him.

If there was one thing my grandfather imparted to me above all else was –
work hard and be honorable.

Andy Griffith – Teen Surrogate Father:

The black & white TV show *The Andy Griffith Show* - shaped a lot of my personal views and even morality.

As a teenager, I would sometimes watch Andy Griffith after school to unwind before starting something new.

I looked up to the character Sherriff Andy Taylor. I enjoyed his laughable sidekick Barney Fife. His “Aunt Bee” was a lot like my grandmother was – hyper proper and vocal about her opinions. And Andy’s kid Opie Taylor was “me” – the kid that wanted to do right but might need some counseling from “Daddy Andy”.

Andy Griffith was a lot like a surrogate father to me during my teenage years.

He always showed good character, high integrity, and strong work ethic. I was inspired by Andy.

Richard’s World – Why Can’t it Be Like Mayberry:

The thing about Andy Griffith is that it was a world set in Mayberry where crime is nearly non-existent, and people’s greatest issues revolve around morality and compassion for others. The Andy Griffith Show reflected what I wanted the real world to be.

My world was unstable and full of threats and dangers, if not real and direct injury and pain.

I wanted my world to be “Richard’s World” where things are like Andy Griffith’s Mayberry – low strife, low crime, most problems can be solved through reason and compassion.

My world has never been like Mayberry...

Throughout life I would adopt the term “Richard’s World” to represent my ideal world where things are run the way I think they should be and where righteous just behavior is rewarded, and bad behavior is swiftly punished and mitigated.

“Richard’s World” is an ideal that will never be reality but has been a North Star to navigate by for me.

Chuck E. Cheese Animatronics:

A friend down the street’s parents started a little electronic assembly company called Unicorn Electronics. They hired me for a summer job under-the-table when I was fourteen to assemble Chuck E. Cheese Pizza & Arcade life-size animatronic characters. I would spend hours on end inserting electronic components like integrated chips, resistors, capacitors, diodes, etc. into wafer boards that were fed into a huge “wave solder” machine that would solder (or weld) all the electronic components onto the board.

The boards were then plugged into a testing harness that would light “green” if the board passed operating specifications or “red” if it did not. We inspected “red” boards for obvious “cold solder joints” (components that ended up with only partial solder welding) so we could manually fix those with a soldering iron. Any other “red” problem was sent to a real technician to examine and make work or toss.

I made a few thousand dollars doing this, which is incredible for a poor country kid! And I got real work experience in a cool area – Arcade Games and animating robots!

Klure and Associates:

I managed to get a summer job assembling electronic boards when I was fifteen years old, a year after I had worked with Unicorn Electronics. I spent the summer working for a man named Robert Klure. He founded a small electronics company that assembled electronics on spec.

My friend, Jeff Lefferts, and I rode public transit every summer weekday to Klure and Associates in a business park in Gilroy, CA. We brought our own soldering irons since the company only had cheap low-quality ones and my mother had nice high-grade ones.

Jeff decided it was pain to carry the soldering irons and the bases back and forth and so asked if he could leave it overnight. Robert said, “no problem!”

A few weeks later we returned like any other day. But the door was locked. Klure and Associates had a sign outside, “Out of Business”. What!? We were not even paid our last paycheck. Jeff lost my mother’s soldering iron because he trusted Robert Klure.

But Robert Klure was gone. No trace. Nothing in the State. False identity. Entirely a scam. He allegedly received payment for the work and skipped town. It explained why his gear was so cheap and borderline unprofessional.

We went to the local labor board which said we were worked more hours than allowed on our worker’s permits given our ages but that did not preclude Klure from paying us – that was illegal. They could do nothing against someone that could not be found.

I learned not to trust people in general even those that have a professional façade.

The truth is behind the veil...it must be pierced to see it.

And people do not want you to see the truth – that they are hiding.

Burger King:

Desperate to make money I looked to get an after school or summer job. I wanted to buy the upcoming Apple][GS; The GS stood for graphics and sound as it was a big leap over the previous Apple][+. The GS computer would thousands of dollars, and then was software! I needed a lot of money.

I applied first at Taco Bell in Morgan Hill, CA. They gave me a math test to see if I could handle the register. I finished it in minutes, but the manager looked at me with dismay and said he would not hire cheaters!

The Taco Bell manager insisted no one could complete the test that fast without a calculator; I guess I was a human calculator then. It did not matter what I said or that I offered to take another test in front of him.

I then applied to Burger King in Gilroy, CA. They hired me right off to work the Whopper and Specialty Sandwich boards in the back kitchen. The only notable incident I experienced at Burger King was during the annual Garlic Festival things were insanely rushed and hectic. I had a band aid on a finger but after assembling a fish sandwich and some whoppers I noticed the band aid was missing; it found its way into someone’s food.

No one complained about a band aid or human blood in their food, but it made me realize how potentially unsanitary restaurant food can be. I was turned off eating out entirely, including my highly discounted Burger King meals while I worked there. Ick!

I worked at Burger King all summer and made enough money to buy the Apple][GS computer and a Video Cassette Recorder and Player (VCR).

I wanted to watch videos while I used the computer and record TV shows I loved like Star Blazers and Captain Harlok. And the computer was a foothold toward my future!

Tandem Computers and Making It Snow:

Sam learned of a summer intern program at his company, Tandem Computers. I applied for it although I was not incredibly old. I assume it was Sam’s connection with Tandem that encouraged them to select me over other candidates. I was hired for a summer job at Tandem Computers. I had no idea what to expect but it was PROGRAMMING!

I was seventeen and had a professional programming job! Woot!

They did not expect anything from me it turned out. I was an intern so if I did literally anything remotely useful it was a WIN. That was mighty low bar for me.

I asked engineers and technicians what they did and if there was anything they wanted programmed. I did not know if I could do it, but I was confident, if not conceited. I thought I could do anything.

An Asian engineer told me he wanted a way to attach thermocouples (devices that measure temperature and humidity) to an object and collect readings from all the thermocouples every set interval (which he could specify). That sounded like an easy thing to do if I could just read the device ports I thought. I asked if there was more?

He chuckled and said that it would be amazing if I could SEND COMMANDS to the test harness so he could tell it what to do in software instead of turning dials and pressing buttons by hand every time. He said there was software interface, but no one ever tried.

That sounded like a real challenge. I asked around if that could be summer project. Given no one had any expectations it was agreed to by everyone including the manager.

I researched everything to understand how the test harness and machine worked, how the thermocouples worked, and how everything was cabled together. I practiced using the manual controls to make sure I understood how it worked.

I obtained a copy of Lotus 123, a spreadsheet of the era akin to Microsoft Excel, and exported its data to a comma delimited text file. I then read the text file and parsed out the data typed in the spreadsheet by the user. I used exported spreadsheet data to feed commands to the test harness and machine.

Having to go to Borland International in Scotts Valley, CA was a weird part of my summer job. I needed to get low level hardware device drivers that worked with Turbo Pascal, a compiler & linker made by Borland then, and an engineer I had reached at Borland said if I drove there, he would give me a disc with the driver I needed and details on how to access soft switches and ports via Borland Pascal. I had to write inline assembly functions to directly control the hardware. Easy stuff given my hacker and cracker background!

Lastly, I wanted to impress with pizzazz beyond the functionality. I found a middleware called Vitamin C (as I recall). It was a visual graphic user interface layer that gave Windows/Mac-like mouse-driven window popup interfaces easy.

Uniting Lotus 123 spreadsheet, a hardware device driver, inline assembly native machine code, Vitamin C GUI API, and Turbo Pascal I successfully wrote my ThermoTemperature Control Software package for Tandem Computers.

What was my ThermoTemperature Control Software used for? Was it used at all? WAS IT EVER USED!!!

The manager and engineers were extremely impressed. My software let them enter temperatures and humidity for any given moment over a timeline, and it read the status of each thermocouple and recorded it so it could likewise be imported into the spreadsheet for analysis.

Now what made it awesome! The Blue ThermoTemperature test machine was a large refrigerator-size unit that could house a large computer. Setting the right combination of temperature and humidity made it scorch, freeze, rain, even snow! I felt like a god!

It got better. Everyone was so impressed they moved my setup to a massive walk-in ThermoTemperature CHAMBER. They tested satellites and other huge things inside the chamber. It was so cool to see my software snow on a satellite destined for outer space. Again, I felt like a god at seventeen years old.

Farewell Tandem:

I had played around in my last time at Tandem, not having time to do another big project. I made a false operating system prompt program that would snarkily react to commands entered, e.g., asking for a directory would get the computer declining the task and indicating it was an invasion of privacy. I had jokes for almost every command. The machine had to rebooted to disable my “prank” operating system. The hacker in me just could not be dormant so long...

On my last day, I wrote a fare well email to everyone at Tandem – literally. I did not realize how big Tandem really was when I entered wildcards for all the recipient fields. Both my manager and I received emails from all over the world wishing me the best in my future endeavors, even if most none of them knew who the heck I was. I must be important if I sent a global TO-EVERYONE farewell...

Working with Satellites and Thermo-Temperature-Humidity Simulators:

The experience of working at Tandem was awesome. What seventeen-year-old gets to work with satellites and thermo-temperature-humidity simulator hardware and entire rooms!?

The feeling of being a “god” fanned my arrogance and hubris like nothing else!

I was motivated to do more amazing things!

E184 HACKING AND CRACKING EARLY ONLINE AND HACKING



Local File:

[.\LibertyBooksVideos\E184 Hacking and Cracking Early Online Phreaking.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qfs6-e184-hacking-and-cracking-early-online-phreaking.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/xo26nFRdmVk>

Description:

Learn about Hacker Captain Crunch and his Phreaker Boxes – like the Phreaker Blue Box.

Hear the tale of The Hacker Haven called The Hidden Fortress, and their abuse of Hacker Power.

Going Online Early:

As a young boy with access to an Apple][but otherwise country dirt poor, I did not have money for computer games. My Stepfather, Sam, had purchased a 300baud dial-up modem; it was a headphone-like device that home telephone handsets were physically plugged into to let a computer talk over normal telephone lines with other computers. But modems use telephone numbers and calling long distance costs money, which again I did not have.

I found local numbers or exceptionally low cost local-ish numbers that had computer Bulletin Board Systems which behind-the-scenes often hosted hidden pirated games. I would find them, download them, and play them! Yay! No/low money games for me. I felt they are digital, and I cannot buy them anyway, so I am not taking anything from anyone else. That was bad thinking then, but it is what I thought. No one said it was wrong, and in fact – I was encouraged to download and copy games for my use...presumably because we had no money, and my parents just looked the other way... so I would have some games.

I eventually managed to save money over a couple of years of doing chores and picking strawberries for a nearby Japanese family that had a strawberry farm; .05 to .25 cents per basket was not much but it added up.

The Hidden Fortress:

A hacker friend online from a BBS invited me to join a BBS called The Hidden Fortress. By that time, I had made a name for myself in the software cracker circle. Cracking software was removing copy-protection placed on software – on games – that a ‘cracker’, a hacker specialized in breaking and removing protections, could remove... so everyone could freely copy and share and use the software – the game.

I was The Code Warrior, named after the Road Warrior, but for programming code obviously.

The Hidden Fortress was a select invitation-only hacker and cracker paradise. Hackers used phone systems to break into government and online systems. Crackers cracked software and cyphers to gain access to things, usually removing protections and sometimes modifying the target. I joined the Hidden Fortress for years.

Trix:

I joined an odd social network at the same time called TRIX, a weird mix of oddballs and outcasts from the computer and alternative lifestyle worlds. The computer, TRIX, and The Hidden Fortress were my “safe places” amidst an otherwise tormenting unstable home life and childhood. I withdrew as Spock, a Star Trek character of logic & reason, into my hacker & cracker technology first world... where I was in control and safe.

I learned so much from the Hidden Fortress as Spock. I learned so much from Trix as a “Kirk” not just a “Spock”. I learned about human interactions and people and influence – in the real world – as ‘Kirk’. And I learned more about hacking and cracking from The Hidden Fortress as ‘Spock’.

I met my ex-wife through Trix, as she was a Hacker groupie that was into people like Captain Crunch. No, he was not the cereal, but a hacker that named himself after the cereal. In fact, she knew Captain Crunch because he grew up in her neighborhood. He was one of the reasons she became fascinated with hackers and techies.

Captain Crunch and his Blue Box:

It sounds crazy but a hacker in the Bay Area was eating Captain Crunch when he came upon a pack-in toy whistle. It was common for cereal makers to include toys inside their boxes to encourage parents to buy specific cereals for their children.

Captain Crunch was walking around blowing in the Crunch Whistle when he thought to make a telephone call, and inadvertently blew the whistle as he picked up the phone.

Well, something extraordinary happened. The phone beeped back and gave him an odd dial tone. As a curious hacker, Captain Crunch played around with the whistle and found he could always trigger this phone state. He found once in this state the keypad could issue commands to some kind of remote telephone control system. It was there – all about maintenance – for the telephone company. Service techs could trigger a test-state using a device that emitted tones that the phone listened for.

Cleverly, Captain Crunch built what became known as the “Blue Box”. It was a little, yes blue, box. He attached a keypad, potentiometer, and speaker to it. He evolved his Blue Box over the ages, gaining different “colors” to signify their revision, with each having more capabilities. The keypad would emit standard telephone key tones and the potentiometer could emit any range of tones. The Blue Box allowed Captain Crunch to operate as full-access control technician over the phone system, which included untracked uncharged unlimited phone calls.

Captain Crunch was the architect of calling free without tracking - for hackers everywhere worldwide.

PC Pursuit – Hijacked Covert Global Dialing System Used by Government:

There was a service back in the Hacker/Cracker pioneering era called “PC Pursuit”. The idea was that there were “PC Telecom Hubs” physically located in major cities which allowed people to dial into a HUB using a modem, and the HUB in turn would connect to another HUB in a faraway location like another city across the country or even in another country entirely like the London, England United Kingdom.

Telecoms offered “PC Pursuit” to corporations and government to give secure untraced computer communication for a subscription fee.

Hackers enjoyed “PC Pursuit” for free because, well, they hacked into it and feigned government credentials to be untraced and call anywhere in the world PC Pursuit had a HUB.

When I was invited to join *The Hidden Fortress*, I was given PC Pursuit login credentials and details, and I was off to the races with untraceable calling anywhere in the world to find and download games!

Like my rationale for copying games, I justified hijacking PC Pursuit so I could call all over the world including the UK because I without the money to buy or make phone calls I could not pay for it anyway. And since it was all digital, no one was out anything I reasoned. And I was able to learn and have some fun.

Time would prove that I gave back to the world in created jobs and livelihoods, wisdom through immersive stories, and gave people a good time. My early access to digital copies of games throughout the world paid off for the world.

I was justified.

Hidden Fortress and Pirated Software – Games and Applications:

The Hidden Fortress was a source of a huge array of pirated software – games and applications alike. BUT MOSTLY GAMES! HUNDREDS OF GAMES flowed through the Fortress BBS every month for its members to download and distribute themselves throughout the world.

It was a goldmine of software for me. Friends of mine coined me as “The South County Software Exchange” because I would trade copies of software I obtained from the Hidden Fortress for other pirated software and bring that back to the Hidden Fortress for credit as a contributor.

My gaming life exploded with access to virtually every game or piece of software in existence.

Hidden Fortress' Controversial Content:

Unfortunately, the Hidden Fortress was not only about software. It included subversive, even Anarchist things too like “zip” gun schematics for untraceable firearms, phone numbers to police court bank and government modems to accommodate hacking them along with credential confidence in case of police/FBI sting, and so much more. There was even an anarchist international book and blueprint for a nuclear bomb.

While pirated software was illegal, I had no idea if the other “content” was legal, and I did not care at the time. It was exciting to me, really.

Hidden Fortress's Technocracy Inflicts Justice:

The hubris of the founders and most elite members of the Hidden Fortress was unmatched. They felt they were gods of computers and were untouchable by mortals without their technocracy powers.

They started hacking banks to transfer funds that they would use to buy things they wanted. Every successful “transaction” emboldened them, and they went further and further each time.

A reporter heard of the Hidden Fortress and decided to write an article defaming hackers and their wickedness and disregard for law and people. The article vilified Hacking and cited details that were blatantly about the Hidden Fortress, or at least so concluded the Fortress' elite.

The Hidden Fortress unleashed its fury on the reporter. Bank Accounts: Gone! Credit Cards: MAX CHARGED! TRAFFIC CITATIONS: UNPAID TICKETS WARRANT!

That was enough to “educate” the wayward reporter for daring to disrespect the Hacker Institution.

Hidden Fortress Exposed:

It worked. The Hidden Fortress successfully decimated the reporter that dared judge harshly hackers like those of the Hidden Fortress. They made the reporter penniless on paper and bogus legal issues to clear up.

The reporter naturally contacted the police who in turn called in the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Neither were pleased with the overt aggressive actions by these Hackers!

It did not take long for the FBI to arrest Hidden Fortress members based in the States. Fortress elites that lived abroad “went dark” to avoid targeting by their local constabulary.

The States Fortress Elites were charged and convicted for numerous cybercrimes. Back then much of these sorts of crimes were “new” and were complicated to prosecute. Consequently, many charges revolved around piracy and terrorism across states and internationally.

It was serious – the Hidden Fortress was **no longer hidden**.

E185 Hacking and the FBI



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E185 Hacking and the FBI.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qfrt-e185-hacking-and-the-fbi.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/3GUtpIJQ3H4>

Description:

Hear the tale of when the FBI took down the Hidden Fortress.

Learn how Richard was ‘scared straight’ by the FBI...

Hidden Fortress' Technocracy vs the FBI:

There was never a chance for the Hidden Fortress to triumph over the power of the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The FBI was huge and had the entire United States government behind it. The Hidden Fortress was just shy of one hundred people and was spread across the globe.

The FBI had endless resources and agents to dedicate to bring down the Fortress. The Fortress only had pirated software and ability to covertly connect computers over untraceable phone lines. Hacking was not going to get anyone out of the FBI's crosshairs.

FBI Wins – Takes Down Hidden Fortress:

In the end, the Hidden Fortress elites within the States were convicted for a multitude of crimes.

The Hidden Fortress was shutdown.

The Hidden Fortress became a forgotten chapter in the rise of hackers controlling the world.

FBI and Me:

And what of me and the Hidden Fortress and the FBI?

The Federal Bureau of Investigation interviewed me for potential involvement and evidence.

The FBI stated logs from the hacker bulletin board system (BBS) download/upload service access history and chat forums showed and proved my involvement and criminal activity as a member the hacker syndicate calling themselves "The Hidden Fortress".

They stated they had hard proof of -

- 1) My Hacker Handle was "The Code Warrior"
- 2) I was a frequent (daily) user of the Hidden Fortress download and upload service to illegally obtain and distribute pirated software - a Federal Crime.
- 3) I engaged in conspiracy to commit criminal enterprise, engaging in organized crime, piracy, and distribution of intellectual property (IP) - a Federal Crime.
- 4) The scope of my criminality was massive – cross-country domestic and international organized crime and conspiracy and piracy and distribution of pirated software – making everything a Federal Crime.
- 5) I associated with known criminals (which I did not know at the time) calling themselves "The Hidden Fortress" which in addition to software piracy espouse anarchy and encourage use of home-made untracked weapons and even had blueprints for a nuclear bomb. And I aided their illegal enterprises – a lot of Federal Crimes.

The FBI's list of my "crimes" felt excessive and trumped up to me. Of course, I had pirated software but that was all I did.

Heck, I even told the hackers on the Fortress not to do anything but copy and share games. But they were Hackers!

Hackers Are People Too – Vulnerable to Petty Desires and Hubris:

Hidden Fortress hackers intended to exploit their powers and improve their lives – games were merely what started them off and kept them united. But they loved the thrill of hacking into a “system” that was designed to thwart them. That was their game. They were smarter! They would prove it.

They wanted prestige and recognition for their greatness. They wanted to leverage their “powers” to obtain money which they could use to buy anything they desired.

I saw Hackers had great capabilities, but they were also ultimately “people” too. Hackers were susceptible to selfishness and greed and “evil” just like anyone else.

Cybersecurity Was Weak – Hidden Phone Number, Password, Rarely Callback:

Once a hacker was “IN” a system they could do whatever they wanted.

Cybersecurity was very weak back then. Protection was an unlisted phone number and a password.

Hackers easily found hidden phone numbers by creating “phone scanners” or “auto dialers” which simply stepped through every phone number within a specified range of digits and listened for a computer modem to answer the call. Once a computer answered, the “dialer” it would attempt to handshake and connect. Upon success, the dialer would hang up and report the telephone number as “live”. The hacker would later return to the “live” numbers and investigate and potentially break into the system to see what was there for pillaging or playing.

Years in the future so-called “secure” systems would add Callbacks to registered authorized users to mitigate random callers. Callbacks were new and cumbersome to manage and required tech experts to set them up and maintain them.

Consequently, Callback systems were rarely implemented. Whenever a hacker hit a callback, they just move on to the next “target” – there was always easier prey.

The Potential Decades in Prison for my Hidden Fortress Crimes:

For my crimes of domestic and international conspiracy, engaging with organized crime, piracy, and associating and aiding known criminals I faced decades of prison time.

Seriously!? I was a kid. I copied, shared, and played games!

And the FBI was telling me my entire life was over...

That was – BULL, BS!

But what could I do?

FBI Compromise:

Fortunately, the FBI told me that I was a kid and naïve and had ignorantly become embroiled in a criminal syndicate. They told me that I had no idea what I was doing illegal but understood some of the Hidden Fortress actions were bad. They effectively told me what to say when asked in the future about how I got into this mess. They were leading me, trying to get me to give evidence against the hacker elites of the Hidden Fortress.

The FBI confirmed that my handle was “The Code Warrior”. They said they found many Bulletin Board System posts by “The Code Warrior” (me) of discouragements against hacking banks and police stations and of targeting individuals for

retribution. The FBI said my posts showed my intent to not support illegality and yet I still committed crimes none-the-less.

They told me they were not interested necessarily in pursuing me for any legal or criminal violations. They just wanted me to understand and acknowledge piracy and organized crime is illegal and cannot be pursued, and they wanted me available as a witness should it be needed to prosecute the Hidden Fortress leaders and elites.

Everything was overwhelming and scary.

Of course, I agreed to do whatever the FBI told me to do.

The Fortress fell that Fateful FBI day because their hubris drove them to target someone that could rally forces to fight back.

I never heard from the Hidden Fortress, or anyone related to it again.

Hacking Could and Would be Used for Evil:

I saw how technology was far more potent than any other things in the world. It gave power while letting you remain remote and unseen. You were a sniper of technology – low risk, high impact - high reward.

It was obvious though - Hacking could and would be abused for evil!

And the world was not and is still not prepared for Hackers.

Hackers will control (if not own) the world.

E186 Learning to Hack from Ed So



Local File:

[_LibertyBooksVideos\E186 Learning to Hack from Ed So.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qfze-e186-learning-to-hack-from-ed-so.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/vOcKoZX9FMg>

Description:

Richard learns how to better hack and crack – just now ‘for good’... as “The Cleaning Crew”.

He learns extensive hacking, software cracking, and reverse engineering techniques from a mysterious man named Ed So.

Ed So:

Over the years as I tried to write my stories and computer games, I copied and played so many computer games from the Hidden Fortress and other BBS's. I had attained perhaps 800 games before my run was over. But my access was always lagging my months to get the latest games.

I was too young to get a real job still to buy games. When I was in 7th grade, I began riding the public transit bus to a computer store that opened in South San Jose, an hour Ride. I would go there every other weekend or so just to marvel at the games and dream how I might be able to play them.

One day, I observed an Asian man talking to the store clerk about copying the most recent HUGE 6-floppy disk game called *Time Zone*. He told the clerk he had not yet cracked it – those were ‘my words’. I walked up to the man and told him that I could crack software, and maybe I could do it. He laughed.

I persisted. I insisted I could crack it, and if not, I could trade him other games if he cracked it. He looked shocked, almost scared, and asked me to go into the back room with him. I did so, and he asked me to bring a list of all the games I had so we could talk next weekend. He told him name was Edward So.

Once more, I journeyed to the South San Jose Computer store and met with Edward So. I gave him my list and he checked off fifty or more games, and said if you have these, we can trade software ongoing every other weekend.

Edward So was president and co-founder of Prometheus Hardware, making of modems and Printer Graphics Chips. He was a full-time consultant for Lockheed Aerospace. He was full-time consultant for Apple Computer. He was a busy guy, and quite possibly a bit scammy.

Learned to Hack and Crack from Sensei So:

We “traded” software for a year or more before he asked me if I wanted to learn more hacker and cracker skills. I did, and so he taught me. I learned like a sponge. It just made sense. While he taught me, he would sit drinking from his mug wine throughout the day. He would drink wine from a coffee mug and watch movies like *Aliens* while I learned and worked... and I hacked, and I cracked...

The Cleaning Crew:

Ed So and I loved games with a passion. We decided that crackers adding their own “cracked by” credits tainted the original games and was inappropriate. We never put our names on cracked software, so felt justified in our decision to remove all cracker credits in games and repost them without the “noise” crackers added.

We called ourselves the “Cleaning Crew”. We would scour the BBSs and find games with cracker screens, remove them, and repost them “clean”. It was a fun game unto itself.

Crackers got wind of what we were doing, and it became a sort of unspoken cracker vs. cleaner war. One time Ed showed me something he encountered. “Watch this!” he said as he launched a program, he said he just “cleaned”.

The game booted up, screen went black, and graphic image appeared with a giant tongue sticking out and text reading “Stop removing my name!” The program promptly formatted the floppy disc in retribution for our daring to remove the cracker’s name. Ed was so thrilled! A challenge!!! The game was on!

Well, I admit that cracker was way beyond me at the time. But Ed figured it out and showed me how the cracker encrypted the code and then compressed to further hide it. He even applied an exclusive or (XOR) function to the unencrypted code so it could be rapidly transformed to working code or back into gobble-dee-gook. It was quite clever.

We encountered more opposing Crackers but none could stand up to Ed's technical prowess, and eventually they could not stand up to mine. I was a quick study for programming including its "dark arts".

Ghost Tested for Ed So While Making First Game:

When I was 17, Edward So gave me copies of Applies Programmer Workshop (APW) framework they had made for the Apple][GS. I worked a summer job at Burger King to earn money to buy a VHS Video Player (for watching movies while I coded like Edward So) and an Apple][GS so I could make a game with the Apple APW framework.

I did not earn enough money for a second disc drive though (I messed up buying the VHS Player first – I learned to plan more thoroughly going forward), but my mother seeing all my effort gave me the money for the drive.

There were no art or audio tools in the era. I made music, graphics, and map authoring and editing tools before I could write the game itself. I had to write low-level high-performance graphics bit block transfers (BLTs) and Direct Memory Access (DMA), and bank switching and zero-direct page flipping. It was lots of low-level hardware performance stuff relative to computer game creation. It's worth noting it was very complicated and I did it entirely self-taught with the help of Mentors like Edward So and the Hacker & Cracker community of The Hidden Fortress.

With hardware and APW framework to code in hand, I set out to write the game that would be my first published title, *The Tower of Myraglen*.

E187 DUNGEONS AND DRAGONS AND CAREER CORNERSTONE WITHY COMPUTERS



Local File:

[.\LibertyBooksVideos\E187 Dungeons and Dragons and Career Cornerstone with Computers.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qz4x-e187-dungeons-and-dragons-and-career-cornerstone-with-computers.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

https://youtu.be/JYFc_MiZli8

Description:

Hear the tale of Richard's Dungeons & Dragons era and crew of buddies.

Learn what became of Richard's gamer crew...

Dungeons & Dragons Birthed my Fantasy Career:

My stepfather Sam purchased the Basic Dungeons & Dragons set for me from a hobby game store, but it was too complex for me to grasp by myself. I struggled to understand how the game worked. It was unlike any game I had ever played. It made no sense to me at all.

I did not know that Dungeons & Dragons was a group game at first. I knew absolutely nothing about the game. But I was fascinated by it. It had deep stories, rich mythos, miniature statues of the monsters, and cool shaped dice (triangles, tetrahedrons, octagons, ...) along with the typical six-sided dice.

There were few things so complex that I did not grasp them quickly, but Dungeons & Dragons was beyond me at first.

Dungeons & Dragons' rules were vast and went to the most minutia of detail. There were books (yes PLURAL many books) providing instruction on magic items and spells, character classes and races, currencies and exchange rates, armor and weapons, equipment and animals, and an entire documented worlds to explore. Or you could create your own "modules" within the tapestry of Dungeons & Dragons. The game and its rules were quintessential definition of complicated. It was exciting to me to learn in the context of fantasy.

Sam heard of a fantasy gaming convention in San Mateo, CA at the Dunfey Hotel to see people playing the game firsthand. He imagined we might even play in one of the convention's gaming sessions.

Upon arrival it was evident that people had to sign up beforehand to play in the games, but we watched. I studied. I learned.

Seeing the "pros" at the Fantasy Convention played Dungeons & Dragons (or D&D as it was called) I understood how the game was intended to be played.

Dungeons & Dragons - Solo:

I returned home and pretended to be both the Dungeon Master (who directs and guides the adventure world and its non-player characters) and the Players (who interact within the world as presented by the Dungeon Master).

It was awkward being both Dungeon Master and Players. I knew what was coming and what the recommended solutions were including where all the secret doors and stashes were, and where the most formidable monsters were so they could be avoided.

In a way, I was cheating with myself by being both Dungeon Master orchestrating the world and its non-player characters while also playing as every member of the party of Player adventurers. But I learned how to play the game by immersing myself in every aspect of it.

Dungeons & Dragons – The Party of Adventurers (my friends):

Over time I befriended an unlikely crew to play Dungeons & Dragons with me –

Scott Littleton – D&D Buddy:

- 1) Scott Littleton – cool dude, long wavy hair, rocker pants & shirt, and all the girls loved him. He was the envy of most High School boys and made our group cool. We certainly would not have been cool without Scott Littleton. Scott was not the smartest, but he was honest and held honor in high esteem. He was the most stable, straight shooter I had met.

Scott's mother was divorced, and his deadbeat father long gone (like mine). They had no money despite Scott working afterschool jobs to help pay for food and rent. Their impoverished lifestyle drove Scott to his "rocker style" because his clothes could be ripped and tattered, and he could be less kempt on any given day; it was camouflage... for being so poor.

Scott had ambition to have his own place and not live so desperately as he was forced to do growing up.

Without money Scott decided he would join the U.S. Army straight out of High School, and that is precisely what he did. He became a Tank Communications Expert (AKA Tank soldier in control of the radio and its maintenance). It was apparently a more techie soldier role – but it was a frontline first-to-die role and Scott knew it. He was okay with it. The Army would pay for his education after a tour of duty.

Scott loved the military so much he decided to stay in as a career soldier.

Jeff Lefferts – D&D Buddy, Programming Partner:

- 2) Jeff Lefferts – my sidekick and future programming partner and subcontractor. Jeff received near-perfect SAT score was crazy passionate about music and band and was naturally brilliant (and very weird). He had an odd demeanor and uneasy stare at times, and he usually sounded conceited. Jeff was not liked by many. And there was his overwhelming Achilles Heel – “girls” melted his brain on sight and left him intellectually dissolved.

Jeff had a sister, Laura. He and Laura were abused by their often-drunk father – he would curse at them, smack them around, and worst of all perform “experiments” on them. Jeff did not perceive the experiments as abuse but rather saw them as scientific research [that happened to be done on him and his sister). He was parroting his father's words.

Their father was a mad man who fancied himself a “mad scientist” about to crack the greatest power technology ever. He believed that electricity was the genesis of life itself and that it could be used to manipulate the soul or spirit life force inside a person, and he imagined he was close to generating infinite power.

The secret behind all his brilliance was Tesla's research and technology. He built many Tesla Coils, including one that was ten feet tall constructed around massive electric company cable spindles; it generated so much power it arced twenty feet – it was DANGEROUS! He even managed to convince the local community Gavilan College to let him demo it as an exhibit, but he had to surround it with Hazard Tape to avoid people from being electrocuted.

Jeff's father also loved gunpowder and explosives. On holidays, ESPECIALLY Fourth of July, he would use dynamite and craft bombs to prove how clever and powerful he was to his family and neighbors. He would explode tree stumps and large object trash he saved throughout the year just for holiday explosions! Watch out for shrapnel! Everyone hid behind barriers, of course.

That all may sound wild, but it was the experimentation on Jeff and Laura that was the scariest. I recall one experiment where Jeff and Laura placed their bare feet on aluminum foil that had electrodes attached to each of its four corners. A similar wired sheet of foil was on a bench where they placed their hands. A Tesla Coil would begin charging nearby, with its ominous pulsing hum as blue arcs of electricity rise in waves up its vertical rod.

And then “flash”. Jeff and Laura were allowed to step away from the foil surfaces - and restore their – then - wild frizzed extended hair – sticking out in every direction - from extreme electricity that coursed through their bodies. Their “auras” were etched in the two sheets of foil. It was eerie how the foil captured a multi-

colored image from their feet and hands like a photograph of “something”. The etches showed an ‘energy’ or distorted energy around them...

Their father insisted he captured the “aura” surrounding their body and soul. Who knows what his mad science really did? His ideas and research died with him from sclerosis of the liver resulting from his lifelong excessive drinking.

What happened to Jeff?

Jeff fell for a “gold digger” woman in his early twenties. She drained Jeff of his money, even what he had saved. And she introduced him to hardcore narcotics recreationally. Jeff’s genius degenerated to “good enough” average intelligence. His career stagnated and was at risk of declining if he remained on his doomed course.

Penniless and addicted to illicit drugs Jeff no longer offered value to his “gold digging girlfriend”, and she left him.

Jeff eventually lost everything and was so addicted to drugs he moved in with his brother (who was also a drug addict) in Berkeley where they could score drugs locally and easily... and continue to be, dope brothers.

Troy Morgan – D&D Buddy:

- 3) Troy Morgan – the “jock” of the group. His father and father’s father were police officers, and Troy intended to become a police officer himself or an officer in the Air Force. He dressed “proper” and made sure everyone knew he was “a man of integrity” and was patriotic with great respect for the military, and that he believed strongly in “the rule of law”. Some might have said Troy was so rigid he had a stick up his butt.

Troy would eventually join the police force in Los Angeles after attending UCLA and its Regional Officer Training Corp (ROTC) program. I recall one of the most jarring things for Troy that made clear to him being a police officer was the right choice instead of joining the U.S. Air Force as he imagined he might do – he had to kill a chicken with a pocketknife to desensitize him from life so he could focus on his “duty”. He wanted honor and integrity to extend to all living things not just the ones he was directed to protect, so he decided on being a police officer.

Troy eventually joined Los Angeles Police Department after attending that chicken-killing ROTC program.

Francisco “Frank” Carvallo – D&D Buddy:

- 4) Francisco Carvallo (AKA Frank) – the son of a first-generation immigrant family from Chile. He and his family had the strongest work ethic I had ever seen (outside of my own, of course). Francisco agreed to be called “Frank” but he always preferred his birth name of “Francisco”. He was the most loyal friend anyone could ever imagine. Frank and I were close friends throughout High School years and well into young adulthood. He even received music credits on some of my games.

I believed Frank was a frustrated homosexual man but, in that era, it was scary for people to “come out” and he never did. His “persuasion” resulted in fun and interesting Dungeons & Dragons episodes and moments that he would instigate “for fun”. I suspect Frank was “experimenting” in the only “safe” place he had – with his friends in a fantasy setting.

Francisco worked with his mother to grow their home cleaning business and expanded to include a contract cleaning the California Coast from Santa Cruz to Half Moon Bay – all their port-a-potties.

Francisco would eventually become a medical supply and equipment sales representative at a company called MedCo. I never heard from him again...

Edward Struzenburg (AKA Snit) – D&D Buddy:

- 5) Edward Struzenburg (AKA Snit) – Edward was the perfect living stereotype of a nerd. He was scrawny, long nosed, squinty eyed, and wore glasses. He liked tight pants and polo shirts. He wore bright colored sneakers. Snit was a “Character” as they say or “an odd cat”. But he loved games with a passion, like no other! He lived for games!

Snit’s father collected weapons – LOTS OF WEAPONS. He had a “secret room” that Snit opened regularly for us (not so secret to us) that contained three walls stacked to the ceiling with mounted rifles, pistols, bows, crossbows, axes, sabers, swords, and medieval shields.

Snit’s father’s “secret room” was a fantasy treasure trove. I marveled at all the artifacts and was so thrilled to hold a real battle axe and crossbow. Snit said his father would freak if we touched his guns but otherwise, we could “safely explore”.

I doubt Snit’s father would have approved of any of our intrusion and fingering his collection. But it was AWESOME!

Snit would become an undercover police officer for the San Jose Police Department, specializing in Narcotics (the same division Troy’s father worked in as fate would play out). Tragically, Snit was murdered while undercover during a sting operation.

- 6) The Guests – throughout the years our core party of adventuring Players would invite friends and even girlfriends. It was great to have fresh ideas and people join the quests and campaign. Jeff struggled whenever we had female guests – he could not focus on the game since he focused so creepily on them; girls were not “repeat customers” as a result.

Dungeons & Dragons – Multi-Year Campaigns:

We played Dungeons & Dragons every weekend for four to six hours, one or two days a week. In preparation for our gaming sessions, I prepared detailed adventure narratives, character bios and statistic sheets, maps, and treasure adventure “modules” that interlocked into a larger “world adventure”.

I used a Naga hide leather mat to draw the map as the players might see it – doors, corridors, staircases, tables, chests, etc. I used miniature figurines that I hand painted of monsters and heroes to bring the experience to life and let players visualize where they were in relation to the fictional reality.

My “world adventure” comprised a multitude of story adventure “modules” spanning a massive “realm map”, and it took nearly seven years to complete it.

Of course, no one ever “completes” an adventure. They merely have a resting point before their next adventure!

As an aside - The adventure “modules” that I used for my computer games *The Tower of Myraglen* and *Prophecy: The Fall of Trinadon* were snapshots from my larger “world adventure” series of modules that were all built atop one another.

“War Ball” or “Squirt Gun Wars” or “Pillow Bash” – Beachside Play Warfare:

In between Dungeons & Dragons sessions we would go to the Foster City canals or to Santa Cruz, Capitola, or Davenport beaches and beach cliffs and play a game we coined “War Ball”. Well, we also called it “Pillow Bash” and “Squirt Gun Wars” (the latter being the most uncreative but obvious). We even played in Foster City’s canals.

We would put a small couch pillow inside a long pillowcase to act as a medieval flail for close melee combat. We would use battery-powered toy Uzi water squirt guns for range and surprise attacks. And we would use tennis balls as “lives” like a video game, where each person would start with three “tennis ball lives”.

When someone was hit with a pillow flail or shot with a squirt gun, they would hand over a tennis ball to the victor. We played on the honor system, and it worked well for us.

There was no danger in the game - outside of the occasional wild ill-conceived idea of climbing on a beach cliff that should the person slip would certainly break bones and go to the hospital (if they did not die). Sometimes people took the game too seriously.

It was great fun!

“War Ball” and the Police:

While I argued there was no danger to “War Ball”, there was danger from people seeing us and reacting to us.

One Sunday, we rode up in our two cars – a white unmarked van and a Supercharged Metallic Orange-Red Toyota T-Top MR2. The van door slid open and out jump a handful of young men armed with Uzi submachine guns.

The MR2 parks next the van and out step two men with Uzis and pillowcases full of some bulky things.

Yea, it might look like some paramilitary nut jobs or terrorists just rolled in and were going to shoot up the place or do something not normal if not extremely dangerous and illegal.

They did not know we had pillows inside our pillowcases or the UZIs were toy squirt guns. They did not know we were just playing a game on public beach land, just not right on the beach.

Inevitably, the police showed up. We had no idea, of course, as we were busy and deeply engrossed in our “War Ball” game.

The police called to us in a megaphone to drop our weapons and come to them slowly and visibly.

We all complied without hesitation. We were shocked there were police at all. Thankfully, they did not threaten us or use any weapons. Candidly, it would have made sense if they had given, they thought we might be armed with semi-automatic weapons.

We were lucky that day with only receiving a scolding and reprimand from the police and decided to not play “War Ball” again. It “was too dangerous” after all.

Dungeons & Dragons – Friends Drifted Away:

Like most people in life as they reach adulthood, my childhood and young adult friendships dissolved as they forged new “lighter” friendships with work colleagues and neighbors.

I kept in touch long enough to see each of our Adventurers find their “place in life” and set course for their eventual sunset.

Life brings friends. Life takes friends away. Some leave for relationships. Some leave for work. Some die. Most leave in the end to pursue their lives. It is normal and reasonable.

In the end, friends leave us all. Mine moved on without me. And so I moved on without them.

E188 YOUNG ADULT PESTICIDES AND COUGH AS YOUNG ADULT



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E188 Young Adult and Pesticide Induced Coughs.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55qz34-e188-young-adult-and-pesticide-induced-coughs.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/5YLBdTB2WcQ>

Description:

Richard laments his zealous use of pesticides, as they may have altered him for the rest of his life.

Pesticides in Morgan Hill:

The first house I ever owned myself was in Morgan Hill, CA. It was a small corner house in a suburban cul-de-sac nestled just north of farm and ranch country San Martin. There were hold-out farms and ranches still in Morgan Hill, but they were rapidly being replaced with single family tract house developments or mini malls.

It was a nice place to buy a house – low population, new shopping, and service centers, near high tech well-paying jobs, but still far enough away to feel safe and private. Morgan Hill was a nice place to live while working at Atari Games in Milpitas, CA.

There were pests like any house has. Because Morgan Hill previously was heavily farm and ranch laden there were still farm animals and the like in the area even if they were becoming fewer and fewer over the years.

My house was no exception. There were spiders, beetles, and all sorts of creepy crawlies. I decided to take matters into my own hands and went to Orchard Supply Hardware, the local Do-It-Yourself (DIY) store. They recommended the strongest pesticide of course, something that contained Dioxin and Diazinon.

The pesticide was mixed real-time with a “feeder” attached to the garden hose you it was easily mixed and spread with minimal contact with the sprayer. I figured it made sense to crank the “mixer dial” to ensure maximum pesticide was delivered quickly so I would not need to do multiple passes.

Did I read the instructions? Yes, I did read the instructions. Did they indicate the appropriate amount of pesticide to use? Yes, they did. Did I follow the instructions and use only the amount specified? No, I did not.

I cranked the mixer dial to “11”. In other words, I maxed it out.

Happily, I walked about the backyard, side of the house, and the front yard with my maxed-out sprayer. Spritz! Spray! Blast! All good times... I coated the rose bushes, lawn edges, flower beds, and the vents to the under-house crawl space.

I did not wear any eye, nose, or mouth covering. I did not wear gloves. In hindsight, I did not use any protection at all - while using highly toxic chemicals. I was not too bright - in that moment. I was stupid.

The next morning, I came out to see the results of spraying work and decide if I needed to do another pass. I did not need to another pass.

Overnight the roses turned brown and died. The grass edging turned brown and died. Any foliage near either was brown and dead. There was an eerie “wreath” of dead spiders around each under-house vent, as if the spiders desperately crawled toward fresh air but died just outside the meshed cover.

A large blue jay bird laid dead at the base of a rose bush. I wondered if it died coincidentally right then where I sprayed, or if it died eating a poisoned bug, or if it died eating the poison directly. No matter the reason it was utterly dismaying how powerful the pesticide was.

The Cough Emerges:

The pesticide leveled so much carnage! All overnight!

A few months later I began developing mysterious cough. It was so severe that I would cough upwards of five to ten times a minute. That is like a non-stop train of clearing your throat and coughing.

In my early twenties Doctors suggested my cough may be the result of exposure to the pesticides I had used. Or maybe it was something else. It did not matter what the cause was ultimately - there was no cure.

My now ex-wife would tell me that “if I was diagnosed terminally ill, she could tolerate my cough until I died but no way she would live a life listening to it forever more.” Wow, if I was destined to die, I was worth being with; otherwise, just go and die by yourself. I did not feel much support there.

Later I would observe my ex-wife had a lot of long lunches with her boss at work. We would eventually divorce, and she would marry that boss (that is yet another tale).

Much later in life, doctors would surmise that the pesticides may have stored themselves in my fat tissues which were released in my mid-forties when I lost a lot of weight. Those pesticides were hypothesized to have caused nerve and brain damage.

Of course, I could have just had random fated brain damage. That is right, I have some kind of brain degeneration. They do not know what it is... And so, I struggle to work... The story begins...

E189 Police Targeted and Abused Me as Young Adult



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E189 Police Targeted and Abused Me as Young Adult.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55ul4b-e189-police-targeted-and-abused-me-as-young-adult.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/ZzAzUHd8dr8>

Description:

Richard shares his stories of numerous incidents where Police profiled and targeted him ...

Some of his ‘encounters’ may have been justified; however, many were not...

Listen to the range of Richard’s experiences and judge for yourself, if he was targeted or merely caught?

Pulled Over by Police in Foothills of San Jose:

I had been driving in the twilight in the foothills of San Jose, CA in my pearl orange (AKA shiny reflective red) Supercharged MR2 with its license plate “D Quest”. It was my first “real” new car that I bought upon signing my first game contract (more on that later).

Out of nowhere on a foothill descent the Christmas tree lights atop a police squad car lit up along with its siren blaring. Immediately following was a megaphone male voice demanding I pull over.

Of course, I pulled over.

I kept both hands on the steering wheel because I had learned from previous pullovers that not doing so can freak cops out and could end poorly for me.

The officer sauntered up to my window (which I had lowered in anticipation) and informed me I was speeding and swerving.

I was not speeding. I was not swerving. I was literally cruising the foothills for leisure.

Talking “Speaker Phone” Kitt Car:

What the officer did not know was - I had a car phone in my vehicle – it was on speaker phone.

I challenged the officer and said that I was not speeding and was not swerving and was just driving properly on the road.

He asserted that it was his word against mine, and he would win in traffic court.

I knew he was right. I knew that if I just showed up with his word against mine the traffic “commissioner” would certainly find me guilty (despite it being a lie and wrong!).

Well, I had a solution. I said, “Hey, Francisco, can you say ‘Hi’ to the officer.”

Francisco Carvallo was a friend of mine that lived nearby where I was driving. I was thinking of swinging by his place to see if he might join me on an evening drive. I was on speaker phone talking with Francisco when I was pulled over. He remained on the phone but did not speak.

As if my car was Michael Knight’s Kitt talking car - Francisco spoke from the center dash, “Hi officer. I heard everything. I recorded everything.” He did not need to say anything more.

The cop looked horrified. He could not know if there was a recording or not. But regardless Francisco was a witness, and I had a timestamped phone record. The officer knew he was in the wrong and I had evidence against his lies.

He told me to get the hell out of there. I drove off and that was the end of that.

Police Always Profiled and Targeted Me:

Police can be abusive for reasons I never understood.

Were they jealous of my age and owning nice cars? Was it my leather jacket and long hair of the era? Did I just look “bad” to them? Was it my license plates of “KRMA ENT” for Karma Entertainment or “D QUEST” for The Quest (misinterpreted as Drug Quest sadly by police)?

For reasons unknown to me I have been often profiled and targeted by police.

Long History of Speeding Tickets and Traffic Police Abuse and Fake Charges:

Yea – I had been pulled over for traffic stops a lot.

I had thirteen traffic tickets in one year which apparently requires a Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) Tribunal with Police and DMV Magistrates (who knew such existed!?) to host a DMV Court to judge your record to see if they should suspend your license or give you more ticket “points” before they suspend it.

It is hard to remember all the times I had been pulled over. Most of the times I was breaking the speed limit and so deserved the ticket. There were times, however, that were trumped up or exaggerated or tiny 5 MPH speed limit excess infractions in “speed traps” that all resulted in a traffic citation ticket.

I recall a time where I was surrounded by three squad cars for driving 55 MPH in a 35 MPH suburban street. Foster City PD took speeding SERIOUSLY!

And then there was another time where I stupidly got out of my car when pulled over around 2am on the Pacific Coast Highway. That ended poorly for me with two more backup police cars, cops with guns drawn, megaphone commands to put my hands on the trunk of my car, and a subsequent stern lecture about my stupidity and how I MUST sit still and place my hands on the steering wheel if I valued my life.

They were verbally condemning of me beyond writing me up trumped up charges with hefty fines for speeding, exhibition of speed, drive too fast for conditions, unsafe driving, and so on.

They should have just said “we do not like him fine”.

Police Pulled Gun Thinking I was a Drug Dealer:

I had a gun pulled on me once. I pulled up to a friend in a shady area of town and an undercover squad car pulled up with its siren slapped on its roof. Two plain-clothed cops came to either side of my car, guns drawn and badges hanging around their necks. The officer on my driver’s side tapped his pistol on my window and I lowered it.

It was a crazy situation. They demanded to search my car for drugs alleging that I was a drug dealer. I did not want them to search my car out of principle, which only made them think even more that I was a drug dealer hiding my stash in the car somewhere.

I finally let them search just to be done with everything. I felt abused and pressured but it was the only path to get out of there I thought.

Police Fabricate Traffic Citations:

Finding nothing – of course! – I heard the officers complaining that they could be in trouble for illegal search & seizure without finding anything.

The officer previously tapping on my window with his firearm came to me and informed me that I had made an illegal left turn running a red light and squealed my tires as I did so in the fog which endangered other drivers and pedestrians.

There were no other drivers. There were no pedestrians. There were parked cars along the street. There were streetlights. It was slightly foggy. None of the that mattered.

Traffic Court is Not About the Truth – not Civil or Criminal but IS Whimsy Court:

The TRUTH DID NOT MATTER!

I fought all those charges in traffic court but discovered traffic court is neither criminal nor civil court. As a rule - if a police officer says an opinion in traffic court, it is accepted as “fact” without question. An individual cannot win in traffic court unless the officer does not show up.

Police officers always showed up for my traffic court appearances.

Traffic Court was simply “whim of people” court.

I lost every single appearance in traffic court except one which may seem dubious.

I won the privilege to keep driving which meant I could get more citations and pay more money in fines.

Coincidence that is the only time traffic court awarded me a “win”?

Legitimate and Illegitimate Traffic Citations:

I have had a lot of traffic violations with police.

In the end –

I legitimately got half a dozen or so speeding tickets because I did not believe the 55 MPH was right; those speed limits are now 65 to 85 MPH (guess I was right!).

I wrongly was cited for all sorts of other things like Unsafe Left Turn, Exhibition of Speed, Driving in Unsafe Conditions (fog), etc.

Attorney Resolved DMV Court:

Collectively my legitimate speeding tickets and illegitimate traffic citations added up DMV Traffic Court tribunal.

I believed my indignant attitude would come across as hubris and disrespect (both might have been true then) which would hurt my case.

Therefore, I hired an attorney to handle DMV Court entirely – and without me involved at all. I did not want to deal with them.

Without anything but time the lawyer called me one day and said that the DMV has agreed that because I drove over 35,000 miles a year (which was mostly for leisure and “creative thinking”) that I fell into a “trucker” or “professional driver” category which is entitled to more traffic citations than ordinary drivers.

Traffic Laws Subverted into Revenue Centers by Politicians and Government:

The idea that people are allowed more citations if they drive more told me two things –

- 1) I would keep my license and “*Keep on Truckin*”
- 2) The law is not about dissuading people from breaking the law but limiting how much they can break it (and make money along the way in “restitution penance” from the violator)

Traffic laws were a scam!

Traffic laws were originally intended for safety, but they had been subverted into profit centers. They no longer sought to discourage speeding or minor violations but rather were setup to maximize profit.

Even the fines were payable with credit cards and the amounts just at the average income sweet spot that is narrowly affordable but can be paid.

The rationale –

if fines hurt financially people will stop speeding and breaking traffic laws.

The truth –

the fines are not enough to discourage traffic law violators, and
cities want citation revenue and so do not benefit from discouraging violators,

police are directed to cite traffic violations to satisfy target quotas which are designed to drive a baseline of revenue for the city.

The whole thing was and is a scam perpetrated on citizens by the officials they elected.

The DMV Court and Traffic Citation Revenue scams are only examples of a deeply rooted systemic revenue-driven government and social “services”.

E190 ROOFIED and DUI BS BULLSHIT



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E190 Roofied Rohypnol DUI BS BULL.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55ul78-e190-roofied-rohypnol-dui-bs-bull.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

https://youtu.be/FreOrYw8_XY

Description:

Richard recounts the dismal tale of when he was roofied and effectively framed as driving under the influence (DUI).

He notes how he witnessed how unfair it was that personal success and wealth translated into greater fines and punishments.

He concludes the legal system has been subverted into a profit center vs a justice system.

He finishes his rant with a tale of witnessing police murder and cover-up in front of his home in San Jose.

Driving Under the Influence – Bullshit:

When I was in Southern California working for Interplay on *Star Trek: New Worlds* and my divorce was aging, I had decided to go out and socialize with colleagues on some evenings and weekends.

It became rote for me - I would go out sometimes alone.

One fateful night I found myself being pulled out of my car by a police officer. The front of my car was crunched into the radiator, and its fluid was all over. The hood was folded like an accordion. And I could barely see it all – it was blurry and fuzzy.

I had no idea how I got there.

The police asked me to take streetside tests for being under the influence. I was apparently, extremely under the influence.

Court Criminal Justice is a Farce:

Having hired an attorney and gone through the court system I learned that it is set up against justice. Court criminal justice is a farce.

The judge directed that I could go to court and face a jury trial for driving drunk and crashing my car (no one knew where I crashed as apparently, I drove the crushed car some miles from the mysterious locale) or plea bargain probation and agree to do 11 weekends of community service and some weekend jail time to make sure I learned my lesson.

I DID NOT DRIVE DRUNK! In fact, I WALKED TO THE BAR!

It was beyond wrong and evil to demand I accept a guilty plea when I was 100% innocent – just to avoid risk of further unjust judgment and punishment.

I was outraged! But I was trapped!

Chemical Mugging:

Blood tests would ultimately prove along with doctor testimony that I suffered a “chemical mugging” by someone putting rohypnol (AKA Roofie) in my drink when I was not looking. Rohypnol makes a person appear extremely inebriated, reduces the inhibitions to virtual nothing, and eliminates all short-to-midterm memory retention.

Rohypnol (AKA Roofie) is the “date rape” drug. It also became a common tool to mug people in bars and clubs. Evil people “roofie” someone and escort them outside, whereupon they take their money and whatever they want. They leave the person to wander or do whatever lost to oblivion.

They did that to me. I was roofied. I was left to wander lost to oblivion.

Apparently, I wandered home and got my keys and drove my car and crashed.

Truth and Evidence Does Not Matter:

Nothing I said or proved mattered. The court judge did not care to hear the evidence. He was intent on clearing his docket of cases expediently and details took time which delayed his finishing the day’s and week’s case load.

Even with a lawyer the “legal system” is rigged.

If you can spend unlimited money appealing and fighting the court knows that and dismisses all but the most serious and heinous of crimes by the rich and powerful.

If you cannot spend a lot of money fighting charges against you, you either risk huge sentencing if found guilty (which is random based on the jury composition) or accept a plea bargain.

Poor Given Shorter Sentences and Smaller Fines than Wealthy:

And if you are convicted of a crime, the sentence is based on “ability to pay” and time in jail if you cannot pay is based on the “amount fined”. That translates to poor people get lighter sentences and lower fines than rich people.

So, there it is – poor income people get slaps on the wrist while rich people get the book thrown at them.

Court System is a Racquet concealed behind the Veil of “Rule of Law”:

What I wonder justifies shorter sentences and smaller fines for poor people than wealthy people?

It makes complete sense when you consider it costs the government money to incarcerate people and statistically lower income people commit more crimes and re-offend.

Wealthy people commit fewer crimes (or pay their way of them) and so when they are charged with a crime, they can afford to pay a lot of money, and if they choose not to pay the money then they will serve a long sentence in jail (thereby encouraging them to pay the bigger fine after all).

The court system is a huge government racquet concealed behind the veil of “the rule of law”.

Taking the Bargain – Children and Personal Risks Too Great to Fight:

Back to my choices –

- 1) Go to court and potentially face life of ruin, or
- 2) Take a plea bargain and lie saying I was guilty of drunk driving.

I was a victim of a mugging! And I was being punished for it!

Perhaps the worst thing on top of the injustice of it was that if I chose to fight for justice and righteousness as I had always done there was a chance that I would lose, and my children would no longer see me nor receive child support while I was incarcerated.

It was all wrong! But I had only one real choice – take the plea bargain.

I concluded definitively - Life and the legal system are wrong and corrupt!

“Sheeple” Let Politicians and Government Abuse Everyone by Not Standing Up:

Over time I grew to harbor disdain for the “sheeple” in the world.

People are “sheeple” when they claim to believe in things but do not stand up for them when they encounter resistance or when they roll over in the face of the slightest conflict.

Yea, I have resentment against pathetic cash grabs that violate people’s rights or the original intent of the laws or services.

Lived in South San Jose in Complex of Duplexes:

During my *Escape from Hell* freelance game development, I lived in a large South San Jose, California rental in a complex of duplexes. Heh – that sounded funny: ‘a complex of duplexes.’

My unit faced the main street which connected San Jose with Morgan Hill and eventually San Martin. Across the street was a stereotypical 1980’s-90’s suburbia shopping center with massive parking lot, supermarket, and a few fast-food joints like Taco Bell.

The street was moderately busy for being otherwise somewhat remote because of its inter-city connections.

“Worktable Square” and “Game God Throne”, Outpacing Eight Computers:

Inside my duplex unit, I had setup a “worktable square” where four rectangular folding tables stood end-to-edge forming a square with one corner offset enough to create a “doorway” to allow entry to the “heart” center of the “worktable square” where my swivel chair as my “Game God Throne”.

Each table held one to computers – each with its own monitor display and keyboard, and mouse in most cases (some computers did not have mice).

I rotated between each computer as I finished a ‘process’ intensive operation that would utilize the computer for five to thirty minutes. By having a series of computers surrounding me I could always be working and not wait on computers finishing tasks.

I rotated my chair to face one computer and then the next as I finished chunks of work on each, like writing or debugging code or editing an asset like graphics or sound or music or a game level or script.

And before rotating to the next computer I started the relevant process(es) on the computer like compiling and linking the game or a tool from source code into a native computer executable program. Or converting graphics or audio assets or game level data or scripts into game runtime formatted data.

Each computer would take as much as five or even thirty minutes to complete their ‘process’. By the time I had spun my circle a full 360 degrees the “starting computer in the table work square” ideally finished and ready for me to test the results of its process(es) and begin a new round of work on it. And when done – I would rotate once more to the next computer around my worktable square.

I found my worktable square arrangement to greatly accelerate my overall performance by being “up” most of the time to be productive. Visitors would be dismay at my computer setup and could not fathom how a single person could outpace one computer much less eight computers!

Whenever people find themselves limited by their physical reality and space, I strongly encourage them to be open to the absurd. I offer my eight-computer worktable square as an example - who would conceive surrounding themselves with tables packed with computers in their living room turned home office, so they do not have to wait on machines?

I suppose “thinking outside the box” resulted in the “worktable square” which was like being back in a box of folding tables stacked with computers.

Slow Computers Drove “Bad Practices”:

As an aside – compiling and linking games became so slow and cumbersome that engineers resorted to in-line #include’ing all header and source files like one gigantic single source file with massive declaration headers as necessary to glue the morass together.

It was abysmal and appalling that slow computer speeds drove engineers to “bad practices” just so they could make progress.

Old vs New Computer Power:

As an aside – it is interesting to think about how much faster and more storage computers are today in comparison to computers when I first began using them.

When I first began programming computers in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, they had –

1. 8-bit central processing unit (CPU) microprocessor running at 1 Megahertz (one million computer clock crystal ticks per second) with a few CPU registers which contained numbers and flags to perform math operations quickly by the processor.

It is worth noting that Radio Shack’s computer brand Tandy and IBM’s PC XT raised the baseline computer performance by four to eight times in the early 1980’s.

2. 48Kbytes expandable to 64Kbytes, and 256bytes for ‘zero/direct page’ fast memory access.
3. Cassette tapes were used to store computer programs, which was a huge advancement from punch cards containing programming code operators and operands.
 - a. There were no floppy or hard disc drives then. They had not been invented!
 - b. There was no Internet or even Local Area Networking then.
 - c. Computers were blossoming in the era but had not yet dominated the world.

New computers in 2021 have vast range in power but a typical ‘unimpressive’ desktop or even laptop computer is –

1. 64-bit central processing unit (CPU) microprocessor with 4-8 CORES (which means there are 4-8 separate ‘microprocessors’ built into the one ‘big processor’ CPU – all running between 2.5 – 5 Gigahertz (one billion computer clock crystal ticks per second). Let’s suggest 6 2.5Ghz CORES as an average, which translates to effectively 120 GHz total processing power across all CORES were it 8-bit single core like computers of old.

Contrasting 1 Megahertz with effectively 120 Gigahertz translates to –

OLD computers: 1,000,000 Clock Cycles Per Second

NEW computers: 120,000,000,000 Clock Cycles Per Second

THEREFORE: NEW PCs are 120,000 times faster than PCs of old

2. And modern computers have floating point coprocessors for complex math, and many have Physics Engines built into the graphics processing unit (GPU).
3. Much more memory: 32-64 Gigabytes of memory is common. We’ll consider 32GBytes typical.

OLD computers: 48Kbytes Memory/RAM

NEW computers: 32Gigabytes Memory/RAM

THEREFORE: NEW PCs have 21,333,333 Times More RAM vs PCs of old

4. Computers have either hard discs or solid-state drives (SSDs) with storage in the Gigabytes (Billions of data bytes) and even Terabytes (Trillions of bytes).

There is simply no comparison of modern storage with cassette tape storage. Comparisons would be incomprehensible.

Comparing 2021 computers with late '70s to early '80s era computers –

1. New computers are on average 48X larger registers and memory addressing range
2. New computer CPUs are 120,000 Times Faster than computers when I first began programming. They are even faster when they utilize floating point processors and GPU physics engines. And faster yet when considering Direct Memory Access (DMA) mass memory block moves or read-ahead pipeline instruction fetch and pre-processing. Conclusion – New computers may approach 2 Trillion times the speed of the early personal computers like the Apple II.
3. New computers have about 21,333,333 more active memory for data in active random-access memory (RAM) which is where programs and its data are stored when being executed.
4. And hard disc and SSD storage is likewise Trillions of times more data than could be stored on a cassette tape. As an aside – it could take minutes to load a program from tape, and they often corrupted and would lose all data contained on it. BACKUPS were critical.

In the end – modern computers are trillions of times more powerful than computers when I started out as a kid.

And yet the core concepts of how they work remain the same.

Invest in Hardware and Software and Tools – They Pay for Themselves:

Ever since my early days of development I have strongly espoused that spending money on fast reliable equipment and software will pay for itself, whereas limiting yourself to save a few dollars will cost more in lost productivity than if you spent the cash on enough tools to maximize your productivity ability.

Bottom-line: Invest in Hardware and Software and Tools – they pay for themselves.

Game Master's Citadel:

While living in the Duplex I decided to buy a high-end hi-fi stereo and turntable with around 750 Watts per Channel of power. A friend of mine told me of a wholesale outlet called Costco that had opened in San Jose, and it had a wildly powerful stereo and turntable and amplifier as one “assemble-able” system in a wood and glass cabinet with component racks to house the gear and hide the inter-connecting cabling.

The Hi Fi Stereo and Turntable and Dual Cassette Tape Player/Recorder with 750 Watt Amp was SWEET!

But I was not allowed to buy it from Costco! Apparently, you had to be a member, and only business owners could become members.

Yea – in the era individuals could not just sign up like you can now. I was told Costco obtained special deals as a wholesaler and was not supposed to sell to the general public as that compromised normal retail channels. And here we are today – Costco lets anyone join and buy their merchandise.

What did I do to buy my uber stereo system? Undaunted and relentless – I would find a way to obtain my metaphorical “childhood hammer”!

I went out and created a fictitious business name (FBN) called “Game Master’s Citadel” (GMC), which is obviously NOT General Motors Company (GMC). I advertised the business formation in local papers as required to legitimize the operation.

And with Fictitious Business Name filed and registered with the city and county, I returned to Costco and obtained a Business Owner Membership with them. And I was able to obtain my “Hammer” – I bought my High-Fidelity Stereo and Turntable and Dual Cassette Player/Recorder with 750 Amp and speakers.

In summary –

- 1) Undaunted and relentless I pursued my “hammer” (the stereo).
- 2) “Game Masters Citadel” (GMC) legally formed just so I could join Costco.
- 3) Obtained a Costco Business Membership with legal business ownership.
- 4) Purchased the “hammer” (the stereo) – Quest Completed!

Witnessed Violent ‘Police Action’ while Playing Dungeons & Dragons:

While I was living in my duplex unit South San Jose, friends and I were playing Dungeons & Dragons on a weekend as we often did.

We heard distance police sirens getting louder as they came nearer to us. Sirens were not too uncommon, so we shrugged it off as a traffic stop or maybe an accident somewhere nearby. But more sirens joined the first sirens – near and far sirens blended to blare a cacophonous eerie screeching moan.

The sound was obnoxiously piercing our ears and we had to rise from our sedentary gaming session to see what was going on outside. Squad car after squad car flew by on the main street outside my doorway. They had sped by and away until we could barely hear them.

Believing the “excitement” was over we returned to our gaming seats and table.

But the sirens came back with their blended screams. They drew ever closer once more. And once more we rose and went to see what was happening outside.

Morgan Hill 4x4 trailblazer police interceptors had joined the pursuit along with San Jose police. They were chasing a beige mid-sized sedan – I think it may have been a Toyota Corolla, but it was a long time ago, so I do not remember for sure.

A 4x4 trailblazer turned in front of the fleeing sedan as fellow cars and blazers screeched and halted around the apparent criminal. The sedan spashed into the blazer’s side and the criminal driver flew into the windshield. We saw the whole thing!

The man was dazed, and police opened the door and threw him out and onto the ground. Officers drew guns and trained them on the man’s seemingly unconscious or at least incapacitated crumpled body on the street.

And the police drew billy clubs and pounded him and kicked him and kept kicking and bashing and pounding. The man never moved when they threw him on the ground. And he certainly did not move after he was abusively beaten as he laid their defenseless.

Thirty minutes or so later the man was placed in body bag head covered and loaded into an ambulance. The police spent the few hours collecting information and evidence and cleared out gradually one after another.

Police Action Cover-Up:

We had no idea or insight on who the criminal was or what he had done to motivate him to flee the police and keep running after so many vehicles and officers were in pursuit. ‘Inquisitive minds wanted to know’ as the saying went in the era.

The next day I called the police department to learn what happened because we only knew what we witnessed.

To my surprise they told me that nothing happened there yesterday or any time in recent months. They insisted that I was confused and should just forget about it.

It was WEIRD! The entire Dungeons & Dragons group and I SAW IT ALL! It HAPPENED!!!

We had no idea what we could do about being lied to by the police. We mused that we could call Internal Affairs or FBI or State Police or someone to report dishonest and maybe criminal or even murderous police. Newspapers?

Of course – I had never had good experience with police personally and so the idea of my escalating to Internal Affairs or FBI to expose police malfeasance seemed potentially risky. I could end up getting undesirable “bad police” attention despite my good intentions.

We decided to “let it go” as the policewoman on my phone call query advised – despite how hard it is for me to “let go” of anything.

The next week we found an article in the local Mercury Newspaper that detailed a drug dealer that had been exposed in a sting operation but managed to escape in a beige sedan with officers in pursuit. The paper outlined the drug dealer’s route from Morgan Hill to South San Jose and back toward Morgan Hill as he fled police.

The newspaper noted the drug dealer was intercepted by a heroic Morgan Hill officer driving a Ford Bronco Police Trailblazer who turned his car head-on into the criminal’s car. It said he died on impact striking the windshield. And police secured weapons and narcotics from his vehicle and his home. The end.

Well – that was not how it happened. It was possible the man had died hitting his windshield, but if had not died they made sure he died with the baton bashing of and kicking him.

We witnessed the truth plain as day –

The police chased a would-be drug dealer and caused him to die whether it was from crashing into his car or beating him to death, and he never had a jury or judge – just executioners.

There was no justice or fair that day, or maybe there was? ...we will never know. But for sure – the truth was buried.

E191 PBI SOFTWARE AND THE MOB



Local File:

[.\LibertyBooksVideos\E191 PBI Software and The Mob.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55ul7o-e191-pbi-software-and-the-mob.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/qFZCKWLRbxE>

Description:

Richard sets the stage of coming in contact and beginning to work for The Mob – even if he did not know it at the time.

He shares the story of how he published his first game The Tower of Myraglen, which made a name for himself, so that his video game development career was started.

Of course – he also shares how it was the Mob that published that first game – that put him on the map.

Richard recognizes the Mob helped him start his career...

First Contract

Earn More Money Vs Spending Less – Good Things Come to Hard Workers:

My mother told me ever since I was little, “Money is power. Power is Freedom.” It was simple but stuck with me.

I was envious of people with money – nice and NEW clothes, pretty NEW fast cars, nice big houses, and fancy vacations and trips. We were poor. We had a computer though (and that was very uncommon) because my parents took a loan out in hopes to become computer programmers and elevate themselves to a better place of income and professional respect.

My mother assured me that I could own a huge mansion and a fancy car if I worked hard and focused and remained righteous. “Good things would come to me if I did those things”, she promised me.

Always Striving to Earn Money:

I decided early that it was more important to earn more money than scrape by with less. My entire childhood was spent earning money anywhere I could.

Bags and bags of walnuts! I collected walnuts from the Walnut Orchard behind my parent’s house in San Martin and sell them to my parents or neighbors for fifty cents a grocery paper bag filled to the brim.

Filling flats of strawberries for a nearby Japanese couple owned farm was another thing I did to earn money.

I worked alongside the illegal undocumented aliens. Rarely someone would drive by and scream “Immigration” out of spite or just being mean. Many workers would flee upon hearing the exclamation. It was cruel. But I just kept picking my strawberries to make money.

In addition to my numerous failed adventure module story and computer game publishing attempts, I did a lot to earn money.

I worked chores and odds & ends to earn money at home. I had worked in fast food at Burger King after being rejected by Taco Bell in an interview. I worked for Klure & Associates and Unicorn Electronics assembling electronic boards. I had a summer programming job at Tandem Computers.

PBI Software Contracts:

At 17 I got my first contract with PBI Software while I was still in High School and published the game *The Tower of Myraglen* right after I turned 18 years old.

I was well along the way to finishing my first game, *The Tower of Myraglen*. I had no idea where I could get published and I had such bad experiences failing with rejection after rejection. I saw the address of a Electronic Arts (EA) in a computer game magazine advertisement and it was within an hour and half drive from me.

Once again, Jeff Lefferts and I, journeyed far away in hopes of opportunity. We could not find EA. The address was not on the map we had. There was no GPS or navigation app. It was all paper maps or get lost. We headed to a gas station to get a newer map and saw PBI Software down the street from the station. I had seen PBI Software’s name in computer magazines too, so without finding EA we went to PBI Software as Fate ordained.

Inside the receptionist was confused, wondering why these two high school kids were here asking to talk to someone about publishing a game. No appointment. Nothing. What hubris that we could show up and be heard.

We were being told to leave when an Asian man walked in and asked what's going on, and then said "why not check it out? You got a disc, right? Let's do this."

The Tower of Myraglen – the beginning:

My game's early version was a demo of my idea and first level of gameplay... The Tower of Myraglen loaded up and he said right off, "Let's publish this. Come to my office." He printed and gave us a contract right there within hours to go home and make another demo using his direction and supporting MDIDEas memory and stereo sound cards. If could do that, he would publish my game plus the signing bonus was mine regardless. It was a dream come true. We signed practically not reading the contract...I skimmed it, but excitement was too great to worry.

The plot and design of *Tower* was based on my second Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) adventure module (that was rejected for publication by TSR Hobbies). I had even printed 200 copies of my modules myself and tried to sell them at a Fantasy Gaming convention hosted in San Mateo, CA Dunfey Hotel.

Cousin Sharon's Cult Adopts Myraglen as Spiritual North Star (as a religious tool):

I gave a copy of *The Tower of Myraglen* to any relative remotely interested in it. My cousin Sharon, who was in an Oregonian Cult, shared the copy mailed to her with her cult leader.

The cult leader was inspired by *Myraglen* and declared it was God communicating through me to get to him so he might interpret it and spread its meaning.

Crazy, eh?

Well, my life can seem crazy at times.

Myraglen and its expressed philosophy of good struggling over evil was the core tenant the leader focused on – obvious and easy I would say.

The cultist then focused on the "rooms" and "levels" and "progression of insanity" of the Arch Wizard Mendalick.

I could see how a religious leader could use the many story elements of *The Tower* to spin his own messages with compelling "outside validation" to his followers. It was just another "religious" tool to manipulate people.

Stories Remembered Long After the Facts are Forgotten):

"Stories are Remembered Long After the Facts Are Forgotten," was a hallmark of *The Tower of Myraglen*.

The idea was simple – do not focus on the specifics or details of history but focus on the spirit of the story and what should be learned from it.

Mirror Glen's Pools Reflect Only Truth:

The eventual site where the Tower would be built was up on a hill above a glistening reflective pool that radiated a fog-life aura of light wafting above its waters.

The pool reflected back not what cast its image into but the truth of that thing or person.

People's faces would appear deformed and twisted the more wickedness they bore within their hearts or had inflicted in their past (there was no escaping one's vile past in the glen's mirror pool of truth).

People's faces would emit glowing auras of yellow-to-white hued light the more "good" and truthful they were and had been in their lives.

Rusted decrepit objects showed images of their glory "new" days and shimmer what they could be again with restoration.

The Mirror Glen was a secret kept by the local village.

Myraglen's Arch Wizard (my grandfather):

The Arch Wizard Mendalick of *The Tower of Myraglen* was modeled after my grandfather.

I digitized images of him dressed up in robe, cowl and wizard's hat, staff, and sporting a huge medallion.

Many of the wizard's philosophies were those of my own which often were extensions of my grandfather's.

Myraglen's narrative ultimately seeks to show how good intentions are subverted so "the innocent inflict evil" and "the good become corrupted and lost through trickery to do bad."

The Medallion of Soul Stealing – Weapon of Mass Destruction:

The Arch Wizard Mendalick had created a weapon so powerful that it could extinguish the souls of armies at sight. It was like a nuclear weapon.

He imbued the horrific power in a necklace piece that he would call the "Medallion of Soul Stealing". The medallion ripped the life force out of its victims and locked it away in suspension eternally within its imprisoning facets for all eternity.

No Heaven. No Hell. No Limbo. Nothingness. Forever. That is what the wizard did to those that opposed him and his views.

The wizard believed he was "good" but realized he was potentially the most "evil" of anyone he could conceive. He contemplated all he had done in the name of good but saw how it backfired.

The Tower was Built to Protect Weapon of Mass Destruction:

Of all the Arch Wizard's magic powers he could not prevent his aging and eventual death from it. He had to find a place to store his – nuclear weapon – the lethal Medallion of Soul Stealing.

Mendalick had learned of the Mirror Glen through scrying across the world to find where he could store the Medallion for the rest of eternity after he died himself of mortal's old age.

As he visited the Mirror Glen for the first time, he saw his wicked nightmarish disfigured face and form as he stared into the Mirror Glen's reflections of reality. He saw what he had become.

His fears that his actions were wicked were confirmed.

The wizard had to build a mighty structure to entomb the Medallion of Soul Stealing.

The Tower is full of psychological conflicts as each level of the tower represents the spiritual and emotional degeneration of the Wizard until he is all but wicked and evil.

In that apex moment the player must spare or kill the specter of the Wizard and deliver the Medallion to the world once more or leave it entombed.

If the player takes the medallion, it is stolen from the player and used to wreak havoc on the world. If the player leaves it behind, the world devolves into chaos and warfare as it has always been fated to do.

The Tower of Myraglen hardcopy found in Australia over 30 years later

Funny thing, although I sold only a few hundred total copies of my original paper-based D&D module Tower of Myraglen - over thirty years later a man in Australia contacted me asking if I had a copy of it and could validate its authenticity. It was a real original copy of my adventure module that had been saved for over three decades. That was cool!

I finished the game *Tower of Myraglen*, graduated from High School, and continued to make games for the publisher, PBI Software, for several years. It was the real beginning of my video game career.

From Tower to PBI Software:

PBI Software had a sister hardware company, MD Ideas. Both were under an umbrella company, ITAT which was based in China (or so we were told).

Jeff Lefferts, a friend of mine that also drew the art for my games, joined me after graduation to move to Foster City and work for PBI Software full-time, forgoing college for the near term. That idea worked for a year, but we got bored and went to San Jose State while still making games; I paid my way and lived in the penthouse Colonnade across the street from the university main campus. We had a great relationship with PBI Software.

E192 Working in Foster City for the Mob



**Working in Foster City
for The Mob**

Local File:

[.\LibertyBooksVideos\E192 Working in Foster City for the Mob.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55uljq-e192-working-in-foster-city-for-the-mob.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/NW7w2FbMbas>

Description:

Richard has bad experiences while working for the Chinese Mob in Foster City.

If he wants freedom, he must find a way to ‘safely resign the Mob’...

Shared Paid-For Condo in Foster City:

PBI Software provided a - paid-for condo - for my friend & colleague, Jeff Lefferts, and I - to stay in while we worked for the company. In retrospect, I suppose it was under-the-table as we were not taxed on the money that was paid against the lease. Of course, the lease was not in our names so it must have been “proper”.

Bored in Foster City:

Late one evening Jeff and I were bored. We could not sleep. We had nothing to do. We decided to go into PBI Software and work into the wee hours.

After all, we had been given the security codes to access the building and work any time we wanted.

Two-Alarm System:

We arrived and entered the security code. The door unlocked and we went inside. The door beeped for the secondary code.

We always thought it was weird that there were effectively two alarms – the first outside obvious security panel and the second inside security panel, both of which had security codes.

Later I would learn the secondary security code was intended to stop “dumb burglars” that were smart enough to get through the first door but not realize there was another internal alarm system.

Bad Alarm Code:

Well, the alarm code on the inside door did not work. The light blinked red.

I entered the code again.

RED!

Again!

RED!

Oh My God!!! The Alarm BLINKED RED CONTINUOUSLY! IT WAS COUNTING DOWN!

The alarm code was not working!

2am Fiasco with Armed Police:

A siren blared - so loud Jeff and I could not hear anything. Not a word. Nothing. It was deafening. Louder than a jet engine! It was insanely loud!

We were paralyzed in fear. What should we do!?

That question did not need answering it turned out.

Police car after police rolled into the parking lot. Officers jumped out and had rifles and pistols. It was right out of a TV show!

Foster City PD took potential break-ins as a life & death incident.

They took things way too DEADLY seriously!

Their megaphones barely audible over the alarm siren commanded us to come out hands up where they are visible.

Jeff and I were so scared. I swear if I had to go to the bathroom, I would have done right there in my pants.

We walked out as commanded, hands held high and visible. The officers walked up and clearly saw we were dumb “kids” that did not resemble thugs. They asked for details which we explained, and they called the building contact PBI President William Low.

William Low explained they had changed one of the codes but forgot to inform us (Thanks William!) and so it was all a misunderstanding.

Apparently, Foster City billed PBI Software for the self-imposed Emergency Call.

Saving the Admin from Locking Herself out of Her Car:

In a random afternoon, the front desk admin could be heard frazzled complaining that she had locked her keys in her car accidentally - and it would cost one hundred fifty dollars to get a locksmith to come out and unlock it for her. It was a lot of money! For a simple mistake!

William Low heard her plight and dashed out, “Wait! I can open it. Is it that car there? You drive the Corolla, right?”

The admin nodded, and William was off to her car right away. As he walked towards it he pulled a pen from his pocket and snapped its lapel clip off. He inserted the clip into the lock as if it was a key and after a few subtle shifts of his hand and fingers the door lock popped up and he opened the door.

William Low was a locksmith magician! We were stunned with how easily he made it look, and with an everyday ballpoint pen lapel clip! William was amazing.

PBI and The Thong:

One-night things were not as expected. Jeff and I often worked into the wee hours of the night as well as weekends. A shadowy figure in a trench coat and fedora hat showed up in a BMW around midnight. We wondered if the President, who was there unusually late for him, had planned such a late meeting with this guy. He went into the president’s office and left an hour later.

William Low, the founder and president of both PBI Software and MD Ideas and Director for ITAT in China, told us he was a Chinese ITAT visitor and due to time zones, it made sense to just meet at midnight. We surmised that made sense and resumed our normal work, minding our own business.

A week or so later - PBI Software’s CFO saw me looking for something in a filing cabinet and became rather upset. I don’t recall why I was looking for something in the cabinet, but it was in a hallway alcove...near stationary supply cabinets. He told me to never look in any cabinet, room, box, anything without express permission from himself or William Low. It was crazy and, in my hubris, I said “nope” and walked off.

But the CFO followed me – anyway. I guess – he changed his mind. He dragged me to his office and explained firmly. “Listen to me, Richard. William Low is Thong. ITAT, is *It Takes A Thief*. PBI Software is *Pirates Bay International*. MD Ideas is *More Damn Initials*. He stressed William Low is a mobster and these names are his conceit. He is above

everyone he thinks and dangles in front of them his truth that they cannot see. The CFO said that I should speak with the head of hardware engineering.

And so, I did meet with the engineering lead that proudly said he was “head of hardware engineering” for MD Ideas. Well, there was no more senior hardware person and yet very hardware people at all, so I guess the title was justified. Just felt like hubris and bravado to me.

What did he say? He first said working for William Low is great. You can have anything you want - cocaine, weed, girls, anything...just ask. He said you get good cash and all expenses paid. He was right, I lived rent free in a company-paid condo and had enough cash to do most whatever I could think of. And if I could just ask for anything else, it sounded too good to be true.

Escaping PBI's Mob:

The catch? Yes, there was a major big catch. Accept the gifts and be tied to William Low forever more. In fact, that engineer said if I left now, I may not live long to see an alternative future anyway. The fact I am talking to him meant I knew too much to exit so he said.

I had struck gold and published my first game, Tower of Myraglen. Then Sea Strike. Then Monte Carlo. Then Cavern Cobra. I had made name for myself. Learning all this scary Thong mobster stuff felt out of TV movie. I decided to resign so informed William Low of my intent.

William asked Jeff and I to attend a breakfast at International House of Pancakes (IHOP). He said the IHOP he likes in Sausalito on the other side of San Francisco, but it's worth the hour ride. I felt a bit uncomfortable riding the mobster that I just told I quit.

On route he stopped at his house in San Francisco to fetch something he said he had forgotten earlier. There's limited parking the city but he had an automatic garage open so he could pull right in and close behind him. We waited as he went into the house. Jeff pointed to the garaged peg tool wall, where hung two UZI submachine guns and some Assault Rifles we could not recognize. I was used to guns. Jeff was not, feeling uneasy around them. I said it was an intimidation tactic. “Just ignore it! Maybe they're toys!” I joked.

William returned and without fuss opened the garage door and off to Sausalito IHOP we were. As we entered IHOP the greeter welcomed William Low by name and said his back room is ready. Weird! William Low has a special relationship with IHOP!? IHOP has a back room!? What the hell!? This was very weird.

We went into a remote booth in a sectioned off room. William leaned back, sort of a power play of confidence and control, almost snickered and spoke. “Look, I know you guys heard I may have some connections you don't approve of. Hey, everyone has baggage and a past. Mine is past. Anything you heard is just not real. You get me?”

I felt like this was that moment that I would be free of William Low or locked forever in a struggle to escape. Maybe it was a wild TV show episode, but I lived it in the moment. “William, no. We know who you are. We know the Thong. We know you've ‘sold’ more copies of my games than were actually sold at retail; you're laundering money with my games!!!!”

William broke in, “Hush! Keep your voices down... That is all just untrue fiction, lies. Your game is great. Anyone says otherwise has not played it. I played it. I love it. I love all your games. You make good money and have a free place to live. You can have anything, just ask. You guys are MY GUYS! I need you...”

The president was charming, smooth, and compelling. Jeff was falling for it. I sensed there were deceptive “cookies” in all this to sway us, much like church groups had done in the past to me.

“No, William. We know the truth. I know the truth. I wrote this all down and sealed it three envelopes. I called and sent one to a lawyer for recording, so if I don’t check in, he just gives it to police. I will do this for as long as I feel necessary, and you will never when or if I stopped my deal with this lawyer. So, I am quitting. You are letting me go. You will still pay me royalties.”

William just replied “okay, I’ll drive you back and get the fuck out!”

It was almost over, but he never paid me my last paycheck, stopped paying for the condo immediately leaving me in a bind, and never paid my royalties. Well, I used that lawyer to sue PBI Software; however, they settled for mere thousands of dollars as they declared bankruptcy and formed a new shell company just like PBI and MDI were before to ITAT. I was free of the Thong, learned a lot, and can say it is not a good experience to be engaged with that level of scary people.

My Career After PBI Software:

While at PBI Software I developed a number of games – Role Playing Game *The Tower of Myraglen*, a casino simulation *Monte Carlo*, a vertical shooter game based on Desert Storm called *Sea Strike*, and a horizontal shooter *Cavern Cobra*.

From there, it was like I had a name - I secured deals with major publishers like Atari Games, Activision, Interplay, Electronic Arts, Microsoft Xbox, Sega, Sony PlayStation, and more. I had arrived!

First, I freelanced nearly a decade until I decided to join Atari Games as a full-time employee instead of contracting with them. I wanted to make new, home video games, instead of just making versions of their standup arcade games.

E193 ACTIVISION AND PROPHECY CAREER ON THE RISE



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E193 Activision and Prophecy and Career on the Rise.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55ulja-e193-activision-and-prophecy-and-career-on-the-rise.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/coUPe3JqOo>

Description:

Hear the tale of Richard's contract with Activision for his game *Prophecy*.

Hear how a Vice President named Kelly Flock blackmailed developers and reviewers to achieve his objectives.

Karma rarely seems to punish the wicked and selfish and bad...unless you do something about things yourself.
...or so Richard observed with Kelly Flock and his exploits; Kelly got away with a lot of evil things.

Activision Contract – Prophecy:

Straight out of PBI Software I secure a contract with Activision to develop *Prophecy: The Fall of Trinadon*. *Prophecy* was based on one of my failed, rejected Dungeons & Dragons modules. I was trying to get out of PBI Software - and so, I cold-called every publisher I could find the name and phone number for. It did not matter how big or small they were. I reached out to every single phone number I found even if there were half a dozen for the same company. I called them all.

I believed in myself. I believed – that had a name for myself I thought because I had published not one but four games – Tower of Myraglen, Sea Strike, Monte Carlo, and Cavern Cobra. I was somebody! Wasn't I? It was incredible though – no one seemed to want to talk to me.

It was incredible - when a receptionist forwarded me to a producer in Activision. Yea – just like that. Fortune! Albeit – fortune made – by me – with so much effort and diligence.

Recognizing my published history, he asked me to come in and meet with him. Of course, I went there as soon as he would meet me. He said right off if we could find the right compensation agreement and game pitch, he would sign a contract with me.

He told me Activision wanted to make an adventure role playing game (RPG) and since I had written Tower of Myraglen I should pitch an RPG.

A Second Dungeons & Dragons Module Leveraged – Gendorian Empire:

I went home and made a massive 100+ page pitch using a Dungeons & Dragons module I had written called Rezendorf: The Gendorian Empire. Activision was so impressed that I could generate such a detailed adventure world and pitch so quickly that they focused on money. I was cheap because I wanted to make my game.

Things went smoothly until the VP of Marketing, Kelly Flock, decided he liked the game so much that his ideas should be integrated. Well, his ideas were outright dumb and awful, and I had contractual right to say what goes and does not go in MY GAME.

The Fight Was On!

Kelly Flock Blackmail Business Practice:

Activision's Vice President of Marketing was Kelly Flock. He was full of hubris and carried himself as smug all-powerful and wealthy executive. He came across as a "dick".

I learned over time as a cautionary tale that Kelly had a reputation for setting people up and framing them, e.g., he hired a prostitute to seduce a competitor and videotaped them together using cocaine. The "victim" happily participated in both so Kelly had a twisted logic that it was therefore okay to blackmail such a person. Kelly was a scumbag and rationalized doing criminal evil things to control, coerce, and manipulate people. He would use the blackmail "content" to secure good reviews or suppress bad ones. He would obtain better contract terms. Worst he apparently would exert control over game development schedules and designs.

Kelly Flock Fired – For Telling Me What to Do:

I would not let such a loser tell me what to do or direct my game design or schedule! And I certainly was not pretty to his beguiling trickster ways. I stood my ground and told him, "No, I have contractual right to do only what I want in MY game." He threatened to cancel the contract if I did not comply.

He was trying to force my hand. And he did force my hand. But not the way he wanted. I was forced to escalate – I called the VP of Development, Sherry Whitely, and explained what Kelly was doing and informed her I was being forced to contact an attorney to seek options and possibly litigation. I told her I did not want that to happen. Could she help me out?

Kelly called me that evening in drunken stupor, damning me for getting him fired. Wow, I thought. He ranted and drifted off. I hung up.

The next day Sherry called me and explained Kelly had a history overstepping his authority and my experience was the final straw, so they let him go. She assured me such encroachment on my rights as a developer would not happen again. They did not and Prophecy shipped as planned.

Kelly Flock Dancing on the Grave of Richard Seaborne:

Remarkably, many years later a producer came to me and said, “Hey, you know a guy named Kelly Flock? I met him at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Vegas over a big dinner.”

“Kelly was drunk out of his mind and climbed on top of the table and exclaimed –

‘Look, I am dancing on the grave of Richard Seaborne!’

Man, you must have really pissed him off. He HATES YOU! What did you do to that guy?”

Well, the story of Kelly Flock and my getting him fired at Activision is sordid tale.

This memory reminds me how actions long past can influence the present. Sometimes you know about it. Sometimes you do not know what has happened or been said in relationship to yourself. But knowing or not knowing makes no difference - the tree DID fall in the forest and it DID affect you!

Karma Fails to Hold Kelly Flock Accountable:

Kelly was then leading Paramount Interactive which ultimately failed as game publisher due to his recurring bad ideas and decisions. In fact, Kelly left a trail of ruined companies following his employment termination at Activision.

Karma bit Kelly in the butt - as he deserved - with his string of failures - following his attempt to tell me what to do!

I explained the backstory to the producer, and he could only shake his in disbelief at how low and pathetic someone must be in their career to publicly be so drunk and petty. He marveled at how major companies like Paramount would hire him in leadership positions.

The world was evidently not fair at all. But there did seem to be Karmic Justice in the end for Kelly Flock.

Evil Triumphs Over Good Unless Good Makes Sure It Does Not:

However, evil triumphed despite Karma - as Kelly Flock rose back to become a senior executive in Electronic Arts, Sony of America, Sony Online Entertainment, THQ, Paramount, and so on.

Apparently, without a Richard confronting and overcoming “Kelly Flocks” of the world they will rise and succeed over others regardless of if they are good or not themselves.

I learned over time that evil triumphs over good reliably unless good makes sure it does not.

Prophecy – Childhood Analog:

It became apparent to me later in life that *Prophecy* was an analog to my childhood.

An everyday laborer became ruler of the kingdom by partnering with demons in a pact that would make him king but upon his death they would assume his form and rule the kingdom as their own. The king would also have to do their bidding once per week – absolutely anything. And there was a final condition – the King will live a natural life but be immune to non-magical weapons and cannot not harm himself – it was physically impossible to harm without magic. The proposed cost to be king did not seem like a huge cost to the man.

But there was the catch as always. The demons said the future children of the King at age of ten would be cursed to become lizard-like humanoids called Gendors. They celebrated as Gendors they would strong and hard to hurt or kill. As Gendors they could still talk and play and be like any other child and grow into adulthood. They would simply be humanoid lizards.

It seemed like an easy choice to make. Lowly laborer forever and die without a penny or become king of the land and the only condition is IF he had children they would have to look like lizards once they turn ten. Well, it was not him and he may never have children, so he agreed.

The story fast forwards to the king becoming jaded with the tedium of kingdom ruling in court and laws. It was not the fantasy he imagined. He bore three children, all unintended, but he loved them. He loved them with all his heart.

When the children turned ten just as the curse was written they turned into lizard humanoids known as Gendors. The kingdom became known as the Gendorian Empire as the children became its de facto rulers representing the king as they ventured into the empire.

But the Gendors fought amongst each other for power. As lizards they were feared and shunned. No one wanted to be near them even though one of the three was kind and wanted to help the people. Even one negative experience outweighed a thousand positive ones and so the people viewed all Gendors as bad. It did not matter as the other two were especially cruel.

The demons inflicted great harm to the kingdom's economy, military, freedoms, and even its culture. It became a slaving bloodthirsty country with only one edict per week from the demons. It was amazing how deadly executive orders can be to a civilization.

The king wished to kill himself to free his children from the curse even if it meant the demons would take his body and corrupt further the kingdom. The damage to the kingdom was done but his children were corrupted and suffering. He believed their evil was their response to the horror of being lizards without friends or social connections at all but rejection and hate.

But the king was cursed that he could not hurt himself and so certainly could not kill himself. He had to live out his life to old age and die of natural causes, witnessing his children suffer all the while his kingdom dissolved into chaos and despair. He just wanted to be king...

The story ends with the player reaching the king and finding the loophole. The curse could be broken if the king died via “suicide by cop” with a magic weapon.

With a magic sword the king could be slain, thereby preventing him from living a “natural” life. And so, with the snicker snatch of a magical blade the king was slain, the curse broken, his children restored to human form, and the demons banished. Happy ending for all!

The parallels did not strike me until much later in life. My mother was the king. She made a deal with the demons who represented my father Silver. The three Gendors were my two sisters and me; of course, the conflicted “good” Gendor was me.

My mother’s pact with my father spawned unintended children who as they grew older became uglier and wicked in behavior much like the Gendor children were human and kind until they turned ten years old and became the cruel Gendorian lizards.

The only way out my “cursed” home life in San Martin was to blow up my world and escape the demons even if that might mean harming the relationship with my parents and moving out at eighteen to forge my own way whether it be making games, attending college, neither, or both. I was blowing up my cursed home just like Castle Trinadon is blows up in the final scene of *Prophecy* with the demons being cast from its fiery collapse.

Prophecy: The Fall of Trinadon seemed clearly a coping mechanism to channel my childhood trauma into an analog outside myself that would distance me from otherwise potentially debilitating memories and scars.

E194 Freelance Contract Development



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E194 Freelance Contract Development.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55ulm3-e194-freelance-contract-development.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/y7h0muS2ocM>

Description:

Hear stories from freelance video game development and decisions - wise and unwise – that Richard made, including huge opportunities missed as a result.

Richard recounts experiences and people at Atari Games and related companies at the time.

Microsoft Vice President Interview Declined – Wrong Prognostication:

During a time when I was freelance contracting... While contracting on SimEarth I received an unlikely call from a recruiter working for Microsoft. He explained that he was an internal HR Recruiter assigned to staff up new groups and he was looking to staff a new games group for Microsoft on its Windows Operating System.

I chortled, “Microsoft and Games!? Right!!!! No thank you.” I thought it was utterly crazy that corporate Microsoft would try and make games.

History would prove that I was as wrong as anyone can be in predicting the future of Microsoft and games.

Microsoft went on to become a major player in computer game development and went so far as to create the DirectX suite of software reference drivers with hardware acceleration support to standardizing input, graphics, and sound on computers so games could focus on their experiences instead of how to deliver visual & audio effects or read different types or brands of keyboards or mice (or touch screens later).

Microsoft’s investment in computer games and related technologies were key to catapulting computer games forward towards the mainstream.

Years later Microsoft would create its own home video game console called the Xbox, and many evolutions of the Xbox were released over the decades since.

It took A LOT OF MONEY, but Microsoft bought their way into the video game industry and is now at the top of the market.

I even worked for Microsoft Xbox and Microsoft HoloLens near the end of my professional career, just not as a Vice President. That opportunity – to interview for VP of Games Development at Microsoft - decades earlier - when I scoffed at the idea – was a MISS.

Bottom-line: I was wrong with my prognostication that Microsoft would not enter or succeed in the game industry.

Oh well – live and learn as they say.

Sculptured Software with Atari Contract - Cyberball:

As I was finished *Prophecy: The Fall of Trinadon* for Activision I began looking for where my next contract was going to come from. Activision said they wanted to wait and see how well *Prophecy* performed before they would sign another game with me. Although I did not like their safe approach, I could not knock them. And besides, I had an upsetting experience with their now-fired VP of Marketing trying to control my game design (not cool!). Anyway, I was looking for my next gig.

I learned about a developer in American Fork, Utah named Sculpture Software that developed their own original games - and then found a publisher to release the game through. Because they funded the development themselves and took the risk up front, they earned a substantially higher royalty than developers like myself that created games being paid by the publisher as Advances Against Future Royalties once the game went to retail sale; the game would have to sell enough copies to pay off the Advances before I would see royalty income from the game sales.

When I reach out to Sculptured Software, they were surprisingly excited to meet with me, and immediately flew me out to meet with their staff and leadership team. It demonstrated their genuine interest.

It was surreal for me. I had never been to a contract developer that subcontracted developers like me to work with them on entire games or features in games they were creating piece-meal within their studio and with contracted experts and content creators. I learned a lot from them on distributed development over time.

Once I was on the ground in Utah, they picked me up at the airport and brought me to the hotel. They said they would give me a tour of the area, which I really did not need I thought being a contract developer as opposed to a potential relocating employee. Regardless of it being weird to me I went along with their itinerary for me. After all, I was hoping to get a contract with them.

Hal Rushton was a co-founder and engineer with George Metos the “business” side of the company. Hal was a nice guy and above average intelligence. He made up for his not being brilliant by being a good “people person”. He was more of “manager” in engineering manager than “engineer” but that was okay because they hired extremely talented smart people and adapted to whatever they needed to work with them.

That is what they were doing with me. They wanted to get to know me and confirm I was trustworthy and was worth jumping through hoops to work with me remotely and set me up with their highly secretive proprietary custom Nintendo development hardware and software.

They took me out to play football with them.

After two football games they took me to a sawdust floor covered “authentic” saloon that was in homage to Brigham Young and the corresponding local university. Apparently, George Metos and Hal Rushton were devout and practicing Mormons which included supporting traditional Utah and its institutions.

I guess I passed their review.

I secured a contract to develop a port of Atari’s coin-op Cyberball to the home Nintendo Entertainment System (NES). The contract was with a company called Sculptured based in Utah.

The founding owner of Sculptured was a full-on Mormon with multiple wives. He tried to keep it on the down-low, but it came out eventually. He was a good guy. His family values were quite different from mine, but I learned to respect him despite our ideological differences.

As an aside, Hal and George eventually discontinued their development hardware and original games. They shifted their focus exclusively on developing games for Publishers. And sold that “newly focused Sculpture Software” to Hal’s brother Dave Rushton who was previously a lead software engineer working for Hal within Sculptured.

Sculptured seemed to struggle with cash flow and always needed more money from publishers as they missed milestones and struggled to deliver quality features in games. After a few years Sculptured’s future was in question. Publishers wondered where the money was going since the teams never grew and the company burn rate did not match their income.

When money ran low in Sculpture Dave first sought to extract more money from current development deal publisher(s). When no one would give more money, he would secure business loans for Sculptured to replenish the coffers. But never getting ahead meant he piling up debt with publishers and with banks.

Whether Dave obtained more Advances to cover his shortfall, he was literally borrowing against the company’s future revenue much like a credit card as they would never see any royalties. Borrowed money not paid back compounds with interest and Dave could never pay it back.

And worse were employees whose compensation included royalties would never see that pay.

Something did not make sense at Sculptured. Publishers suspected something was possibly corrupt and sent auditors. They discovered evidence of embezzlement and local police investigated. Dave Rushton was arrested and convicted for embezzlement and fraud. He served many years in prison.

I was long gone from Sculptured by the time Dave destroyed it. Atari Games was the almost-publisher for Cyberball since it was translation (called a “port”) of the standup arcade game of the same name.

Due to an ongoing lawsuit between Nintendo and Atari consumer division Tengen, Cyberall was ultimately published through a different publisher Jaleco as opposed to Atari.

It was crazy that I developed Cyberball for Sculptured Software for Atari Games only to be published by Tengen through Jaleco.

As I developed Cyberball I was introduced to Atari Games Vice President Steve Calfee and its Director of Development Bill Hindorff. That relationship would later be key to my becoming a full-time employee at Atari Games (more on that later).

Steve Calfee (Vice President, Atari Games):

Steve was a rotund forty-something man with a round boyish face and wide smile with slightly curly grayed hair with resistant black streaks. He was boisterous bordering on loud at times. But he had high integrity and deep heart. He cared for his team and games with conviction and passion.

He was famous within the video game industry. He was one of the original team members to create *Missile Command* which would sell several million copies along with numerous other famous games. He pioneered new hardware technologies. Steve strove to be at the forefront of video game tech.

Gaming Cabin in the Woods:

Steve owned a cabin in the woods of Lake Tahoe that had a basement full of original Atari Coin-operated arcade games. It was a two-story cabin with a third “story” basement. There was an elaborate curving polished banister staircase connecting the floors. The cabin was posh.

Steve would award staff with weekend trips to his cabin in recognition of extraordinary accomplishments.

Much of the Atari staff was “money agnostic” because they had earned so much in bonuses that they needed something that felt personal and special. Steve’s gaming cabin in the woods was his answer to make his team feel important and special.

As a contractor and later as an employee working for Steve - I had no interest in going to Steve’s cabin because I played every game so much that using his basement arcade would be novel but not worth the trip unto itself. I had no need to socialize or bond with people further and so going to the cabin with coworkers seemed pointless. And my time was precious to pursue my own interests or to learn new things.

I saw no value for myself going to Steve’s cabin in the woods though I could see how others valued it a lot.

Steve’s Punch Card Puzzles:

Steve rose from an era of engineering even before my time. He programmed far enough back that he used thick almost-cardboard paper that was punched with operator and operand codes which would be fed into ‘computers’ as programs and variables which the computer would execute and generate the results.

Steve offered some of these ancient program punch cards to engineers to figure out what they did as a puzzle.

There was no payout or bonus or anything beyond recognition and personal pride of accomplishment to figure out what a stack of punch cards would have done were their intended computer still around to feed them into.

Of course – I enjoyed figuring out what the punch card’s cryptic holes instructed arcane ancient computers. It was like going on a time travel mission and learning how to program a machine so old that it may as well be alien tactile technology.

I excelled at Punch Card decryption and analysis such that it quickly became boring, and I moved on.

But I had garnered another level of respect from Atari staff – especially from those that had no idea what those cards were ever used for to begin with.

I was a sorcerer of technology.

Bill Hindorff (Director, Atari Games):

Bill Hindorff was the Director of Development in the consumer division of Atari Games – called Tengen. He was a thin scrawny man of moderate height - donning thick-rimmed black glasses and plain slacks and polo shirt. His voice was slow and almost monotone. Bill did not seem to ever get excited; however, he was passionate. He was also incredibly loyal and had extremely high integrity. He was frugal - and he was responsible.

Overall, Bill was unobtrusive and appeared entirely to be an average geek of a man. But he was smart, talented, and strategic. He reasoned over problems to calculate solutions. He was not impulsive and made sure to collect plenty of information to make a decision.

Some evenings Bill came to me to “dump his woes” on me looking for solace and sometimes recommendations. Bill was not well liked but he was not disliked either. He was a solid soldier for his boss, VP Steve Calfee.

Contract After Cyberball:

Following my contract on Cyberball on the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) I worried what my next “deal” might be and where it would come from.

Bad at Networking Despite Being Respected:

I was calling around everywhere. I called producers and developers I had met so far in my career – at least the ones I obtained their contact information for. I realized then that I was not good at networking and maintaining contact information.

I worked fine with people even if they thought I was “maybe” “a little” conceited. I was confident, talked fast, worked more hours, focused more intensely, and could do anything I set out to do. And I would be faster than anyone else while also innovating something. People expressed immense respect for my talent, willpower, and unwavering commitment to games.

Anyway – I have much more to share on Atari Games... later. This was – however – how I first engaged with Steve Calfee and Bill Hindorff of Tengen and Atari Games.

E195 Teaching at Hudson Soft Japan and Maxis SimEarth



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E195 Teaching at Hudson Soft Japan and Maxis SimEarth.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

FORTHCOMING...

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

FORTHCOMING...

Description:

FORTHCOMING...

Hudson Soft, Maxis Software, and SimEarth on TurboGrafx DUO CD:

As occurred between most contracts – I was on the search for my next ‘game deal’.

I finally reached a receptive publisher – Maxis Software. Although Electronic Arts would eventually buy Maxis, they were independent in the era. Their claim to fame was *Sim City* and thereafter *Sim Earth* and then *The Sims*. There were many versions of these games on most platforms at the time – on computers and video game consoles and handhelds. On everything.

I interviewed with Maxis – in hopes of securing a contract. I interviewed across the entire company – engineers, producers, designers, and executives. I even interviewed with creator, founder, and innovator of Maxis’ flagship Sim products Will Wright. I impressed them one and all.

They offered me two contracts. One to license a video game level & art & sprite authoring tool I had developed over the years to help me make games. The second was to translate Sim Earth from the Personal Computer / Macintosh to work on the Hudson Soft TurboGrafx and TurboGrafx CD video game consoles.

An opportunity to work on the TurboGrafx was exciting, and especially to work a compact disc-based video game console! Only the Sega CD existed as an alternative, and it was a Genesis with a CD added to it at its core. The TurboGrafx DUO CD could support 256 colors – albeit in 16-color 8x8 tile pixel ‘custom letter’ character images or 8x16 motion object sprite images.

I became a human compiler-linker as I read C++ code from the original game and translated it to 6502 assembly language with RAM segments banked into the CPU’s address range. And making floating and double-floating point math on an 8-bit integer register based microprocessor; it only knew how to add & subtract – it could not even divide, or multiply. And, even more techie - I created an interrupt time-sliced system to support gamepad “mouse” and concurrent thread-based “earth simulations”.

It was insanely complicated, but I adapted my authoring tool to support it and delivered “the impossible” – SimEarth ran at frame rate in 256 colors using a mouse-like interface on the TurboGrafx DUO CD.

Crossing the Minefield with Will Wright (and waiting on others to find path):

Something about Will Wright... During an early Game Developer’s Conference I recall Will Wright of Maxis present his philosophy of taking risks in game development.

Will Wright’s claim to fame was that he designed and programmed the original PC and Macintosh Sim City and Sim Earth games)... and later – the Sims.

The one thing he said that stuck with me was that it is paramount to learn from other people’s mistakes and successes, and model your approach to maximize their ‘good ideas’ and avoid their ‘bad ideas’.

He described it as a minefield.

Do you want to be the first or last person to traverse the minefield? The first people will likely fail and blow up and die. The last people will be too late and not attain any reward or achievement because everyone else that got there first claimed all benefits of success.

The answer was instead – let some people take big risks but replicate their success quickly even if borders plagiarism. He said do not plagiarized, but be close... to maximize good ideas. That is how you succeed he asserted.

Blue Ocean vs Red Ocean vs Slightly Blood Mostly Blue Ocean –

Ultimately – It is important to get into mostly ‘blue oceans’ of innovation and new ideas after someone crossed the minefield but others failed. It is paramount to enter a ‘slightly red ocean’ with competitive blood.

Hudson Soft – Learning “Rapanese”:

Well – Early on in my Sim Earth contract, Hudson Soft – who made the TurboGrafx gaming console – and who were apparently funding Maxis, to fund me – wanted to meet me in person. It was a Japanese tradition... to meet business partners.

I learned simple conversational Japanese phrases from a cassette series called “Rapanese”. It was a cute way to learn key phrases to get around as a tourist and professional.

The HudsonSoft executives smiled with my poor pronunciation but were pleased that I tried to communicate in their language. They shifted to English as they spoke much better and more fluently than me.

Hudson Soft – Trains and Anime:

The trains and transit system in Japan was super organized and planned. Everything made navigation intuitive sense once you learned the design principles behind their layout and operating routes.

Japan hosts many people from around the world - and it’s language is not the most ubiquitous language globally, and so city planners added Japanese animation (Anime) characters in front of their subway entrances and train & bus lines so people could navigate by “character picture” not just names written out in native phonetic Japanese Katakana. It made it possible for me to get around without a translator.

Of course, simple transactions and asking for directions was impossible for me. I needed those Anime pictures!

Hudson Soft – Teacher in Japan:

My reputation was wide within the small video game industry. I was invited to visit Hudson Soft in Tokyo, Japan and their Video Game University in Sapporo, Japan. They wanted me to meet the executives of Hudson Soft since face in-person relationships were extremely important to them (which was consistent with Japanese professional culture in the era).

Visiting the executive team in Tokyo was fine if not boring. They directed my guide and translator (who was also a video game engineer) to take me out to a Japanese Karaoke bar. I was not interested in going out to a bar much less one where they might ask me to sing.

Out of respect I agreed to go out to Karaoke with my Japanese colleagues.

The experience went well albeit slow with a translator. I felt important special being an international guest speaker in Japan about video game development.

Hudson Soft – Karaoke in Japan:

Karaoke was the same as it was in the States – tables arranged to face a microphoned stage with big displays showing the words to be sung as a ball dances across the words to indicate word and syllable timing.

Avoiding exposure or being asked to sing I kept the conversation going. Unfortunately, I spoke English and so delays happened due to translation. Those delays gave time for attending executives to think and imagine me singing. And ask they did, and so sing I did.

Hudson Soft – Great American Sumo:

As I stood up the group seated at a nearby table clapped and exclaimed some name I did not recognize and “Sumo”. I thought I recognized “sumo” as being a Japanese wrestler.

The translator leaned in and told me they were cheering the Great American Sumo that was going to grace everyone with my singing. They thought I was some American Sumo that lived in Hawaii and was visiting for a Sumo tournament that happened to be going on in Tokyo while I was visiting.

So, a white American looks like every other white American. I could have seen that as racist or something. But I did not. I have been a victim of racism but have not been racist myself at all – it has always been and remains offensive to me. I am sure they meant no disrespect. In fact – they were praising me as the Great White Sumo.

They called out “It’s a White Christmas! It’s a White Christmas!”

Without my confirming *It’s a White Christmas* came onto the karaoke display. And I sang.

I sang poorly. I do not have a singing voice much less a good one. But I sang. And I finished.

And they cheered and clapped!

Hudson Soft – Sapporo and Hiroshima:

On my flight to Sapporo, which is an island north of mainland Japan, from Tokyo the short in-flight movie was a recognition and memory of Hiroshima being nuked.

That is right – the movie was “celebrating” the nuclear bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States.

Being the only American on the flight further made me feel uncomfortable.

I learned later from a Hudson Soft executive that his sister was incinerated in one of the bombs and that he swears he recognizes her singed shadow on a wall where she might have been at the bombing.

He told me that the shades of death and films are to ensure Japan never rises to the level of pride they had before they were shown their hubris by being destroyed so utterly by nuclear weapons.

During my tour time an old man approached me and echoed that view – he asked forgiveness for he and his family’s transgressions. I had no idea how to respond to such. I was not there. I had nothing to do with any of it.

And yet being American all things USA were attributed to me - even the nuclear bombing of Japan.

Hudson Soft – Sea Slug and Stuff and the “offered admin”:

Hudson Soft executives believed strongly in traditions and hosting dinner every night for their guests was a critical tradition.

During a dinner in Sapporo one of the executives said he noticed that I had been talking to one of the admins and informed me that she would go to the hotel with me tonight to tend to my needs. Whoa! He offered his admin as a prostitute to me! Or so I sounded like.

I queried the translator to make sure what I perceived was correct. Yes, I was right. He told me it is traditional in many companies for admins to double in reception and professional visitor “accommodation”. To this day I struggle to believe that was true, but I was offered sex from a company admin without provocation or expressed interest. Cultures can be wildly different!

The food choices were “exotic”. My name may be “Seaborne”, but I do not like seafood. I am not allergic, but it tastes awful to me. The dishes looked like “sea scorpion” and “sea slug” and “starfish” and all sorts of sushi mysteries wrapped in rice. It was all so unappetizing to me that I did not eat much at all. I did not want to offend my hosts but there was no way I was going to eat the stuff they laid out before me as “treats”.

I told them I ate at McDonald’s (which had a unique menu but was mostly “western”) in Tokyo and that coupled with my “seafood” non-eating experience the night before, they took me to a Korean-style restaurant the next night.

Hudson Soft – Ice Sculptures:

During my visit – it was near Christmas. Christmas was upon Sapporo with Kirin Beer facilities nestled in the nearby hills. Snow was falling and it was cold!

A man outside Hudson Soft’s building cleaned the windows in the frigid cold... even while snow was falling. The translator with me explained work ethic is absolute in Japan – they will clean the windows no matter what the weather is.

Outside Sapporo was beautiful and they had an ice sculpture event going on. Some sculptures were tall as trees and others small as bunnies. They were everywhere like a literal winter wonderland of crystalline ice wilderness and statues.

It was a rare beauty that I deeply appreciated.

Hudson Soft - Teacher:

While working on TurboGrafx DUO CD SimEarth for Maxis in CA and HudsonSoft in Sapporo & Tokyo Japan I had the opportunity to go to HudsonSoft University – to teach. I was both a developer to meet with classes and had tales of game design and getting published. It was cool – being a guest speaker at HudsonSoft University (a school HudsonSoft founded to teach game development).

Equilibrium and Jaleco Contract – Peter Pan and The Pirates:

And the time came...to find another contract. And search, and search... call after call... it was becoming familiar. And I had learned to be flexible... and be persistent. And never give up. Rejection was expected. It only took one “Yes” to ‘keep on truckin’ and making games.

Finally, I met someone that would give me a contract. He had a publishing deal with Fox Interactive, a subsidiary of Fox created for publishing video games – every big entertainment or telecom company had video game divisions.

It was the furthest downstream from the publisher for me. I was so removed and never had any influence in the design or concepts beyond my implementation of Equilibrium’s ideas.

They had a “designing producer” that was supposed to tell me what to create and what the artist that I contracted should draw. It was unpleasantly prescriptive and something I had never experienced since working at Burger King!

Although it was unpleasant, I was paid well for the highly compressed three-month contract. Yea, THREE MONTHS! It turned out Sean Barger the president and owner of Equilibrium had over a year to make the game but failed entirely and started over with me to finish it within the remaining contract time.

So, I finished a year-long game contract in three months. I was paid what I considered nearly five or six months of compensation, so it was a great deal for me even if it was A LOT OF WORK!

Everyone won in the situation in the end despite the hard journey. So, I have to say, it was – worth it.

Games vs. The World - Doctor Keller vs. The Game Industry

Games, Doctors, and World Value... that was the topic of a debate I had once with my ex-wife's disapproving father.

Dr Keller, my ex-wife's father, was a conceited man that believed in white supremacy. He would spout his beliefs whenever and wherever he thought there might be a receptive audience. He was proud to show me how he taught my first-born, Amanda, to goose step after she barely learned to walk.

He was proud of his success. He was farm boy of an immigrant family in Washington State. His parents owned the land that would one day be purchased by Microsoft for a lot of money, changing Dr. Keller from successful to immensely wealthy.

To Dr. Keller's credit, he joined the army to become a medic so he could get tuition paid for to attend university and eventually a medical doctor. He worked hard for many years. His pride was great, however.

We debated over the merits of individual life-saving healthcare versus mass culture changing. I argued a game or book or movie that inspires people to be and do better saves more lives and makes people happier as a civilization than the saving of even 1,000 lives. I agreed that every life was precious and far more valuable than a game, but I argued "ideas" are more powerful and important than an entire generation of people.

As to personal gain? I said sell 1000 medical procedures or 1,000,000 games. Which one touches more people and makes more money? He accepted my arguments were reasonable and fair, but he insisted doctors are important and game developers are not.

We never got over than impasse, but I think Dr. Keller developed a tolerable respect for me.

E196 EA ELECTRONIC ARTS AND HELL



Local File:

[.\LibertyBooksVideos\E196 EA Electronic Arts and Hell.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55ulwq-e196-ea-electronic-arts-and-hell.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

https://youtu.be/oejk_MQilrc

Description:

Hear Richard's tale of working for Electronic Arts on an original game.

Richard works with an unorthodox “creative” Executive Producer, who pushes Richard away from a grim comedy of *Dante's Inferno* into a somewhat comedic *Escape from Hell* as a contemporary *Bill & Ted's Excellent Adventure* in Hell with a *Guns & Roses* tone.

Hear the core principle of game design of the era as appealing to instinctual responses in young boys... ..and as an inexpensive babysitter.

Escape from Hell and Electronic Arts

Electronic Arts Contract – Escape from Hell:

When I signed my contract with Electronic Arts (EA) in Redwood Shores, CA. I signed a contract to develop *The Inferno* based in part on Dante's *Inferno* but made modern ala Jerry Pournelle and Larry Niven's *Inferno* contemporary variant.

I was ecstatic. EA was renowned for its excellent almost revered treatment of game developers. They even had a massive granite tablet held vertically in a huge marble base that read how Developers were the heart and soul of games and creation. It hailed those games were made for gamers by the creators above all else. EA was not about making money but was about "the pure spirit of The Game".

Well, I would learn that EA was very much about making money. It was very much a business that intended to generate as much money as possible for its owners. Much later when EA went public its board of directors were directing the company to make money.

So, EA was always about making money but found the culture and vision statement was outstanding marketing to attract developers and convince consumers EA had the highest quality games from the greatest talent in the world.

Well – I bought into all that.

I was proud that EA considered me one of the greatest talents in the world.

EA Executive Producer Dave Albert:

A man named Dave Albert – an Executive Producer (EP) – was assigned to my project (and, therefore, to me). He was a very direct, and highly creative person. He was apparently obnoxiously direct - about defending developer's creative freedom, so much so earning a "Jack Ass Producer" award within EA for it; he was proud of that. He kept in view of everyone – to know where he stood.

Dave Albert insisted on splitting game development into two parts – research & implementation.

Six Months Researching Religion, Occult, Political Unrest, Polarizing People:

My goal was to indiscriminately put every political partisan and religion in Hell, represented backstory sins of polarizing historical people.

I had done a lot of research before on religions out of my own interest. No doubt that is what inspired me to write *The Inferno*.

Following EA's direction, I spent six months of dedicated research on religions, political and government unrest, polarizing people in history, the occult, and so much more. I made sure to play every genre of game that might contribute to *The Inferno* design.

My knowledge on the topics was deep before but it was much deeper after all the research.

Computer and Video Games are the Legal Drugs of the Future:

While working on *Escape from Hell* – I had many working and design sessions with the executive producer Dave Albert and numerous sessions with an EA professional author, editor, and writer-for-hire who operated as a 'consultant' for EA game maker contractors.

During one session with Dave Albert, he surprised me one of his philosophies on video games.

Dave Albert shared his strong view - that well designed computer and video games - can strategically provide risk-reward dopamine releases in its gamers, and in so doing were effectively narcotics that induced recurring bursts of dopamine 'high' thrills and satisfaction.

And with the recurring dopamine rewards gamers would continue to play games until they mastered them and no longer received achievement or accomplishment dopamine reward sensations.

And thus – without reward gamers should normally return to normal life, but instead publishers should offer another new and different game to feed their gaming addiction and keep them hooked on the publisher's 'drugs' ... on their games.

Game Designs Used Girl's Voices to Manipulate Boys and Get their Attention:

Game design was very psychological... there were few coincidences.

Interestingly – Atari used female voices in attract sequences to 'call' young boys to look towards the 'distressed girl' allegedly appealing to deeply rooted 'protect women' instinctive response. The idea was to manipulate gamers using a 'waif of a girl' pleading for the young male to come to her rescue. It worked well and was used in numerous forms in games over the decades.

Once someone was looking at the arcade game, the game had to look fun – artwork on the arcade frame and sizzling graphics and sound and music.

And players had to be given gratuitous victory reward within a minute of play and keep getting rewards with progressively more difficulty up to five minutes at most per quarter spent. It was planned and crafted to give enough reward to make the gamer feel they were competent and could do better, and thus feed another quarter to play more.

Video Games – The Cheapest Babysitter Around:

Like Dave Albert's perspective that video games were legal drugs of the future that would potentially corrupt civilization and reduce overall productivity, Steve Calfee from Atari Games had told me many years prior that Video Games were the cheapest babysitter around.

That is right –

1. It was socially okay and even expected to park your child in front of the television to watch 'educational' content shows like Sesame Street or Blues Clues and so forth.
2. But children would grow bored watching the same TV shows, and TV shows were short and required frequent parental involvement to ensure the appropriate next shows were started for the kid.
3. Video Games lasted 'forever' so long as they were interesting to children, and they were carefully designed to precisely attract and retain children's interest.
4. And whenever the child mastered the game and lost interest, the parent need only buy another game to 'keep their child busy and out of their hair and trouble!'
5. And what parent would not pay \$40-50 to entertain and occupy their child for hours on end every single day – and MOREOVER something their child actively WANTS TO DO!

Video Games – Potential Threat to Civilization Productivity like Drug Addiction:

There it was – Atari Games VP and Electronic Arts Executive Producer both recognized that computer and video games were cornerstones of our evolving society, and while was a positive-negative ‘babysitter’ metaphor the other was threat to civilization productivity like addictive illicit drugs.

EA EP Dave Albert seemed to believe that computer and video games could literally erode innovation and civilization growth. He argued that artificial dopamine rewards undermine natural compulsions to do things in the real world that deliver dopamine for accomplishments.

Consequently – gaming could encourage people to stay home and play games instead of going to school or work or investing towards innovation and growth.

I have never agreed with their views that games are drugs or parental replacements. I do not believe that idea is ‘the truth’. But I do think that they are an outlet for addictive personality people.

Video Games – Xbox Sesame Street Leverage ‘Babysitter’ Game Design Thinking:

As an aside – I used much of the video game ‘babysitter’ game design thinking during my work on Xbox Sesame Street because it was the closest thing to Steve Calfee’s prognostication as I could imagine.

Sesame Street benefited from frequent challenge-reward loops and characters that were compelling with addictive quirky personality and cute ‘childlike’ voices.

E197 Sentient Cloud Analytics AI and Storage



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E197 Sentient Cloud Analytics AI and Storage.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55ulxf-e197-sentient-cloud-analytics-ai-and-storage.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/yOfgru7rggo>

Description:

Learn how Electronic Arts and Microsoft both passed on opportunities to get in very early on advanced artificial intelligence and cloud analytics.

Hear how and why they thought what they are doing now – was a bad idea then...

Sentient – Cloud Storage and Analytics and Artificial Intelligence for Games:

While at Electronic Arts I spearheaded the development of a shared common interface and technology called NetCore which was a game telemetry collection and analysis tool and library suite that game makers could integrate into their games to have network and online gameplay and data storage.

NetCore evolved from account management and game tuning data and gamer saved data to include matchmaking and numerous online features games could use.

I took the same idea of NetCore at Electronic Arts when I joined Microsoft to create a new cloud analytics and game feature suite. It was called ‘Sentient’.

Sentient was intended to not only be analytics and data storage but also support game feature modules and an emergent artificial intelligence that could dynamically tune computer and video games for gameplay balancing so players would always be challenged but not too frustrated.

Sentient was a set of libraries and tools for local machines and a cloud telemetry, analytics, and artificial intelligence technology suite.

Sentient knew when and where gamers struggled and failed, and if enough gamers failed the game had to be adjusted so more would succeed and enjoy the game.

Sentient made sure Dopamine rewards flowed in its gamers.

Sentient knew how to manipulate people.

Sentient was ‘SMART’.

Sentient was so successful in its pilot form in numerous Xbox Live Arcade Games that it was ultimately adopted as a standard technology across all of Microsoft Xbox.

Sentient Learned and Expanded:

Sentient was evolved to include a suite of libraries that empowered game developers to use telemetry and cloud analytics and cloud storage and cloud account management. Sentient even allowed developers to dynamically change their game’s content and even user interface screens and buttons.

Sentient Evolved –

1. more and more products used Sentient’s automated ‘bots’ to troll and collect information about gamers across Xbox Live and Sentient-specific collected and distilled and data mapped telemetry.
2. some games used Sentient’s modular system to implement cloud AI to analyze individual and aggregate telemetry and recommend changes to gameplay, game content, release dates for games and patches, and more.
3. Sentient became an extraordinary suite of powerful cloud tools and technologies that let video game developers use cloud solutions easily.

Sentient succeeded and everyone was impressed with it. I had completed a world evangelism tour for Sentient that achieved Microsoft Xbox universal adoption of its technology.

Sentient Sees You (as 3D skeleton with kinetic motion tracking in your living room):

Sentient was eventually granted access to Kinect 3D data so it could use it in educational and entertainment games.

Sentient was a computer in the sky ‘cloud’ that watched and recorded people and cats and dogs and simple furniture like coffee tables and chairs and sofas – all through Xbox Kinect via the Internet and processed for pattern matching and understanding by Sentient’s cloud artificial intelligence. ...all so Sentient could know what it was looking at – in your living room.

But upon seeing Sentient see people - in the privacy of their living rooms - and learn and adapt to their movement and furniture – and even learn what objects were alive via motion vs static – it learned. Executives and staff were generally aligned on one thing –

SENTIENT AI WAS CREEPY!
And was scary...

Sentient – From Games to Education:

But Sentient continued... just with AI-Fear scrutiny... and concern of going ‘too far’.

With Sentient’s success executives wanted to use it in a children’s product line.

Microsoft Xbox was interested in utilizing Sentient in non-game products like Sesame Street using Kinect (kids loved it!).

Over time - Microsoft delivered several educational and fitness games on Xbox that using Sentient.

We created proof of concept prototypes of Sentient creating, assigning, and scoring academic tests to kindergartners through sixth grade.

Sentient assessed each student’s test results for categories like reading, spelling, math, object finding & recognition, and so forth.

Sentient also created curriculum from categorical content and corresponding tests - and it made tailored individual tests and sections into question sets with association meshes and using neuro-net influence weights from human educators.

Sentient determined specific areas of difficulty for a child and provided follow-up assignments and tests to help the child improve. We hired PHD experts to drive our educational content.

Eventually Sentient sent a report to parents and parent delegates of how the child had performed and what areas needed improvement – and what areas were high performing and may benefit from doubling down on them.

Sentient presumed to know how to educate human children and tailored their curriculum and tests and parental and family engagement individually.

Sentient was AWESOME!!!!

Sentient Lived – But ‘Skynet’ of Child Education Died (too eerie to proceed):

But then came fear and paranoia!

Sentient WAS –

SKY NET!!! (out of the movie Terminator, that ends humanity)

Executives became uncomfortable with the eerie creepy idea that a cloud artificial intelligence was going to educate humans.

Even with expert doctorate educators on staff supporting Sentient – it was too much for people to embrace.

Sentient ‘Skynet’ for Child Education was not going to move forward.

It was canceled.

Sentient lived on – but not for education – and was absorbed and renamed... by Xbox Console Platform. It became an Xbox Analytics suite, minus the cloud AI component. But its cloud AI components fell by the wayside, making Sentient focused on its cloud analytics technology components.

Xbox Wrested Control of Sentient from Me – Sentient ‘Skynet’ Stopped:

Once Microsoft Xbox Studios adopted Sentient for all games, they seized total control over it. They wrested control from me and set about changing it without consulting me at all.

I had heard they kept only the analytics and data storage and dynamic tuning modules of Sentient. The rest was apparently left to rot and fade away.

Sentient ‘Skynet’ was stopped dead in its tracks by Microsoft Xbox Studios.

E198 Alan Murphy Prophecy Hell and Peter Pan

**Contracts on the Beach
Peter Pan, Prophecy, and Hell**



Local File:

[.\LibertyBooksVideos\E198 Alan Murphy Prophecy Hell and Peter Pan.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55um6r-e198-alan-murphy-prophecy-hell-and-peter-pan.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/7sFMR-KQhOo>

Description:

Richard shares how the video game industry was once small, intimate, and had “no norms or standards or expectations” ...

He shares stories of his top artist ally and partner – Alan Murphy – and how working on Escape from Hell was soul-wrenching for Alan.

Of course – they also worked and even signed contracts on the beach!

Alan Murphy Artist on *Prophecy to Hell* and Peter Pan in between:

I was introduced to Alan Murphy while working on *Prophecy: The Fall of Trinadon* for Activision by my producer (assigned by Activision).

Signing Contracts on the California Coast and Beach:

During and following the completion of *Prophecy* - Alan and I forged a great partnership. I would meet him on in Santa Cruz or Capitola on the California coast for creative sessions and art reviews, and even to sign his contracts!

My favorite contract signing was literally on the Davenport, CA beach where Alan was surfing. I waited on the shore while he finished catching a wave and came back in wet suit.

He laughed and said he wished he could have a photo of this – when he next caught a wave. He also asked if I would take a photo of him signing the *Prophecy* game contract – right there on the beach, while surfing!

And the next contract we signed on the beach as well, but this time Alan had his camera ready for me take some snapshots to commemorate the signing and for his wife to see.

Design and Working Sessions on the Beach and in Oceanside Coffee, Shake Shops:

Alan and I would have design sessions on the beach or in beachfront coffee and shake shops. It was possibly the best time of developer career – total freedom and no worries beyond making great fun games and immersive experiences. And working with great people.

Shielded by Rituals and Patterns:

Although I enjoyed my flexible schedule and lifestyle, I also liked predictability and had my “rituals”. As example – Alan and I had a favorite shake shop we regularly went to that served olallaberry shakes. Olallaberries are unique to the West Coast, primarily in California and Oregon. When ollaberries were out-of-season it bothered me that I could not have my “ritual” shake. Of course, I could have a blueberry shake but it was not an “ollaberry shake”.

You can see how in retrospect it was odd how compulsory I was in fulfilling my rituals and patterns even though I had the flexibility not to be so rigid.

But I also believe my rigidity and rituals shielded me from the “crazy” elsewhere in my life – past and present, and future as life would prove.

Small Computer Game Industry Then:

The computer game industry was small then, and so income was at best “okay”. It was not about the money. It was about GAME and the flexibility and freedom of schedule and being able to do your dream job of making entertainment and games anywhere you wished.

This was a time when game creators made games for gamers and geeks. It was before the industry grew big and cutthroat. It was a time when creative programmers that could partner with artists and musicians were rare and empowered to design and make computer games while they eked out a living.

But none of that mattered because I loved making games and the chance to tell my stories!

Alan's Amazing Resume (made *Gauntlet!*) and Huge Opportunity to Work with Him:

Alan Murphy had an amazing resume, especially for me – he was the primary and lead artist on *Gauntlet* coin-op arcade game which I loved. Working with Alan was huge!

Prophecy to Hell to Peter Pan:

After Alan finished *Prophecy* with me, we continued as duo and signed on with Electronic Arts to develop *Escape from Hell* together (more on that later). In fact, the game's official title was *Richard and Alan's Escape from Hell*.

Alan worked on one more game with me – *Peter Pan and the Pirates* with Equilibrium (more on that later too).

Alan's Catholic Childhood + Hell Fuels Anxiety:

Escape from Hell's artist Alan Murphy was raised Catholic and attended Catholic school up until university. Alan was extremely if not hyper aware of Catholicism and its teachings. He tried and struggled in his wish not to “believe” in God - but deep down he “did believe” in God and the Devil and in Hell and Heaven.

Alan expressed anxiety at first taking on *Escape from Hell* after he had done the artwork for *Prophecy: The Fall of Trinadon* with me. *Prophecy* was a story of clear good versus evil, even if the evil were a corrupted conflicted once-upon-a-time good man; he could see the hero was just and his opposition obviously bad.

Escape from Hell was not like *Prophecy*. *Hell* had otherwise good people “damned” like a classic “Greek tragedy” flaw. *Hell* found justice in condemning deceitful priests and politicians alike. *Hell* took no sides – all partisans and religions were represented in Hell. Including Catholics, Popes, and more.

Hell played with the player's mind with making them employ Hitler, Mussolini, Genghis Kahn, and so many more horrific figures of history. The player had to befriend them and help them to secure their help to, of course, ESCAPE from HELL. The player was given reasons to see “value” in these terrible historical icons.

Expanded Hell's Allies to Reduce Alan's Anxiety:

Alan struggled with the idea that such EVIL PEOPLE were NECESSARY PEOPLE to escape from Hell. We adjusted the design so there were A LOT of people the player could have join the party of adventurers in Hell.

Some characters the player could employ were “MORE EVIL” than others and so the player could CHOOSE which degree of evil they were willing to accept to escape from Hell.

We even added some characters from Shakespeare like Hamlet and Othello so the player could use “flawed” and “conflicted” fictional non-player characters (NPCs) if real-world “bad” people were too much for them to use as allies.

The extended “evil ally” design made the game better in the end. It made it one of the earliest open-world games akin to the *Ultima* and *Wasteland* games.

Hell used no code, engine, design, anything from Wasteland despite theorists:

For the record – *Escape from Hell* did not use any code or design or engine or anything from *Wasteland* as some Internet theories surmise; they are wrong.

Deep Research for Hell – Religions, Hell & Heaven, Mythology, Lore, and Fantasy:

I did extensive research for *Hell* including going into deep archives in San Jose Public Library that require entry-permission and monitoring and you can only review the materials in the library – they cannot be checked-out or taken outside the archive room.

There is crazy stuff in those archives. I found old articles from the late 1800's and early 1900's about Vampires in America! That alone was worth the research.

Of course, there were all sorts of drawings and sketches of demons and hordes of tormented in Hell, Hades, the Afterlife, etc.

The most moving images for Alan were fictional *Call of Cthulhu* compendiums and decades or hundreds year old drawings of Hellscape and Tormented people. Art like *The Screamer* touched Alan in a deep and spirit-wrenching way.

Suffering in the Afterlife:

It did not matter what religion there was a way to suffer in the afterlife.

The best outcome would be to devolve into an animal or insect to learn something so you might evolve once more upward in the ascension ladder. If not, back down to the lower rung.

Although devolving into a lower lifeform did not directly include physical pain it was terrible like the myth of Sisyphus endlessly pushing his boulder up a hill only to have it roll back down crushing him as he neared the hill's peak. Evolving, devolving, evolving, devolving... Seemed like a cycle of living, hurting, dying, maybe learning, and repeating – kind of its own form Hell.

Of course, the other afterlife “specials” were outright locales of torment and suffering. Or interim neutral places like Limbo that were either waiting zone “lobbies” on route to the good or bad place of any given religion. ...or eternal boredom.

Given the choice of devolving and “trying again” versus eternity of inescapable torment and suffering, a “do-over” sounded like a good deal.

Nightmares for Catholic Schooled Artist Alan Murphy:

The Inferno research haunted Alan. It was not just the images of demons and suffering tormented people and hellscape but also of the emotional conflicts of good and evil working united to overcome the devil and Hell.

I had over-achieved in my goal of immersing Alan in my imagined *Hell*. He saw what I saw. His “frame of mind” was corrupted, and he could “see Hell” and “feel the tormented souls’ lament”.

I had imbued Alan with such a potent and real sense of Hell that elevated his suppressed childhood Catholic School and conflicted religious feelings and traumas.

Alan had many stories of abusive nuns and cruel priests. He had little good to say of being raised Catholic and attending Catholic schools but that it taught him fear and compliance.

Sadly, Alan suffered nightmares for months before and after *Escape from Hell* was published.

Alan's Wife Asserts Alan Cannot work on Another *Hell*:

His wife, Gaye Murphy, pulled me aside as *Escape from Hell* was wrapping up and emphatically asserted that Alan could not work on another “Hell” game. It was too much for him. It was too real for him.

I learned that everyone has a trigger, maybe they have a lot of triggers. It was apparent that people that were otherwise strong and smart and possessed emotional fortitude could break with the “right” trigger.

Whether it was the accumulation of things, and the proverbial straw was too much, or the one thing that shatters beliefs or crushes dreams and hopes flies in your face. And then there was getting something and having it ripped away from you.

Alan was triggered by “evil” being “good” to help the player overcome evil and escape from hell. He was triggered seeing ancient drawings and texts that purported Hell was real and these were real things. Images of demons and suffering souls in Hellscares stuck in Alan’s visual mind and haunted him day and night.

Alan’s wife Gaye was sincere and protective of her husband in asking that I not even ask Alan to work on a sequel, which were contemplating as *Hell on Earth* where the Gates to Hell were left open so the hordes and tormented ascended into the mortal realm where the Infernal Wars would begin.

Hell on Earth was a “hot” idea (pun intended) I thought but timing did not work out and Alan was evidently unavailable anyway per his wife.

Uzi's and Protection Statues

EA had a tradition in that era of putting a photo of the developers with a statement about them at the time of making the game.

When Alan and I went to our creators’ photo shoot, I held an Uzi submachine gun and Alan held a Polynesian Statue of Protection. It said everything about how we approached the world and perceive *Hell*.

I was glad that Alan could end his *Hell* project being protected by a divine force through his Polynesian statue of Protection.

E199 TO HELL IN SIX MONTHS WITH EA



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E199 To Hell in Six Months with Electronic Arts EA.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55umd6-e199-to-hell-in-six-months-with-electronic-arts-ea.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/dZPKeQLUmlU>

Description:

Learn how Escape from Hell was broken into halves – a Research Phase and a Development-Delivery Phase.

Hear stories about EA's (Electronic Arts') Founder Trip Hawkins and Legend Bing Gordon working with Richard.

Richard shares quips and tips from Video Game Industry founders and luminaries.

And – EA with Richard received death threats because of *Hell*.

Six Months to Write *the Inferno*:

For Electronic Arts, Making Escape from Hell - I had six months out of my twelve-month contract. First – create low level graphics drivers to support all current video cards. Then make sound and music player that will work on all PC brands including authoring tools. Make graphic editor to create artwork and animation. Make world map editor. Make event and game script system. Create keyboard and mouse input system.

As you can see – It was the wild west of software development.

In the era of Escape from Hell there were virtually no software development kits (SDKs) or application programming interfaces (APIs). There was nothing but reference manuals for how hardware worked, “soft switches” that triggered hardware lines on chips that can read/write to, and one or more microprocessors depending on the specific machine or computer.

Tech for *Kief the Thief*:

EA was excited about the tech I wrote that dynamically (AKA programmatically without human involvement) adapted MCGA 256-Color highest end art down to 16-Color VGA or EGA to 4-Color CGA to 2-Color HGA (green monochrome / black & white)

They asked if other developers working with EA could use my tech as a middleware in exchange for recognition. I imagined other developers would create something similar and did not think what I wrote was so special and so agreed for EA to have my tech.

I received credit in *Kief the Thief* but not in other games that used my tech. It turned out the “credit” was only as good as that producer made sure it happened.

I did not sign a contract for it and I owned the rights to it according to my contract but now the source was given to EA’s developers they could modify and call it their own anyway; they probably did.

In the end, I did get recognition for my tech in *Kief the Thief*, and I can feel good that I helped a generation of games support a wide array of video cards and their different color depth and resolution dimensions.

Skateboards, Girls, and Stuff with Trip Hawkins and Bing Gordon:

Bing Gordon VP of Marketing and Trip Hawkins President of EA attended many of my creative design sessions with Electronic Arts. It was great to have Trip there. He was creative and expressed his ideas succinctly.

Trip Hawkins in EA Executive Creative Sessions:

Trip provided things like a double-side sheet of tips on writing compelling stories. He would talk about tenants of good game design and how every feature needs to have a hook, a challenge, and a reward.

He came across as surprisingly effeminate which for the era was even more unusual for an executive to be openly so. It did not offput anyone, but I recall the Executive Producer informing me not to comment on Trip’s demeanor because he can appear feminine to some people.

In retrospect I suppose the EP was trying to say that I should not discriminate against the president if I was discriminatory. I was not, of course, so the caution seemed weird to me.

Bing Gordon:

Bing was crazy - even if creative. He talked about Hell being full of railroad tracks like roller coasters - where kids were stuck on skateboards - and rolled along human railway ties...until they were struck by a train. He had “ideas” about Hell.

I would work with Bing later as an employee at Electronic Arts Canada. He continued not to be disappointed there too. He talked of “beaming games” to friends on playgrounds and mimic’ed space-like “pew pew” “vroom beeeeeeam” sounds to make it all more real.

Once he laid himself out on the 20-foot-long conference table at one point to “help him think”. The table was surrounded by twenty people at the time... Yea, Bing was crazy.

As an aside – Bing would later become even more successful and mega rich as a Venture Capitalist. Bing Gordon has always been wildly successful from what I understood.

For the Love of God, a Picture Please:

During an initial PlayStation Portable (PSP) meeting with top EA developers and executives from around the world, Bing Gordon arrived and threw a big printed manuscript on the massive conference table.

He exclaimed, “For the love of God, a picture please! This thing is amazing. Incredible detail. Great insight. But not a single picture in how many pages!?”

Well, I wrote that manuscript entirely on my own. It was packed with technical specifications and capabilities and approaches to adapt existing EA games to run on the PSP, and tools and libraries that we might make to facilitate PSP game creation.

But it was an insightful learning moment for me – people need pictures to comprehend things.

Never Do Half a Favor, Make Things Great or Do Not Do Them At All:

Much like Atari’s guidance it was important to never make a feature that cannot be polished; Atari said “never do a player half a favor” meaning the same idea. Make things great or do not make them at all!

It was important to know your market – your audience - for the meeting – and make the ‘content’ appropriate to its ‘needs’ and your intent.

Escape from Hell Released To the World – It was Hell on Earth:

Back to Escape from Hell...

Fast forwarding to its completion – in the second half of its twelve month development duration. The first six months phase – of Research and Tool Development phase - was done. And – after another six months... it was done - and released to the world – it was Hell on Earth.

Germany Bans *Escape from Hell* – Because Swastikas Were with Damned Nazis:

Escape from Hell was being sold at retail!

And then it was not selling at retail – in Germany! Their government decided the game had to be pulled because it had Nazi Swastikas where Hitler and Mussolini were being tormented.

Apparently, there are German laws that forbid any presence of swastikas or Nazi symbols in any consumer materials including games.

It was odd to me that a country that wants to not repeat its “sins” actively prevented people from knowing its history or insignias.

Moreover – it seemed especially weird to me that Germany wanted the swastikas removed that were alongside the damned Nazis for the atrocities. Germany was approving of damned Nazis but not of them having the swastikas they would have used in the real world (were they not fictional).

Well, things are what they are regardless of what I believe it seemed.

EA asked me to change all swastikas to the already-present Devil Banner which was an upside down Pentastar on a flag – the most traditional “hell” / “devil” symbol you could imagine.

There it was: Nazi insignia = bad; Devil insignia = good.

People Are Not Naturally Deep Thinkers - Unable to Utilize Innate Intelligence:

I guess Nazis were worse than the Devil that made them do it, which seemed wrong and silly to me, but people proved over and over that they are not naturally deep thinkers and are unable to utilize whatever intelligence they have.

Cultists Issue Death and Bomb Threats to EA and Me

Escape from Hell had been at retail for perhaps a month and its EP Dave told me over a lunch post-ship meeting that EA had received bomb and death threats because of my game.

One cult in Oregon declared that *Escape from Hell* was blasphemous, and that EA and the game’s creators must die and burn in the real flames of hell. They were quite serious and received the appropriate legal scrutiny.

However, EA was alarmed that anyone would threaten to blow up their building and kill their staff much less contractors.

It was more shocking than alarming or scary to me. I was so far removed from the threats that it felt more like a TV show.

I brushed off the death threats as just another “narrative” in my larger-than-ordinary-life.

Oregon Attracts Wacky Cultists:

As an aside – it is weird that the cults I have encountered in my life were all in Oregon except for one in Woodside, CA.

It really seems an odd thing - Oregon attracts wacky people that like to form and join cults.

Portland, OR has a “Keep Portland Weird” slogan and is used by many of its city’s residents to celebrate their culture of “crazy whack jobs”.

Why do you imagine that is – that some states like Oregon become homes to “crazy whack jobs” people? And other states don’t?

I guess that is the gazillion dollar question – for government leaders that are sincerely interested in the best interests of the people they represent...

Cult Issues Death and Bomb Threats over *Hell’s Religious & Political Damnations*:

Again back to EA and Hell... *Escape from Hell’s* Executive Producer informed me that EA had received bomb and death threats. He said the threats were coming from all over the world now.

EA was being inundated by random incensed zealots calling for the cancellation and recall of the game because it offended and damned religious leaders and politicians and nobility and just about everyone to hell.

It seemed there was something (or a lot of things!) in *Hell* that offended people.

Well, that was the point of the game. To show people how the very things we claim in society that are good and pure are justified reasons to be damned to hell when examined more closely.

In fact – when applying the Bible and New Testament and Ten Commandments (never mind the Old Testament where God is wrathful and far less forgiving) most people will be damned to hell.

UNLESS – they make a deal with the church and ask forgiveness; they may be asked to pay “indulgence” fees for serious offenses. This practice has largely been unused in the last century, but it does exist within the “church”.

No More Hell Games:

Electronic Arts lost its stomach for making political charged games especially those so rich in the field of “content” to offend people like Hell.

I Was the Salman Rushdie of Games:

My Executive Producer told me that I had been labeled “Salman Rushdie of Games” within EA because of Salman’s published book *The Satanic Verses*.

Salman Rushdie had published a book *The Satanic Verses* in 1988 which he said was inspired by the life of Muhammad. The book was said to represent a divide between Muslim and Western culture.

Things got so bad for Rushdie that in 1989 the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran to issue a “fatwa” which meant Muslims should kill Rushdie on sight.

The cultural conflict appeared rooted in the fundamental premise of whether people should be killed for their beliefs or statements, or not. Muslims argued “yes”. Westerners argue “no”.

Rushdie identified the issues and earned calls for his death because of his writing down and stating things that offended many Muslims and the Iranian country’s leadership.

And so, *Escape from Hell* offended people all over the world and was garnering the hate on EA and me like Salman Rushdie and the *The Satanic Verses* publisher received.

Once again – I had no idea what I was supposed to do with this information.

I could only conclude that there was definitely not going to be a sequel to *Hell* and I was famous (or infamous). I did not feel afraid or threatened, however; it was more exciting than concerning.

I am glad to have made an impact – even if it was not the one I was specifically looking for.

E200 EA Was Still a ‘Company’ Despite Gaming Glory



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E200 Nintendo NES Blaster Cartridge and EA Culture_ Just a ‘Company’ Despite Gaming Glory.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55umh8-e200-nintendo-nes-blaster-cartridge-and-ea-culture-just-a-company-despite-g.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

https://youtu.be/IDu6avKR9_I

Description:

Richard’s lifestyle right down to his choice of clothes are challenged by EA designers, writers, and producers. He is told he should be hipper and wear jeans and more casual clothes – and specifically – do not wear slacks or button shirts.

Hear the tale of Electronic Arts’ foray into Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) video game development, and how they had devised a cartridge that could literally destroy the NES security chip.

Learn more about the incestuous NES developer tool landscape of the era...

EA Lifestyle – Jeans, Drugs, Cash, Expensed Lunches

Working for Electronic Arts (EA) was an exposure to a larger company with deep pockets, and expectations that game developers were ‘artists’ and needed to be celebrated AND ELEVATE TO ROCKSTAR STATUS.

But EA also had a ‘culture’ that my Executive Producer encouraged me to embrace as my own – to be more ‘cool’ and ‘hip’.

Drugs and Cash:

The Executive Producer came to me once and said, “Hey, you get paid a decent amount monthly for your milestones. Some developers spent some of that cash on drugs and girls and stuff. If you ever wanted something like that there are ways to save money. Let me know if you want some ‘tips’ on how to do that. I mean, we want every dollar possible to go towards the game after all.”

Of course, I declined his implied offer to set me up with a drug dealer and pimp. It was weird but I attributed it to “the entertainment industry” is influencing the video game industry.

Atari and PBI were proven drug laden so I guess it followed that EA might have developers with similar interests.

Jeans versus Slacks – Be a Real Game Developer:

A producer pulled me aside once and asked, “Why do you dress so formal? You are in games. Dress like it!”

I asked the EP about my “clothing” and he nodded, “Yea, you dress like a nerd not a cool creator. Wear some jeans. Maybe ditch the button-down shirt.”

Well, I kept the shirt but went “jeans” and sneakers. When I next saw both the producer and EP they exclaimed, “YEA! Right on! Now you are a game developer!”

It was weird...how you appeared, had something to do with your ability to make games...

Escape from Hell, NOT ‘The Inferno’ – a rose/Inferno by any other name...:

More on Escape from Hell... It was pitched as The Inferno... Dante Alighieri’s Inferno... but that did not last. Marketing took over after the game was in Beta. They created box art, back cover promotional text, art, and game screen captures. They created the name of the game!? WHAT!?!?!?

That is right, Electronic Arts Marketing decided my game should be more understandable. No one knows what Dante’s *Inferno* was. They certainly never heard of some Larry Niven or Jerry Pournelle *Inferno*. MAYBE they heard of Stieg’s *Inferno* comic book. No, EA Marketing asserted the game could not be called *The Inferno*. It MUST BE CALLED *Escape from Hell*.

How did they justify *Escape from Hell*? Objectively, that is precisely what the player does. He goes to hell to rescue his girlfriend and friend and to do so must “escape from Hell”. Okay, it literally made sense but had zero creativity and abandoned the literary heritage of the game.

I felt it greatly diminished the “Heaven and Hell” feeling of the game, too.

None of my feelings mattered. Bing Gordon VP of Marketing joined with Trip Hawkins President and Founder of EA told me they needed the name to be current so people “got it”. *Escape from New York* was a recent box office movie hit and so *Escape from Hell* was a name that could benefit from the halo effect of the movie’s name similarity.

I could only resign myself to “a rose by any other name is still a rose...” and my *Inferno* was still *The Inferno* even if it was called *Escape from Hell*. An Inferno by any other name...is still the Inferno.

The game shipped under the name - *Escape from Hell*.

Offsite Lunch “Expenses” – The Hill to Die On:

My Executive Producer Dave Albert and I would often meet outside EA’s main building and talk over lunch. Dave always chose one of two restaurants - Red Robin’s or Bennigan’s in Foster City.

A funny side-story.

Dave asked me if I would state formally that “Our lunch meetings were necessary and productive and made me feel like an important part of EA’s family.”

Apparently, if Dave’s developers on mass indicated the lunches were an expected part of their experience with EA, then Dave could continue as he had been doing for years.

However, without that support he and all his developers would be relegated to ordinary conference and meeting rooms for simple strategy and coordination sessions. LOL – Horrifying!

Seriously – paid lunch expenses seemed like an odd hill to die on.

Everyone has “their things” and “developer lunches” were apparently one of Dave’s “things”.

How did it all end?

Well, Dave was approved to continue running things the way he wanted to include his lunches.

Dave’s Executive Conflicts Drove Him Out:

But Dave also seemed to have lost some of his clout as things went forward after that “professional conflict” with his executive leadership.

It was not long that Dave was talking to me about leaving EA to become a Creative Director at Sony of America (SOA)

Dave did quit EA and join Sony sometime later after I was no longer working with Electronic Arts. Although his career had some turbulent times, he became VP of External Development at Infogrames’ games publishing division.

Last I heard Dave Albert was back to his roots working with Brian Fargo (who was the founder of Interplay, where I worked on *Star Trek New Worlds*). Dave, in 2018, became a producer on the reboot of old Interplay games including *The Bard’s Tale*.

I do not know where Dave will go from there.

Since Dave was at least ten years older than me, he may be retired now.

EA Tools and R&D – Interim Contract Post *Escape from Hell*:

Before the bomb and death threats came in and scared EA away from potential sequel *Hell on Earth* to *Escape from Hell* but after *Hell* was done and had entered manufacturing, Dave Albert asked if I would consider an interim contract while EA waited to see how *Hell* sales and retail and consumer reception were.

Dave expressed an interest in keeping me retained by EA and thought a short contract might be a good idea.

Dave recommended partnering with EA's "Tools and R&D" team to work a shared game development suite of tools and libraries as a sort of "game middleware" exclusive to EA developers.

He noted they were working on both Personal Computer and Video Game Console tools and libraries.

With my "tools history" with EA helping out with Kief the Thief they were keen on leveraging what I knew for their "middleware".

Ironically, I learned a lot about how middleware is built and formal shared software design architecture and Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). I also learned how important documentation for advanced APIs was versus my prior "it must all be in your head, or you cannot succeed."

I believed that if you cannot see and know everything at once, then you cannot program great things – you will be at best a competent copy & paste & modify coder...not a REAL AND TRUE ARCHITECT AND ENGINEER!"

It turns out almost no one could keep track of things like I could – everything was just there on instant recall.

I never had to think about things or write things down. The most I had to do was write annotations in my code and use "intelligent names" for variables and labels and functions.

Electronic Arts –Nintendo Development:

I had finished *Escape from Hell* and EA asked if I would use their latest Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) development hardware and middleware they had been writing.

It was a great opportunity to explore EA's NES development environment while deciding if there was a game I wanted to make on the NES.

I did not like EA's development kit or fledgling middleware. I felt I could write my own middleware from scratch, and it would be better than what they were offering. My code would be tailored to my needs while theirs was generalized and full of "fat" that I did not need in my game.

Electronic Arts Security "Blaster" Cartridge:

Interestingly, Electronic Arts (EA) developed a "blaster" video game cartridge that fried the console security listener chip so it could not disable the CPU and thereby bypassed the chip entirely.

EA never sold the "blaster" cartridge since they negotiated a license with Nintendo that both companies were satisfied "enough" with to avoid litigation and get to making and selling games.

The existence of EA's Blaster Cartridge prototypes afforded EA leverage in negotiating better terms with Nintendo.

Of course, that was quite funny. There was another reason EA did not want to proceed with their NES Blaster cartridge other than securing good terms with Nintendo.

There was about a 1 in 10 chance the Blaster Cartridge would fry (yep, destroy!) the NES game console completely so no game would ever run in it again.

You heard that right –

if the “Blaster” worked, games would play without any security check.

But if the Blaster failed, no games would ever work again on the console.

Not a great consumer experience.

Nintendo Demo Samples and Documentation Stolen:

When working with EA’s NES development hardware and software they also provided hardware programming manuals.

I discovered the demo samples in EA’s NES development kit was identical to Sculptured Software’s official NES demos in evidently “re-written” but same layout documentation. Later I would have Nintendo’s official documentation and would observe they, too, contained the same demo samples. They all stole from Nintendo; it was obvious despite alleging they “created it all in a ‘clean room’ isolated environment.” That was Cover-your-ass (CYA) talk.

So, Sculptured’s own development ICE and RAMulators NES documentation (supposedly created in a “clean room” non copyright/patent infringement approach) and EA’s NES documentation were clones of Nintendo’s originals. It was obvious Sculptured copied Nintendo’s documentation and samples to create their own “original” work. Yea, “original” ...

It is interesting that Atari Games had their own samples and code for the NES unlike the other companies. Their development software was written in Forth which was nuts for that era in my opinion, but the engineer loved Forth and Atari let people do mostly whatever they wanted if things delivered on time.

I May Be One of Few People Exposed to See All Four NES Dev Kits and Their IP:

I have to wonder – if I am one of the few people that saw all four NES Development Kits and their source code and examples...and documentation. I wonder – am I one of the few people to know how much inter-company IP theft there really was...

E201 ATARI GAMES



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E201 Atari Games Employee and Contract Developer Support.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55umhi-e201-atari-games-employee-and-contract-developer-support.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/xTbJ9eZPiC0>

Description:

Hear the story of Richard's role and function within Atari Games and its consumer division called Tengen.

Richard shares some of his attributes – like how he was described at Atari by others as “an overclocked Pentium CPU” (Pentiums were the fast chip in the era).

Hear the madness of corporate oppression of creative Atari when Time Warner wholly acquired Atari Games.

Atari Games – Full Time Employee

Atari Games Inroads:

I had known Atari's consumer division Vice President Steve Calfee from my contract work on Cyberball for the NES and so had a foot in the door at Atari Games. Steve oversaw console video game development for platforms like Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), Sega Masters, CD, Genesis, & 32X, etc.

There were so many platforms and cross-platform development was critical for cost management and players have consistent experiences no matter what machine they had. I bargained with Steve that I would work on my own original video games with a small team. I asked that they hire me and give me a salary and bonuses based on my game sales like a royalty but as an employee. I suppose – I was rather presumptuous.

Atari Wanted External Developer Support and Original Games:

Steve wanted more for Atari than just my original games to sell; he wanted technical support for his struggling developers within Atari's console video game division. He wanted me to be his tech guru to fire fight any projects in trouble and solve the most complex problems. To me, whatever...that sounded, and was proven to be easy for me.

In fact, I think being developer support added to my range of skills and exposure to very wild if not outright insane code and engineering designs. I learned a lot working for Atari. Later in life engineers would joke that I had the "Engineering Force" and so could just "feel" and "sense" where bugs or problems were in source code or hardware failures.

Overclocked Pentium CPU:

Steve Calfee was so impressed with my talent that he joked I was a cooled overclocked Pentium Processor (which was the fastest computer chip at the time in the world). He meant that as a great compliment.

Straightshooter Does Not Belong in the White House:

Conversely, Steve called me the "most straight shooter he had ever known" which he intended as a derogatory remark suggesting that I would be better off not saying things so directly without filtering or editing for other people to "embrace".

Steve's perspective would recur throughout my career with people saying things like –

"You don't belong in the White House. You belong in the field, on the wall, somewhere far away from politics and instead focus on winning and succeeding."

It was obvious – my employers wanted me for my raw abilities and did not want me in their lives or businesses otherwise.

I was a necessary part of their operation but one they preferred work somewhere out of sight.

Quitting Atari (Three Times):

I resigned three times from Atari, the first two times resulting in generous counter offers to stay and keep doing what I did for them – firefight flailing external development problems and make games. Things were weird and my resignation "took" the third time after sitting in the CEO, Dan Van Elderen, office from about noon until midnight.

Dan Van, as people called him, towered above people at almost 7' tall. He drove a custom modified Mercedes so he could fold himself into and out of it. Dan was innately intimidating and add to that his gray eyes staring down on you with long awkward silent minutes.... Yea, MINUTES!!!! That IS UNCOMFORTABLE!

Dan mastered the art of emotional and psychological control. He kept talking and talking, trying to convince me it was my best interest to stay with Atari.

He offered a down payment on a house in Cupertino, a big advance on future bonuses, etc. He said my newborn daughter deserved better, what he was offering and how selfish I must be to not just take what is being offered to me?

He asked how I could be disloyal to Atari? But every offer had strings attached that would effectively indenture me for years...no more quitting for me. They figured their complex play and I walked into their web, where they were ready to “lock me in”.

Time Warner Strangled Creativity and Culture:

What precipitated that last resignation from Atari?

Well, Atari Games and Tengen had been transferred as “assets” to Time Warner and merged with their already-existing computer game interactive video group in LA. It was called Time Warner Interactive Group (TWIG). The merged Atari and TWIG companies were re-flagged simply as ‘Time Warner Interactive’.

Time Warner installed a senior executive to be ‘adult supervision’ to oversee Time Warner’s investment for fiscal returns and appropriate public appearances due to shareholder expectations.

Atari had never been a corporate culture and was arguably the opposite of ‘propriety’. Atari Games’ staff drank alcohol and consumed illicit drugs regularly – if not daily. The culture of Atari was one of freedom and wild abandon creative passions. It did not expect employees to ‘partake’ but it looked the other way and even accommodated the most veteran of developers.

People were not happy with their first impressions of Time Warner’s assuming control of Atari.

Drug Tests at Atari Games – Per Time Warner Request:

After Time Warner had established its senior executive ‘adult supervision’ overlord from its Board of Directors things became weirder every week.

It seemed like Time Warner was intent on disrupting Atari’s free flowing life and workstyle and replacing it with a more traditional ‘tech’ company culture. They did not appreciate that some employees openly expressed approval for illegal drug use and excessive partying and booze consumption.

DRUG TESTS! DRUG TEST! DRUG TESTS!

Then came the memo –

All Employees Will Submit to A Drug Test, Or Face Immediate Employment Termination.

Well – this was not far from Atari Corp’s Jack Tramiel ‘Towel Designer’ major mistake (more on that elsewhere).

Within the span of maybe eighteen hours half of Atari Games tendered resignation. So, it took the day the memo went out and part of the next morning for the consequences of Time Warner’s ‘unthinking’ demand of drug tests for Atari Games’ staff.

Seriously! I believe more than three-quarters of Atari employees used illegal drugs every single day, and they would fail any drug test given them.

Time Warner had no choice but to reverse their ‘demand’ and formalize some oddball drug testing policy clause that allowed Atari Games to be excluded from otherwise expectation that all Time Warner employees were ‘drug clean’.

‘So Mote It Be’ –

Time Warner indirectly but knowingly blessed Atari employees’ use of illegal drugs.

Felt Subjugated without Opportunity for Fun or New Products:

People were coming to terms with working as a ‘controlled’ subsidiary of Time Warner. Some of us felt like we were subjugated or otherwise conscripted into working on things we were not as excited about. Things felt like a waste of time.

Time Warner alleged employees could pitch new product ideas, but nothing was greenlit; I had lost faith in working on fun or new things – at least in the foreseeable future.

The wind had left my and many people’s sails.

Free Desk Clocks from Time Warner:

In a seemingly olive branch move Time Warner gifted every employee a pretty desk clock. It was not a big deal to most people but there were those that felt like it was a signal that they were valued and appreciated – after all.

The clocks were placed sporadically throughout Atari Coin-op and Consumer Tengen divisions.

I suppose the clocks were a moderate ‘hit’ considering how many people happily placed them on their desks facing them so they could see the time and date every second of their workday.

And reminding them – that the company cared.

Heh – maybe that was not such a good idea, putting something in front of developers reminding them –

HOW LONG THEY ARE STILL WORKING!!!!

I mean – Casinos don’t show you time...for that very reason. They want you to lose track of time...and play, work longer...

Whatever the reason and reaction – most people liked their Time Warner branded clocks.

Disassembling a Time Warner Clock:

Time Warner seemed to forget that Atari had A LOT of GENIUS people working for it, and many of those geniuses were engineers who largely learned how to program firmware and games independent of any mentor or school or formal education. They were almost always – self-learned, self-taught.

Game engineers, especially those dealing with low level hardware and firmware, are incredibly observant and have a propensity to exam...even deconstruct, disassemble things to reverse-engineer and better understand them.

And so, an enterprising engineer took a Time Warner clock apart.

Time for Betrayal – CCTV Clock Faces:

HORROR of HORRORS!

Time Warner had installed tiny CCTV cameras inside every one of its ‘gifted’ clocks. They were effectively ‘web cam’ spy cameras so management (Time Warner) could watch and monitor employees while at their desks (or at someone else’s desk).

Time Warner asserted the clocks were required, no different than needing a computer or keyboard. It was part of the ‘workstation’.

The revolt was on – AGAIN!

Like Paul Revere’s ‘The British are Coming’ –
‘influencer’ employees ran through the halls and to each office to proclaim the ‘The Spies are Here! The Spies are Here!’

One after another the clocks were tossed in garbage cans or in a dumpster. Some were smashed and crushed. People had fun putting the clocks as ‘heads on pikes’ to showcase their disapproval of being lied to a spied on. I believe one person drove their car over a clock.

All of this transpired in under twenty-four hours.

And in the finale –
Time Warner reversed the clock policy and expectations.

Atari Employees were triumphant, but trust in Time Warner was very low.

E202 Leaving Atar Games Tengen The Spock Kirk Spirk Spectrum



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E202 Leaving Atar Games Tengen The Spock Kirk Spirk Spectrum.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55umnv-e202-leaving-atar-games-tengen-the-spock-kirk-spirk-spectrum.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/MAVr61pI82s>

Description:

Richard shares how much he learned at Atari.

He shares where he falls on the SPIRK Spectrum – the engineering-logical-“Spock” to Creative-Relationship Kirk Spectrum.

Learn how Hidai Nakajima held a Japanese-style corporate all-hands “SHAME MEETING!”

Hear stories of Nolan Bushnell hoping to buy Atari back with ‘big oil money’... and so much more!

Why Leave Atari – Answer: Left as Time Warner Killed Atari:

What precipitated that last resignation from Atari?

If spy clocks and subjugation were not enough reason to leave Atari, there were even more issues.

Things were falling apart with Time Warner calling the shots, pushing bad ideas and game designs and repeated efforts to manipulate, monitor, and control the creative and engineering geniuses that made Atari valuable in the first place.

Worse, Time Warner directed - what tech we should use - yet had never worked on console video games. They were so ignorant - they did not know the right tech choices or where to invest; they naively drew flawed conclusions on platform parallels that would make for bad slow games.

Most notably – they believed video game consoles were just like computers to create software for...they were very wrong.

Atari Games Up for Sale by Displeased Time Warner:

The clash of Atari and Time Warner culture was palpable, and there seemed to be no path that could satisfy both entities.

Time Warner was not happy with Atari Games, and Atari Games was not happy with Time Warner. And so – Time Warner decided to sell their newly formed Time Warner Interactive.

Nolan Bushnell and Bally-Midway Home Entertainment Top Acquisition Contenders:

Consequently... There were potential buyers of Atari passing through at times...

I met Nolan Bushnell, original founder of Atari Games when he came through looking to buy back Atari Games after he sold it long ago.

Apparently, Nolan had “oil money” from the middle east and could pay cash if the price were right. As it turned out though, the price was not right.

However, Nolan did not have enough cash to regain Atari in the end. His hopes and dreams of returning to his glory Atari were dashed.

Midway Home Entertainment Buys Atari – ‘Chop Shops’ Assets:

Instead –

Midway Home Entertainment bought Atari and pieced it out over time until Atari was completely gone.

All that is left of Atari Games are its old games and nostalgia...

- Which no doubt will be capitalized on by low-quality developers churning out an unimaginative repetitive sequel like so many ‘loser’ studios do...

Mother Fixed TVs for Atari Nolan Bushnell:

As an aside- Surprisingly, coincidence was Nolan employed my mother when she fixed TVs as *The Troubleshooter* to repair reclaimed broken TV sets to mount inside coin operated arcade games initially for bars and later arcades.

She would fix TVs in a warehouse day in and day out, being paid on spec per TV that worked, or she would earn nothing at all. She was motivated and earned a record amount for her time repairing TVs.

Crazy world we live in when you learn your mother worked for Atari and chatted up its founder Nolan Bushnell!?

At Home and Learned So Much at Atari:

I gained a lot of experience as an employee with hands-on coding, game design, dedicated and cross-platform engineering, managing a team, and interacting in what may have been the least “corporate” corporation around. Atari was not your ordinary video game company. People regularly self-medicated with booze, recreational drugs, and “adventurous” behaviors. It was such a dichotomy to see excess drugs and booze aside genius engineering and creativity.

I was among “my kind” I felt at Atari. I was naturally like Spock, an alien character dedicated to logic & reason above all else, but I learned talents to be like Star Trek’s “Kirk”, a human character that leads with emotion and integrity, to better engage, inspire, and work with people.

Atari Spocks, Kirks, and Spirks:

Atari people were individually either extreme techie in ala Star Trek Spock or over-the-top loud mouthed like Star Trek Kirk. The whole company was full of Kirks and Spocks, but very few people had both Spock and Kirk traits. People were simply on the “Spock-Kirk Spectrum”, wherever they placed. People in the middle of the spectrum could juggle intense hardware, software, and human challenges but were not necessarily geniuses or innovative or strategic, but they were solid contributors with the Jack of All Trades position on the spectrum. Pure Spocks were deep hardware, firmware, and software engineers and architects. People on the Kirk side of the spectrum were usually game leads while pure Kirks were often Producers or artists.

The nature of spectrum is that things are measured across its span; however, it becomes anomalous when somehow a single unit exists in two places at once. It is sort of a metric paradox. Well, I was such a paradox. I was an extreme pure Spock while also being an extreme pure kirk. The result is I somehow was on BOTH ends of the Spock-Kirk spectrum being highly capable at both. I called myself Spirk, being both Spock and Kirk at the same time.

I rose quickly, being seen as the “Pentium Processor” of the era, a computer core CPU that needed to be actively cooled or it would burn out prematurely. Funny - I did have a fan blowing on me non-stop every year, every day, every hour, every minute. Was Steve right, jesting that I might burn out if I kept going at my regular pace? *No, of course not! I was “THE SPIRK”.*

Crazy Atari:

Atari was crazy.

One artist lived in an RV in the back lot, catching the California sun on its roof during the hottest days; he put a lounge chair on its roof. He was loose with dating – and so had frequent dalliances with numerous partners... It was obvious...because...well, he lived in the parking lot. One unhappy “girlfriend” ran him down in the same parking lot requiring a hospital visit and police report.

Another artist, Manual Laguatan – who went by Manny - blackmailed the company - and another time, had his nose broken by an angry engineer while both were using cocaine arguing over a SF Rush car art design.

An engineer bought a yellow Lamborghini Countach and mounted a kitchen faucet as its hood ornament. He declared the “water faucet” on a multi-hundred-thousand-dollar car showed everyone he was successful! It showed everyone he was insecure but had money to waste. It made him a target of loose gold-digging women because of his flaunting excess, and that is exactly what he wanted.

Engineers and artists and producers fought verbally frequently. They even resorted to fist fights and an occasional all-out brawl. Emotions ran high in Atari, especially when people were drunk or high on drugs (which was more often than people might want to admit, or imagine).

Offsite creative sessions and pitches were offsite “events” for drugs and booze in remote locations like beach hotels. The recreational drugs and booze were intended to stimulate imagination and encourage socializing.

Offsites often ended with police and behind-the-scenes settlements. One such offsite incident was an engineer stealing a nearby home’s kid’s motocross bicycle and riding it in the hotel halls and ultimately into its pool. He was arrested but Atari hired a lawyer for him, paid his fines and court fees, and settled with the plaintiffs whose kid had his bike stolen by a big Atari “dude”.

All silly things and some even criminal...but that was Atari culture - wild, creative, and unaccountable.

Hidai’s Shame:

Before Dan Van Elderen took over from Hidai Nakajima as President and as Atari Games was on the decline in coin-op revenue relative to Atari’s excesses, Hidai called a company-wide meeting to discuss Atari’s performance as an organization spanning consumer and coin-operated games.

Hidai first praised the great history of Atari and extolled the greatness of the people that made it great. Yea, he had a lot of “greats” but he was sincere and made his points clear despite English being his second language; he spoke Japanese natively.

He paused and then said in a deep solemn voice, “We must hang our heads in shame. We have not kept Atari what it was. We are not selling as many games as we did. We must be better. We must do better. Atari depends on us.”

Atari was its own “person”. It was more than a corporate entity. Atari was the spirit of games and creativity and passion.

But Atari was struggling. Coin-op arcade games were not earning the quarters they had anymore. Consumer games had issues with Nintendo litigation and transitions to new generation video game consoles. It was a tough time for Atari.

It was surreal to have a Japanese style “shame meeting”. Just like Atari had its crazy culture, Hidai had cultural influences from Japan as well. Even so, it was weird to me – like out of a TV show.

I remember a movie “Gung Ho” from 1986 that showcased a similar American vs. Japanese work culture clash resulting from a Japanese car company buying an American car company and imposing cultural expectations on American culture.

I lived the “Gung Ho” movie experience that day with Hidai’s day of shame at Atari Games.

E203 AWESOME POSSUM AND FIRE FIGHTING ROBIN WILLIAMS DECLINES



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E203 Awesome Possum and Firefighting and Robin Williams.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55umq6-e203-awesome-possum-and-firefighting-and-robin-williams.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

https://youtu.be/uzEJIPf_AdA

Description:

Richard recounts his experience developing the game Awesome Possum.

He shares the challenge of making the game the most talkative game in video game history.

And – he laments how Robin Williams declined to be the voice of Awesome Possum...

Diverse ‘Characters’ at Atari Games

Saving the Environment One Can at a Time in The Grand Canyon:

As a young kid I had gone to the Grand Canyon with my mother and Bill, a man she lived with along with us kids). We were there for almost two weeks and so - I got bored after exploring the immediate area for a few days.

It was awesome! The Grand Canyon Park had a special nickel refund for EVERY SINGLE SODA OR BEER CAN you returned to any of its in-park stores.

Since I was always motivated to earn money, I decided that would be the sole goal for the rest of our vacation at the Grand Canyon – I would collect aluminum cans and turn them in for money!

The world was a better place I thought for it too. I was cleaning up the environment by picking up cans people left behind all over. And making some money as I did. There were not enough cans in the park area we were staying – and I had to expand my search.

Obtaining a park map with its bus routes I plotted a course that would take me to most every tourist stops so I could branch out across the entire park and be “the can cleaner” of the Grand Canyon.

I amassed over 1,000 cans! The store I returned the cans to was in such dismay and so proud that I was cleaning the park as such a young child. They took a photo of me holding a big garbage bag full of foot-stomped aluminum cans and said they would publish it with an article in the local newspaper. “Kid saves the environment one can at a time – 1,000 cans!”

Awesome Possum Environmental Superhero:

Many years later when I was in Speech and Debate within 10th grade in Live Oak High School, while attending an accelerated self-learning pilot program called Kleine Schule.

I had to learn to be a confident public speaker - and how to assess the audience - of judges, teachers, parents, peers, competitors, and the like – and to employ logic and critical thinking – and methods of organization. Those were all natural and intuitive to me. And so - I spent most of my time focusing on learning the “soft skills” of public speaking.

The “debate” aspect of my coursework focused on Oxford Legal Style debate, Lincoln-Douglas Values Style debate, Mock Court Trials, and Student Congress and Senate.

The “speech” component of my class was mostly Original Prose and Poetry (called OPP in speech and debate circles) beyond a few specific assigned topics.

How does all that relate? Well... My Grand Canyon Can collection became the origin of my most successful of my Original Prose. I made a story about a possum that whose wild environment was being destroyed by pollution and cities being built across the possum and his friends’ home forest.

This marsupial was incensed by the destruction of all he held dear and acted. Empowered by Nature’s Force the possum was blessed and transformed into Awesome Possum the Environmental Superhero.

Awesome Possum would don human lab coats and the like as disguises to infiltrate the human world and fight back against their invasion and willful abuse of the environment. He was silly – he could jump up just as an elevator would hit the ground after falling to avoid being hurt at all of course.

Atari's Awesome Possum:

Atari Games was looking for new ideas to make into games and they loved the idea of making a Sonic/Mario-like platform jumper game with a mascot character. I pitched Awesome Possum as their mascot and argued saving the environment was in vogue and it was just the right thing to do anyway.

It was contagious! Everyone across Atari Games and its consumer division fell in love with The Possum. Artists made Christmas Cards with “Awesome” on its cover saying catch phrases. The Possum became so famous – he secured partnerships with World Wildlife Federation, Rainforest Café, and more.

I developed what was then the most advanced audio compression and playback tech for the Sega Genesis, extending a middleware package called GEMs. The middleware was disassembled, and reverse engineered and then modified to add several compression algorithms on its parallel Z80 microprocessor to its 68000 main CPU.

Awesome Possum would ship with more spoken voice and music than any other video game in history before it. It received both love and hate for how much The Possum babbled and babbled. Yea, he just did not ever stop talking. Even in death he exclaimed things like, “Da! I am road pizza!”

Robin Williams:

We tried to get Robin Williams to be the voice of Actor for Awesome Possum. We thought he would be especially interested because he made a movie, *Toy*, recently and seemed motivated to support good initiatives like saving the environment. Unfortunately, we never made it through Robin's agent. The agent simply told us Robin was not interested in doing a game with Atari at this time. Nothing you can say to that...

Weird Wally:

The audio director, Earl Vickers, in Atari found a radio and commercial voice actor named Weird Wally. Wally was, well, weird. But quirky personality and appearance aside, Wally was great. He had a super positive attitude and wide range of voices he easily called upon. In only a few sessions we recorded everything we needed and had two pickup sessions for late additions and refinements.

Atari People and Projects

I worked with a diverse group of people on a range of product genres across all sorts of gaming devices and consoles. I met a lot of people and learned a lot.

Earl's Rain Forest Fungus:

One person I met was named Earl Vickers.

Earl was super creative and loved to write stories and compose music and design sound effects. He was a huge partner and champion for *Awesome Possum*. He worked with outside parties to write over three hundred educational environmental questions that the Animal Tribunal would use to judge the player between action levels.

Alas, Earl had contracted some rare lung fungus when he went on a private one-on-one tour deep into the rain forests of South America. He described going so deep that he saw bugs ten times the size anywhere in the USA – dragonfly like things, spiders, beetles, ... He detailed the wild animals and snakes that could kill you in minutes if not seconds.

What he did not expect were tiny spores getting into his lungs and growing into a fungus. There was no surgery, drug, or anti-biotic not even radiation that could kill the fungus without killing Earl. He would take an anti-inflammatory and anti-fungal medication for the rest of his life to prevent it from growing further and eventually asphyxiating him.

RBI Baseball:

When I first joined Atari Tengen, I was asked to take on RBI Baseball to extend the franchise and make good money. I worked on a several of RBI Baseball releases on Sega Genesis and Sega 32X.

Game Firefighter:

I also was asked to be a game firefighter. In fact, it was the real reason Atari hired me it turned out. My official job was making video games. My pragmatic job was to be on call to jump in and figure out anything and everything wrong with a game or its development team and fix it or cancel it. Fixing was always the priority.

I saved so many games.

Bit Masters:

Atari Tengen had a contract with a company named Bit Masters which represented a handful of developers – engineers and artists plus one of the founding engineer’s mother as secretary/reception/admin.

Small companies like Bit Masters were often “alter ego” companies where they were really development teams built entirely around one “rock star” programmer or designer-team leader that both inspired and delivered incredible feats.

Bit Masters was no different. Although there were two formal founders only one of the founders was a “rock star”. Dave was that rock star for Bit Masters.

Dave’s LARPing and Girlfriend:

Dave was a cliché nerd with his love of live action role playing (LARPing) where he would dress up as a medieval knight and enter fake combat and adventures with friends likewise donning adventurer’s garb and wielding foam swords and staves.

Dave met his girlfriend at a LARP event – The Renaissance Faire in Novato, CA. She was weird and obviously a gold digger... to anyone else who saw her.

It had not occurred to me that men who LARPed often were nerds or geeks with money! And they were desperate to date “GIRLS!”

LARPing events were perfect hunting grounds for gold diggers... lots of prey to choose from.

It was sad but Dave fell for this girl hook line and sinker despite her overt pressure to spend, spend, and spend – ON HER!

Well, it was none of my business what he did with his life and money.

Primal Rage Salvaged at the Airport:

One evening as *Primal Rage* for the Super Nintendo Entertainment System (SNES) and Sega Genesis was maybe three months out from being finished by Bit Masters, I learned Dave had a meltdown emotionally after a fight with his gold-digging girlfriend.

Dave was at the San Jose International Airport awaiting a plane to fly and see his girlfriend who went to Hawaii without him to prove her independence. It was wacky!

Dave was dropping everything to prove his love for her like out of a Romantic Comedy. Again, wacky, and stupid!

I went to the airport and found him at the boarding gate. Airport security was not effective or much present back then...

Through clever arguments and heartfelt pleas, I persuaded Dave to return to Bit Masters to finish the game and trust his girlfriend would want him to succeed over throwing everything away for a shot in the dark romantic gesture.

Well, they broke up and things never did work out. I do not believe his flying to Hawaii would have made a difference in their relationship, but it would have resulted in Bit Masters going bankrupt. He made the right decision.

Primal Rage Shipped On-time with My Help:

Dave could not pull off the work needed to finish Primal Rage even with his returned focus on it over his girlfriend woes.

I stepped in to take over the Sega Genesis version of Primal Rage and provided surgical targeted help on the Super Nintendo version while Dave focused on it. I diverted my small internal Tengen staff to help on both versions as well.

Saving Primal Rage became an all-hands-on-deck drive.

Primal Rage shipped on time on all platforms. Success!

And Bit Masters were paid handsome bonuses for “their achievement” – despite the fact that it was me and my team that made it happen.

E204 Lessons from Atari



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E204 Lessons from Atari and Tengen.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55umri-e204-lessons-from-atari-and-tengen.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/BDrzGNM9xPQ>

Description:

Hear key nuggets of wisdom from working at Atari Games...

Never do Someone Half a Favor – Quality, Polish Over Quantity, Haste

Atari had some fundamental tenants about making games. The one tenant that stuck with me the most was from VP Steve Calfee –

“Never do half a favor, and that includes game features”.

Steve and Atari evangelized the idea that any feature made for a game had to be full, complete, and polished. There had to be natural intuitive transitions from one “scene” to the next. Nothing should feel rushed or leaving the player questioning why something did or did not happen. And whatever the player sees can be interacted with in some way.

The biggest “half favor” failing was missing the Action-Defeat-Action-Reward loop, where the player must learn how to do things in the game, get defeated so victory will be sweet, and then master the things in the game to “win” the scene. And then the gratuitous reward – a romp through the once-threatening foes slaughtering them in a satisfying wake of destruction, or big score tally counting excitedly to a fanfare finale. Or a reclaiming of a lost treasure like a skateboard or romantic partner. Games were formulaic even if set in different genres.

Some game designers would design too many features so developers spent all their time delivering them to “minimum viable feature” quality versus delivering fewer features to highly polished, fun quality. Over-designing was the doom of any otherwise good game concept or feature.

I quoted Atari’s “never do someone [or a game feature] half a favor” throughout my career in hopes of guiding designers and developers and producers to find a healthy balance between “addiction to iteration” and “shovel-ware” development strategy (AKA dirt-quality software shoveled into retail).

I argued there was a balance to support a profitable business while legitimately delivering a satisfying fun game experience to the consumer.

But inexperienced designers often believed every idea they came up with was genius and must be in the game, and so none of their features are great or polished – they are at best “okay”. The consequence is their game is not as well received or reviewed as it might have been and sells fewer copies and the designer gets a lesser “gig” next time. He spirals down and out of the video game industry – all because he designed too much and had no design filter or razor (more on that later).

Good games usually have the leanest designs that deliver the intended immersion and experience without clouding or confusing or mucking it up with a pile of dung dripping all around the core feature(s).

I would espouse and strive to live by Steve’s “Never do half a favor” for the rest of my life because it made sense to me to do only what you know can be great. I despise the idea of doing something poorly or hastily because the result is something I do not appreciate or see as long-term value; it would just be shunt, a hack, a quick fix.

Conclusion - I would not do half favors. I would only do FULL FAVORS or NOTHING AT ALL.

Design for The Consumer, NOT FOR YOURSELF:

Over and over, I have seen designers focus on concepts and idea they would love to experience and play themselves. While someone ‘is the market’ designing ‘for yourself’ will work well – BECAUSE you are literally ‘designing for the consumer’, you just happen to be ‘the consumer’.

But what happens when you are asked to work on games that are interesting but not the types of games you play or like yourself?

The answer is always the same –

- 1) Determine who your target consumer is and figure out what they want in their games.
- 2) Prototype and focus test features and concepts with the target consumer demographic / psychographic.
- 3) Refine the feature or concept according to consumer test feedback.

It should be obvious from that list – there was and is never a moment when the designer should ask themselves ‘what do I want?’

The designer needs to ask, ‘what does the consumer want?’

Bottom-line: Always design for the target consumer, NOT FOR YOURSELF!

Max 20% ‘New’ Design Features:

Atari used to say that a game cannot evolve more than 10-20% ‘new’ in concept or features.

The idea was that people can only grok and learn ‘so much at a time’, and if they are given too much information to process, they will become unhappy and blame the game for their negative feelings. And so, each game or feature was supposed to build off a pre-existing game feature or mechanic... so the consumer can ‘grok’ it.

In the same way, games have brand identity and characters and environments and often rewards and loot. And they have multiplayer matchmaking lobbies and all sorts of ‘technical’ functional features too. And game genres like Shooters, Racing, Sports, Adventure, Role Playing, and so forth often had vastly different and complicated interfaces and ‘traditional’ designs and features.

To make games fun and understandable, game and interface and feature and world and story design must all be ‘extensions’ from familiar things to the consumer. Too much change will result in a bad game experience. Too little change will be seen as a repetitive lazy rip-off sequel.

What it means –

Apply a maximum of 20% ‘new’ design features in any original or sequel game.

Anything more...or much less...will likely result in a bad, failed game.

Stay True to Brand and Game – or Your Product and Company will Die:

Products and companies succeed for a multitude of different reasons.

My experience has been that designers or executives that drift from their ‘core’ business or culture that made them successful in the first place destroy those companies and products.

Consumers choose your company and its product for a reason. It is okay to evolve a product by adding up to 20% new and different features (as explained elsewhere). But changing more can not only add complexity and confusion to users but can create consternation with ‘how it feels’ as a brand.

It is complicated to explain –

Know Your Brand and Stay True to It!

Or Face the Consequences of Consumer Backlash!

Sold Soul to Sports:

I had to adopt the ‘design for the consumer’ concept myself and hold onto it close to my heart. For I ‘sold my soul to sports’ when I worked for Atari Games... and later, for Electronic Arts.

Never had I been ‘into sports’ and was likewise not into computer or video game sports.

However, I wanted to make money and advance in my career. It was obvious that Adventure and Role-Playing Games earned a fraction of the revenue Sports and Racing games earned.

Thus - I made a deal with Atari VP Steve Calfee to work on the RBI Baseball series – sports games - and made Dick Vitale Awesome Baby Basketball – a sports game.

It felt like I had sacrificed a part of me by embracing making games for other people to just play and not for myself or to ‘make them better people’ with compelling stories.

But my income and position and responsibility rose steadily as I engaged with Sports games. And it was my Sports experience that aided by eventual working for EA Sports in Canada.

Dick Vitale Shoots Alligator on Golf Course with Shotgun:

Heh, another aside—

Dick Vitale pulled a shotgun from his golfclub bag and shot an invading alligator on a Florida golf course during a visit to him.

Coin-Op Delivery to Steve Jobs in Cupertino:

The Quality Assurance (QA) Manager Mike Klug often deliver coin-op arcade machines locally in the Bay Area of Silicon Valley near Atari Games’ headquarters in Milpitas, CA.

He had the fortune of being asked to deliver a coin-op to Steve Jobs’ house in Cupertino. But Steve’s house did not have a doorway large enough to move the huge arcade machine into the room he wanted it in. Even removing doors and hinges was not enough to get the arcade machine in the room.

There was a solution! There was an enclosed courtyard that had an internal-facing large sliding window that could reach the room. But the only way into the courtyard was the sky it looked up towards. Mike just had to raise the coin-op up and over the house down into the courtyard and then through the sliding window – and delivered!

How does one raise a several hundred-pound heavy wooden arcade cabinet packed with electronics and a huge TV display?

Answer – a helicopter!

That is right – Atari hired a utility helicopter to pick up and transport the coin-op arcade unit to Steve Jobs’ house.

That was the purest sign of wealth and decadence to a gamer! To me!

Air Conditioning Delivery “Break” (While We Waited):

Another tale of helicopters and Atari was a hot day we were all asked to go outside and wait for a massive new air conditioning unit to be delivered and installed on the Atari Headquarters building (where we all worked).

Having been evacuated for our safety a huge double-propeller utility helicopter arrived carrying a multi-ton air conditioning unit. The unit was to be lowered onto the building and then bolted down before wired and activated.

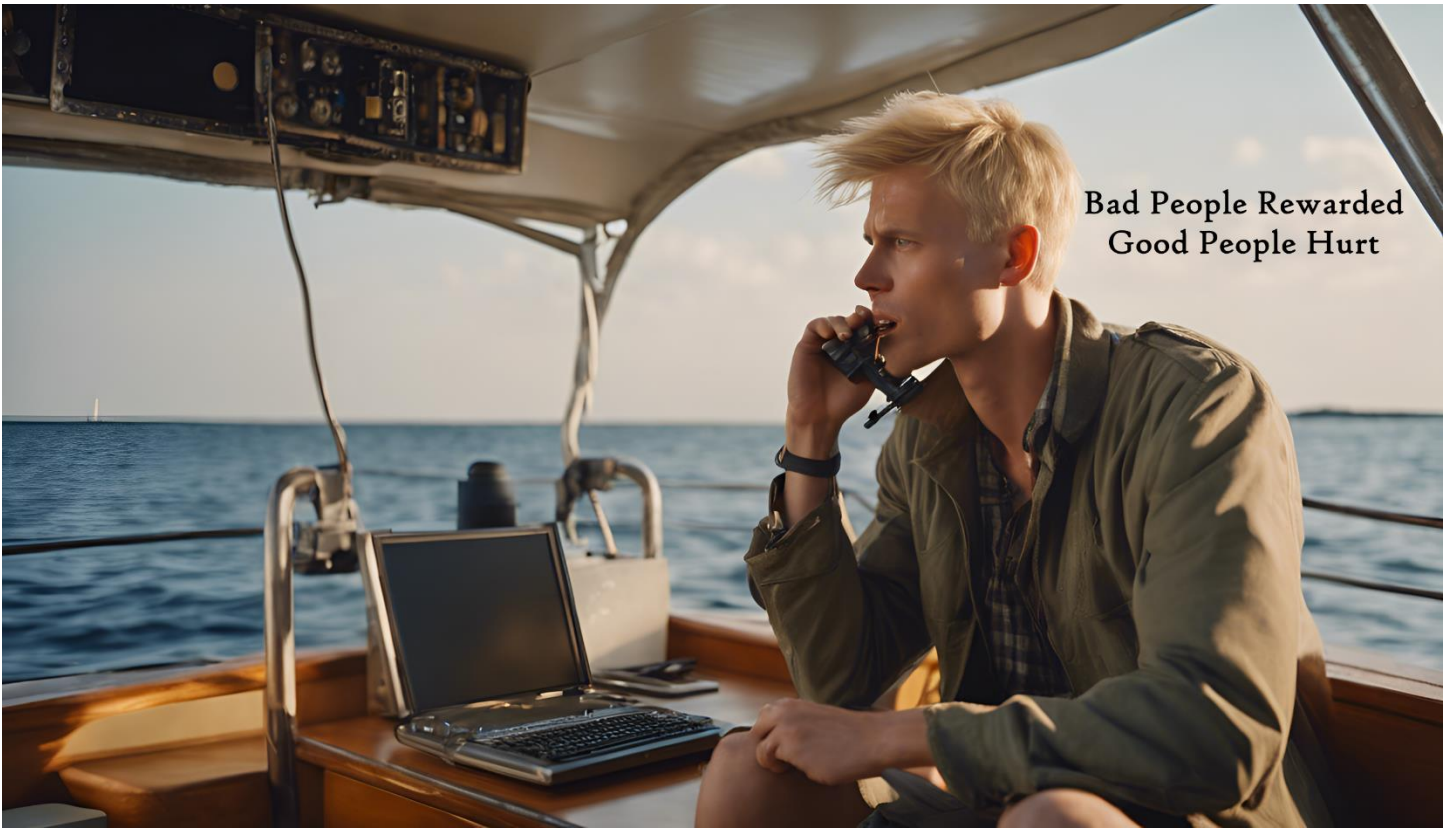
As we waited, the chopper stopped in motion and hovered. We saw the pilot pull out a banana and ate it as we watched. He then pulled out a half sandwich and ate it, washing it down drinking from a thermos. He spent fifteen minutes – to the SECOND on his break.

Later it was explained to us that they were a union outfit, and he had a break due, and so he took his fifteen-minute break.

Oh well, that day made clear to me that rules are stupid if they do not make sense and hurt or limit other people unnecessarily.

The idea that a union would enforce such a rigid policy made me question the value or intelligence of unions or their leaders.

E205 Bad People Rewarded Good People Hurt



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E205 Bad People Rewarded Good People Hurt.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55un0r-e205-bad-people-rewarded-good-people-hurt.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/MHYBoijgVV8>

Description:

Hear the tale of Tim Crossman and how bad behavior is rewarded more often than good behavior is.

See how freedom and flexibility in work can result in adrift lost souls...

Learn about the conversational 'integrity of humankind' topic, and how it can enlighten people about true human motivation and behavior.

Tim Crossman Joins Consumer Group from Coin-Op Division:

A senior long-time veteran video game engineer, Tim Crossman, transferred from joined Atari Games' coin-op division to its consumer group Tengen. He wanted to shift his focus to home game experiences away from the bigger arcade games.

His first project was a version of San Francisco Rush for the Nintendo 64.

Tim Crossman Escaping Coin-Op:

Tim was trying to escape burn-out in Atari and had lost his motivation to do much of anything.

He imagined he could be a solo engineer and make a Nintendo 64 (N64) game with only need audio and art provided to him. And since he planned to “down port” arcade coin-op games to home video consoles like the N64 he envisioned using down-sampled art, sound, and music.

He thought he could be – solo, independent.

Tim Crossman Had Addiction and Behavior Issues:

Atari Games attracted the greatest of the greats within the game industry. However, extraordinary people seem to have extraordinary problems and baggage.

Tim was no exception – he had extraordinary coding skills but had a lot of personal problems.

Tim had a big cocaine addiction. When he did not have “coke”, he turned to hard liquor. The consequence was an unpredictable Tim Crossman at any given hour or day. Some days he had cocaine...some days he had hard liquor...some days – he had both.

Yelling at the top of his lungs became an expected behavior of his. Even striking and shoving fellow employees he disagreed with was not uncommon. Tim was unstable.

He joined Tengen as a wild man, and he got “wilder” afterwards.

But Tim's raw talent as a coder was so strong that Atari forgave his transgressions and behavior problems.

Tim Went Too Far for Atari:

Eventually Atari Tengen could no longer look the other way as Tim had become so belligerent that Legal Counsel advised the company to terminate Tim's employment with a gag order against sharing details on his prior “covered up” or “paid off” behavioral issues, public disturbances, or legal problems.

Atari had a history of “protecting” its employees from themselves. But there comes a time when someone has fallen so far that they are bringing others down with them.

Tim Crossman had reached the point of no return for Atari Games.

He was “fired” by asking him to resign and become a contract developer for Atari Tengen.

Tim Crossman “Bad Behavior” Rewarded with Generous Contract *Hot Wheels*:

The consequence of being a raging alcoholic and cocaine addicted lunatic was that Tim was rewarded with a lucrative contract to develop *Hot Wheels* on the Nintendo 64 for Atari Tengen.

“Bad People” Lavishly Rewarded – 9 out of 10 people are selfish “bad”:

Again – how is it that bad people get lavish rewards and wealth handed to them? And I must work my butt off to attain scraps!?

I wondered if my beliefs of integrity and morality and ethics were flawed. I considered the ramifications – rewards and punishments – for being a libertine money-grubbing untrustworthy louse.

Being “bad” seemed wrong to me – on the inside. But I struggled to identify more successful “good” people than “bad” people.

In fact – I concluded 9 out of 10 people are selfish and “bad”, and those same 9 out of 10 people generally are more successful than the 1 out of 10 that has genuine integrity and personal ethics.

The “Integrity Test” Game Exercise:

I developed an “Integrity Test” over time.

- 1) Gather a group of people together – ideally over dinner or drinks so the conversation is casual and loose.
- 2) Ask each person to answer,
 - “How many people out of 10 will lie to benefit themselves or avoid trouble?”
 - Most people start admitting it could be as high as 7 to 9.
 - It is eye-opening for people to hear high numbers from peers.
- 3) Ask each person to answer,
 - “How many people out of 10 will lie to benefit themselves, but at the expense of someone else?”
 - Most people imagine fewer people will hurt someone and so typically reduce their numbers to 4 to 6.
 - It surprises people to draw the PERCENTAGE comparison – “40 to 60% of people will hurt someone to benefit themselves!”
- 4) Ask each person to answer,
 - “How many people out of 10 will ally with other people lie to benefit themselves even at the expense of others?”
 - People reluctantly acknowledge at least 1 person out of 10 will ally with other “bad” people to achieve ill goals even at the expense of others.
 - Some people will say more than 1 person – as high as 2 or 3 people will forge a syndicate to achieve “bad” objectives.
 - This gets dicey for people to embrace and answer because they are beginning to realize that there far more “bad” people in the world than they consciously realized before this “Integrity Test” game.
- 5) Ask each person to answer,
 - “What does it take to prevent or mitigate syndicates of “bad” people that do not care if they hurt others to achieve their goals?”
 - There is no “right answer” to this or any of the prior questions.
 - I offer that the answer depends on the size of the group being managed –
 - < 10 people can be managed by personal relationships.
 - 10 - 50 people require a “sheriff” and “deputies”.
 - 51-99 people require a “police force”.

- 100-199 people require a “Bureau of Investigation (FBI)”.
- 200+ people require additional subdivisions with their own “FBI, Police Force, Sheriff and Deputies”.
- I share my own journey seeing corruption evolve into syndicates as we grew EA Canada’s Fusion division from four employees to 325 employees and between 12 and 17 external concurrent contract games under development at any given time.

When the “Integrity Test” is completed, it is rare to find anyone not moved by the exercise.

Some people are visibly shaken from self-reflection that they “thought people were good by-and-large” but now “think people are inherently selfish and may hurt you”.

I have always enjoyed helping people see the truth of things. Especially from their own perspective. This was just an exercise... to open their eyes.

Tim Crossman in the Florida Keyes – Floating Freelance Game Developer:

What ever happened to Tim Crossman?

Well, Tim did receive a *Hot Wheels* for Nintendo 64 development contract in concert with his resignation from his tumultuous end times at Atari Games.

With his reward for exhibiting bad behavior, Tim set off to prepare his independence as a freelance game developer.

Tim imagined he would buy a 30 foot “mini yacht” in Monterey Bay and sale all the way to the Florida Keyes where he would dock and set himself up as a floating freelance video game developer.

It took him over a month to make the trek and he had tales of storms and misadventures. He traversed the Panama Canal in his little thirty-foot vessel. But he made it!

Tim Crossman arrived at the Florida Keyes and secured a full-time dock mooring for his new “used boat”.

Trouble in the Keyes:

Tim struggled to make progress on *Hot Wheels* for the Nintendo 64. He could not focus.

The weather was awful and made it nearly impossible to code and work within his boat. He had not considered he might need Air Conditioning on a boat. But Florida was humid and hot and sticky and buggy.

Tim did not do his homework, nor had he even visited his fantasy destination.

Tim made a mistake moving to the Florida Keyes.

Tim Crossman - No Accountability, Low Emotional Intelligence:

Tim Crossman had benefited from Atari Games huge bonuses paid out for the many phenomenally successful coin-op video games. Tim had made A LOT OF MONEY!!!

However, Tim SPENT A LOT OF MONEY!!!

As an adult single man, Tim Crossman had no accountability and mad money to spend.

He spent every dollar he earned no matter how huge the amount.

In many ways Tim was an idiot savant. He was a brilliant coder but utterly moronic emotional intelligence and had no fiscal responsibility.

Tim Crossman – Inevitable Failure:

Without making progress there were no milestone payments coming Tim's way. He had already received "extra" advances to help him get by while he tried to catch up on his lagging development work.

He had burned through all his past savings and advances against his *Hot Wheels* contract.

Depressed and unable to make progress with his contract, Tim was desperate.

Tim Crossman – The End:

Atari's consumer division Director Bill Hindorff visited Tim on his boat in the Florida Keyes. He had informed Tim of his planned arrival - but caught an unlikely earlier flight. Having landed early in Florida, Bill headed straight to Tim's mooring in his rental car.

Bill was shocked and horrified to find Tim jerry rigging a shotgun with a cord attached to its trigger and its barrel held in a vice mount on his boat's dinette table.

Tim was preparing to commit suicide by shooting himself with a shotgun... before Bill arrived!

Bill was able talk Tim "off the ledge" so-to-speak. But Tim had lost all hope and was despairing without any path to recovery. He had no remedy he was convinced! He ruined his life! He was emotionally totally lost.

911! Bill contacted authorities who took Tim Crossman away for psychiatric care and treatment.

Hot Wheels was canceled. It would be developed by another company years in the future.

Months later Bill gave me more details about Tim's situation. Tim had been released from psychiatric hold and evaluation and took a job driving a taxi in the Keyes.

I never heard anything about Tim Crossman again.

His story was over.

E206 The Manny Maneuver All About Leverage



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E206 The Manny Maneuver All About Leverage.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55un10-e206-the-manny-maneuver-all-about-leverage.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/efC9oHoXGeQ>

Description:

Learn what the ‘Manny Maneuver’ is...

See how leverage is a powerful tool – but can be abused in actions like blackmail.

Hear how ‘bad people’ can time their blackmail or coercion such that there is little choice but to acquiesce to their demands.

There can be eventual consequences to selfish abusive behavior.

SGI Artist Workstations and 3D Artists and Animators:

SGI was the top-of-the-line dedicated 3D hardware called the Reality Machine; it was so hyped and corresponding expensive that companies reluctantly bought a few and would try and keep them used around the clock.

Atari Games Coin-op and Tengen divisions both purchased SGI workstations and hired SGI proven artists and animators. The combination was rare and so often required 3D artists and animators to be trained on the SGI workstation which required more resources, experts, and money.

Did I mention the cost of those SGI workstations? They ranged from \$100,000 to just under \$500,000 USD! They were stupid money expensive!

Those artists once they got good at using SGIs often became arrogant and demanded huge raises and bonuses due to their unique skills (paid to learn at the company but that did not engender loyalty).

SGI Artist Workstations:

When finishing San Francisco Rush an artist named Manuel Laguatan (AKA Manny) decided it was the perfect time to demand a huge raise and bonus.

Atari Tengen declared he was blackmailing them by making his demands so close to when the game had to be done to satisfy retail distribution and sales commitments.

Manuel declared they should have always paid him more money and so now was the time he could make them pay what he had due him. He decreed his work was clearly critical so why not pay him accordingly?

Manny Maneuver Blackmailing at Opportune “Power” Moment:

Well, Atari coined the artist’s demand for money and bonus while putting the team and the game and the company in jeopardy “the Manny Maneuver”.

The Manny Maneuver became a reference that meant a selfish employee’s willingness to blackmail the company if ever in a position of power to do so no matter the harm to anyone else.

Anyone that did the Manny Maneuver... was bad.

All About Leverage:

In essence, Atari Games decided that it could no longer trust its employees to do their jobs out of integrity or honor. It was all about money and leverage.

I learned indirectly from Manny that leverage was an incredibly powerful tool but could also be easily abused... and by all sides. And – once you lose leverage, retribution may come...

Humankind is Inherently Selfish and Therefore Evil:

Manny reinforced an underlying belief of mine that humankind is inherently selfish, and selfishness is the root of most evil; therefore, humankind is inherently evil.

Manny exemplified this – evil is rooted in selfishness at the expense of others.

Karmic Justice Smited Manny:

Manny succeeded in extorting Atari in paying him a bonus and awarding him a raise because of his blackmailing them at a critical time – right before the game was to ship and fulfill consumer and retailer commitments.

Karma had its justice on Manny, even if driven by retaliatory vengeance of the abused Atari leadership.

Atari raised its executive arm and smited Manny - down after the game shipped.

Manny was fired as no longer being a “fit” for Atari Games due to his blackmailing the company and putting company reputation and revenue and staff employment at risk.

He was lucky Atari did not seek civil litigation to reclaim the money he blackmailed them for and further pursue potential criminal charges.

But Manny was “done”. His newfound reputation yielded a bonus and temporary boost of monthly income. For this “bump” he fell off the cliff of employability.

Manny never recovered that I know of. He certainly did not continue in the video game industry.

Karmic Justice bit Manny in the Ass!

E207 PEOPLE AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES



Local File:

[.\LibertyBooksVideos\E207 People and Missed Opportunities.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55un1n-e207-people-and-missed-opportunities.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/h60cJbO0NAA>

Description:

Hear the tale of multi-E Emmy winning composer and musician Doug Brandon, from his tours to working in the video game industry.

Learn about Reality Bytes and missed opportunities...

Reality Bytes Missed Opportunity

Simon the Unknown Smooth-Talking “Biz Guy”:

Atari Tengen hired a smooth-talking artist named Simon who owned three SGI workstations he had acquired during bankruptcy proceedings at a company he worked at previously as a SGI 3D Artist.

Simon was not happy to just be an artist. He was not a talented artist anyway so his unhappiness may have been a blessing because it motivated him to pursue other career opportunities.

However, in the moment Simon was an SGI 3D artist for Atari Tengen.

Simon kept looking for ways to expand his influence and opportunities.

He sought a partnership to form a new company with the cornerstone leaders in Atari Tengen –

1. Richard Seaborne, Design & Engineering (me) – Senior Staff Firmware Lead Engineer, Team Manager, and Producer; Yea, that really was my title! Long story there...

What can I say? C’est Moi! It was me!

Doug Brandon – Emmy Winning Composer:

2. Doug Brandon, Sound & Music – Emmy winning composer and sound designer.

Doug held integrity in high regard and was prepared to make his opinions known to those that “needed to know it”. He was kind and considerate to those who deserved it and he was vicious to those that likewise deserved it. He smoothly got along with everyone else. Doug was a passionate and expressive man.

He won several Emmy awards for music compositions for mainstream television daytime dramas (AKA soap operas) and advertisement jingles.

Doug Brandon – Transition to Video Games from TV and Record Industries:

He decided to transition into video games believing it was the future of entertainment. He was right, albeit he may have anticipated its rate of growth incorrectly.

The game industry took a lot longer to grow, but it grew a lot bigger than we could ever imagined!

To make his transition into games Doug interviewed at Atari Games (with my team and me). Doug was the best composer we had interviewed by a lot, so much so that we wondered why he wanted to leave his glamorous and successful Hollywood and Record industry music world and join video games? We hired Doug, of course. He was a huge boon to our team. He had sound composition skills as well, but we already had an in-house sound effects expert Earl Vickers and so Doug was assigned music composition as his primary responsibility.

Doug Brandon – Commuted between Southern and Northern California:

Doug lived in Southern California with his well-established family in school and mortgaged suburban house. He was a successful musician and composer but that amounted to a solid good living where Doug was able to purchase a house and two cars with his wife and son and daughter. Sure, he had loans on everything and was leveraged to the hilt but that was “normal” for the era.

To avoid uprooting his family Doug devised a way to fly to and from Atari Games for “free”. Southwest Airlines offered a loyalty incentive program that awarded a transferrable roundtrip ticket to anywhere it flew after you flew twenty-six flights (so thirteen roundtrips). Doug would purchase far in advance bulk ticket bundles to secure super low fares, and when he redeemed his thirteen roundtrip “Go-Anywhere Southwest Goes” Award he immediately sold it to recoup most if not all his local commuter flight bundle costs.

Of course, Doug had to stay in a motel or hotel, but he likewise negotiated “special deals” with them to get super low rates or stay “free” in exchange for his performing in their “piano bars” or jazz clubs some evenings. Doug could play any instrument I could name. He was incredibly versatile and flexible.

Doug Brandon – Toured with Performers like Aretha Franklyn:

Doug had a raspy voice resulting from a complex vocal cord surgery. He was shiny baldheaded and sported an earring. Doug dressed between a hipster and yuppy. He was a “cool cat” by anyone’s standards. Afterall, he toured with Aretha Franklyn. He had to be cool.

As an aside – Doug had two tales when he was on tour with Aretha Franklyn that stood out to me.

Doug Brandon – “Evening Escort” Declined:

- I. He was at a bar late night after a performance and an attractive woman approached him and spent fifteen minutes chatting him up. She was sweet and kind and flattering of the musician touring with Aretha Franklyn.

Believing the woman was possibly a groupie of some sort, Doug thwarted her advances explaining that he was married and could not “do anything”.

The woman recoiled and returned leaning into Doug’s face whispering, “Hmm, I am ‘available’ but I am not ‘free’. I thought you understood.” She respectfully smiled, rose, and left Doug to resume his lonely glass of merlot (he preferred merlot given the choice of wines).

She was apparently a “lady of the evening” offering her personal and intimate “escort services” for a fee. Yea, she was a prostitute.

Doug’s tale surprised me that he could be that naïve given his musician background, but I had to remind myself that he was a commercial musician that performed in fancy nightclubs or big venues – and not in seedy dive-y bars or dens.

He worked for decades at Disney Land as a director and performer while he wrote TV advertisement jingles and TV Show theme songs and background music. His “gigs” did not always pay a lot, but they kept him busy and visible and relevant.

For all the places Doug had worked over his career he somehow had not frequented or worked in any establishment that supported prostitution (overtly or covertly) and so he had a blinds spot to it. Again, I was dismayed how someone in the entertainment industry could have missed something that prevalent and that obvious.

Yep, people have blind spots no matter how obvious they are to others.

Doug Brandon – Cash or Drugs or Mixed Pay:

- II. It was common on tour to get paid in cash. At the end of a given tour segment the tour team would go individually to the “manager” to get paid. Doug described that at one point the manager offered a choice to –

- a. Get paid the normal cash amount agreed upon.
- b. Get paid in drugs of choice at twice the value of the otherwise cash amount.
- c. Choose a combination of the two choices – they would do the math.

The story sounded wild, but I had seen how Atari embraced the entertainment industry’s drug and booze and partying play hard and work hard lifestyle.

Doug declined the drug option explaining that he needed every dollar for his family and to buy a house for them (which he did – in fact, he would buy two houses later in life much after his years at Atari).

Doug Brandon – Landed at Microsoft after Working with Mark Phoenix:

They say, “It’s a small world”, and I can attest it may be small but the game industry is much smaller.

Doug found himself working with Mark Phoenix as a subcontractor and as an employee over the years.

The last job I knew Doug secured was as an audio and media director at Microsoft’s Xbox Studios. He has always worked hard and been a true friend – one of the few I have ever known.

E208 Reality Bytes with Jules Marino Too



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E208 Reality Bytes and The Godfather Jules.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55unf1-e208-reality-bytes-and-the-godfather-jules.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/kjeQFWCGYNU>

Description:

Hear the tale of journeyman artist and creative genius Jules Marino, from his work on cartoons to movies within the USA and internationally.

Learn more about Reality Bytes and missed opportunities...

Jules Marino – World Renowned TV and Movie Animation Journeyman Artist:

3. Jules Marino, Art & Animation – World renowned artist from cartoons to film.

Jules was a most-bald sixty-something Italian tall'ish thinly built man. He wore thick gold wire-rimmed spectacles that made him stand out. He wore jeans and a sportscoat – sometimes a white sportscoat to stand out as an “artist”. Likewise, he wore a fedora and carried a bright umbrella at times.

While I believe much of what Jules said and wore and did was to stand out as an extrovert; however, it may have been he just loved the style so much that he adopted it wholesale.

Jules was an amazing artist and animator with an incredible background.

Jules Marino – Fat Albert, He-Man, Cool World, and More:

Jules Marino had an impressive resume and artist “reel”. He was the lead artist and journeyman for the animated TV series Fat Albert.

He was one of the main artists and animators for the original He-Man: Masters of the Universe cartoon series. He worked on numerous Hanna Barbara cartoons and traveled the world to work with animation houses and luminaries globally.

Jules even worked on blockbuster movie animation like the mixed cartoon-reality movie “Cool World”.

His work was so popular that his son sold drawings and sketches of Jules’ at school, and he had an endless customer base excited to get original materials from their favorite TV shows.

Yea – Jules was the real deal. Incredible talent and down-to-earth good guy personality.

Jules Marino – 2D Art and Animation Phenomenal; Challenging Transition to 3D:

Jules was an “animation and 2D art god”.

Jules was not a 3D artist – at all.

After years of effort Jules became a competent 3D artist and animator. But he was never great and certainly a shadow of his 2D and traditional cell animation renowned self.

Sometimes I wondered if Jules made the right decision to transition from TV and Film animation to video game animation.

In retrospect I believe Jules was correct that video games would be a fantastic future for art and animation; however, he was a little too early to leverage his talents in the blossoming game industry.

And moving from 2D to 3D ... might have been too much for him, late in his career.

Jules Marino – Master of Craft (2D,3D Composition, Modeling, Lighting, Animation):

Jules was successful regardless of entering the game industry “tech and 3D blind”. He overcame his ignorance and was able to work in 2D and 3D composition, modeling, lighting, and animation.

He was a master of his craft... even if challenged in 3D.

I held great respect for Jules seeing him learn so much new technology and processes and even ways of thinking and he was over sixty years old. Jules was an impressive man.

Jules Marino – Lost Everything to Ex-Wife:

Jules' ex-wife wanted to "take Jules for he was worth" and had secured the Chicago condo they owned along with their car and furniture. In other words – Jules was able to split whatever cash they had and was responsible for half of any debt they had.

But Jules was also responsible for spousal support for half the term of his marriage, which accounted for all the money they had saved and then some. He was facing the outcome that he would owe more money to his wife than they had for getting divorced. He settled taking all debt in lieu of having to come up with cash to pay his ex-wife more money than they had to begin with.

It was crazy to Jules that his wife could cheat on him and file for divorce only for him to lose his home, his car, and all money AND assume all credit card debt and car payments. The only thing he did not have to keep paying was the mortgage on the condo his wife took sole ownership of.

Jules Marino – Screwed by Ex-Wife and the Internal Revenue Service:

After his divorce was filed Jules left the United States to work with cartoon animation houses abroad – in South Korea, Germany, London, all over Europe.

While Jules enjoyed being the famous American animator, he missed his home country. He wanted to return but it had been many years – nearly a decade since he had left the States.

Having rebuilt a small nest egg working internationally Jules booked his return trip to the United States. He planned to reboot his life in America once more.

Upon passing the security gate two police officers approached Jules and informed him that he was under arrest and read him his Maranda rights. He was under arrest for tax evasion!

Yep, Jules did not file any tax forms while he worked internationally. He did not think it was necessary – he was wrong. The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) is finicky about filing a tax return every year no matter where you live.

Factoid – the IRS has "agreements" with most countries that U.S. Taxpayers must pay the "higher tax" of whatever country they reside in or the United States (to the higher taxing country).

The IRS did not want to put Jules in jail but rather intended to scare him into paying them what he owed.

The IRS informed Jules that he owed almost two hundred thousand dollars in back taxes resulting from the sale of his condo and liquidation of stocks right after he left the country.

Apparently, his ex-wife sold the condo and their stocks and kept the cash but left the tax due on the account's owner Jules Marino. It was a sneaky move by his ex-wife's lawyer and one that ruined Jules for the remainder of his life.

The IRS offered a "deal" to Jules – garnish his wages, alas - so much that he could barely afford a one-bedroom apartment an hour away in a "dicey 'hood". It was wrong! And if he left the country now, he would be formally absconding and be a wanted international felon. He really did not have a choice.

A year later the California State Franchise [Tax] Board contacted Jules and informed him that he likewise owned them over a hundred thousand dollars resulting from some complicated Illinois-California real estate and divorce tax agreement.

It did not matter – State Tax was just more tax debt piled on to Jules’ impossible Federal Tax Debt Hill. It was all impossible anyway to pay off and have any kind of life at all.

And to top off Jules’ tax misfortune – it is not allowed to declare bankruptcy to get out of your taxes if you are employable.

Jules was screwed by his ex-wife and the IRS!

He would work the rest of his life to pay against the debt that he would never pay off and have a correspondingly lower quality of life forever more.

It was obvious to me that wicked people can do horrible things to good, kind people. Jules did not deserve what happened to him, but it did happen to him none-the-less.

Jules Marino – The Godfather:

We had gone to the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Chicago, IL. A video game developer rented a pub downtown and invited everyone from Atari to join them. They hoped to score a contract and so were “wining and dining” us and our team in hopes to ingratiate themselves with us.

Jules “Dressed to the Nines” as the saying goes. He wore his usual thick-rimmed gold spectacles. He wore wingtip shiny white leather shoes, bright white flowing slacks, white shirt, and super bright sports coat. And, of course, he had a white fedora. If that was not enough of a “bright and noticeable sight” Jules donned two huge overlapping golden necklace and a golden belt buckle holding an off-white belt. Jules did not have a suit vest but was otherwise insanely dapper and well dressed.

He smoked a lot and so Jules asked Doug Brandon and I to join him outside where he could smoke. The pub was downtown on the “bad side” of town. Jules thought it was prudent for us to go as a group outside since the smoking section was at an alley entrance.

Maybe half a cigarette in and a bum approached us and asked for a handout. Doug raspy voice told the man to get lost.

The bum turned into a mugger quickly. “I asked for some money! Give me some money!” he threatened.

Jules did not hesitate and looked at the guy and exclaimed, “Get out of here, you idiot!” He yelled so loud that everyone up and down the alley and inside the pub heard him.

The bum looked agitated and unsure what his next move would be – attack us, flee, or wait and see what we do. He stood there waiting, thinking.

A big black guy ran up and panicked, “Dude, that’s the Godfather! The Fuckin’ Godfather! You gonna die, motha’ fuck’a!” The black man ran down the road screaming, “The Godfather is here! The Godfather is here! He is back! He taking the city back!”

The would-be mugger seeing the panick of the huge man embraced the myth that Jules was, in fact, the Godfather returned to retake Chicago, and he fled in fear himself.

What a fiction! And people believed it!?

I could only presume drugs and alcohol feeble-minded these locals to be impressionable and prone to fantasies of mobsters and unrest.

Jules Marino – Projecting Confidence to Scare Off Threats:

Doug and I could not fathom how Jules could be so loud and commanding and boisterous given the potential of being murdered right there in an alleyway entrance by as seedy downtown Chicago bar.

But that is what happened, and it was fortunate Jules was insanely mistaken by brain addled denizens of the alley as the returning Godfather to take back Chicago like out of a TV show.

Later on Jules provided a clue as to why he dressed so “standout” dapper with bright clothing and dazzling bling jewelry. In his past he grew up in the Chicago area in the ‘hood.

He explained that it was paramount to project confidence and authority in the ‘hood or anytime you are threatened. Showing weakness or fleeing tells the lion to attack. Standing your ground tall and wide even threatening back, he asserted, almost always scares off the potential attacker.

It worked out in this case – thank goodness. I was out of my element and so apparently it was good to have the “Godfather” on my side.

Jules Marino – Delivering “Packages” in the ‘Hood:

Jules recounted a highlight of his ‘hood life.

As a young man, he had a job delivering “packages” from local fine jewelry retailers to their buyers, in unmarked sealed boxes. He admitted he believed there might be other things in those boxes, but his job was to deliver them as a legitimate delivery man. And so, he did – he delivered the suspicious unmarked boxes to their recipients without tampering or questioning anything about them.

He looked a little ashamed of a time when he compromised his integrity. Jules always valued honor and holding to promises and your “word”.

I surmised that much like I rationalized my pirating games as a youth this was Jules’ version of piracy. I “had no choice” because I had no money to buy the games and thus was not taking anything from anyone else by obtaining and playing games digitally, so I reasoned.

Jules did not have money and thus needed to earn it, and the only job he could get was a dubious delivery gig. It may have been legit or may not have been. He never knew and so could presume it was legitimate. By not investigating he gave himself plausible deniability legally and for his integrity.

Of course – that argument could be countered as a ‘mind trick’ rationalization.

His apologetic guilty expression made Doug and I think he believed there were definitely “other” things than jewelry and diamonds in the “packages” he delivered... even if he never investigated.

Jules Marino – Conceal Carry Permit and a Pistol:

Jules’ “package” delivery job for fine jewelry and diamonds retailers represented a risky service transporting high-value content throughout the Chicago area. Moreover, the buyers for these diamonds and jewelry were invariably in dicey neighborhoods to unsavory people.

His employers advised Jules to carry a pistol with him in the event of a conflict or robbery. Afterall, he was delivering expensive merchandise... well worth, being mugged for.

But Chicago did not allow carrying a pistol around with you unless you were approved by the city police department with a special “conceal carry permit” for firearms. Jules did not have any kind of gun permit, nor did he own a gun for that matter.

He set out to address both issues – he needed a gun and a license to carry it around.

Jules Marino – Obtaining a Pistol:

Jules first challenge was obtaining a firearm.

That turned out to be easy for Jules. He went to pawn shop and asked about pistols, whereupon an array of handguns was laid out in front him to choose from. It was that easy – “ask and ye shall receive [firearms!]”

Jules did not know a lot about the guns and so looked for the most intimidating pistol that he could stick in a pocket or hang below his arm – it had to be invisible to the public. Or, of course, it would not be “CONCEALED”.

He saw a black revolver with a mahogany pistol grip. It was a little black devil with bulging rotating chamber revealing from its barrel-end bullet tips proving its loaded to its victim. And it had enough heft to be an adequate cudgel like brass knuckles.

Jules picked up the revolver and said, “This is it! Scary as hell to whip this out and whack someone on the head and tell ‘em you could kill them. Yea, this will do great. Anything you can tell me about it?”

The pawnshop owner knew a lot about all the firearms. He seemed proud of how much he knew and was compelled to explain in great detail all the pistols and their pros & cons. Jules never expected a history and capability lesson on pistols – especially from a pawnshop merchant.

The revolver Jules was keen on was a Smith & Wesson Model 36 .38 caliber known as “the Chief’s Special”. The Chief’s Special was called that because it was unveiled in October 1950 at a conference for the International Association of Chiefs of Police. It did not have the stopping power of bigger higher caliber gun but it looked intimidating and it could be a surprise to anyone assaulting him.

Jules bought mahogany-handled black “the Chief’s Special” revolver with cash – no ID, no background check, nothing. Choose the gun, pay for it, walk out with the gun along with complimentary bullets in the pistol and another full box of .38 pistol rounds to go.

Jules Marino – Obtaining a Pistol and Firearm Conceal Carry License:

Next Jules needed a “conceal carry permit” license so he could legally have the gun with him when he went on deliveries (or anywhere for that matter!).

This was less straight forward. He went to the police department and filled out the paperwork. Later he was asked to visit the police station to interview with the “approving officer”.

The officer Jules met with told Jules he had no justification as a delivery boy to carry a weapon of any kind. Jules’ argument that he was carrying high value merchandise was insufficient. The officer told Jules to use an armed transport service and not some “boy” running packages around with a gun.

Jules Marino – The Bribe:

As Jules left the officer mentioned, “I love photography but, on my salary, nice cameras and lenses are way beyond what I can afford. Like there is this amazing Canonflex 35mm camera that would just make my day, you know. I get all positive about things when I can take good photos.”

Jules knew it was a request for a bribe. He returned to his employers to tell them he failed to get a pistol permit but that he would still deliver the goods. He said he might even take the pistol into especially bad areas anyway.

His employers demanded Jules uphold the law – he thought that was ironic given what he suspected was in those “packages” he delivered. But, again, maybe the packages genuinely did contain jewelry and diamonds. But there were A LOT of diamond and jewelry buying going on daily – apparently HIGH consumption items. And sometimes – the same people bought more jewelry.

The head jeweler told Jules to go out and buy the camera and wrap it up and put it on the officer’s desk. Then return to him and ask how his photography is going and tell him your employer asked that you re-apply for the permit.

Jules followed his employer’s directions to the word.

The officer smiled and answered he had recently acquired his dream camera the Cannonflex 35mm and that he was having a great time taking photos.

Jules’ conceal carry permit was approved and issued to him... right then.

And the officer was... happy...with is new ‘found’ camera.

Jules Marino – Movies and a Conceal Carry Firearm:

Jules was “in business” delivering packages armed with his Chief’s Special pistol. It was like money burning a hole in his pocket. He wanted to show it off and use it. But it was a gun and he had to be responsible.

One of Jules’ pastimes was going to the movie theater. During one movie a group of rude obnoxious hoodlums sat in the seat row in front of Jules and a buddy that was with him. They talked and joked and laughed incessantly.

Jules asked they keep it down so he could watch the movie without their disruption. He swears he was respectful but clear he wanted to watch the movie in peace.

They had no interest in that and scoffed at Jules, and resumed their chatter.

Jules had a pistol! He whipped it out and slammed it along side the ear of a chatterbox hoodlum, “Shut the fuck up you pieces of shit!”

Whoa, Jules told us he was a lot more “direct” and violent then. Yea – apparently so!

Jules said he trained the barrel of his Chief’s Special on the guy next to the man with ringing and aching ear and head, “When someone asks you nice to be quiet, you listen to them. You - Fucking do it! You got me!?” Got it!?”

The previously defiant boisterous hoodlums groveled and pleaded not to be shot and apologized profusely.

Jules admitted he felt powerful, and he was “the authority”. It was a feeling he had not had before.

He also realized he had a lot of witnesses, and he likely broke several laws there. But it was also dark. He dashed out the emergency exit.

Jules suffered no consequences from his movie theater pistol whipping experience. It emboldened him he told us to be a bit of a “gangster” during his younger Chicago years. He never shot anyone but admitted he pulled a gun on people on a few occasions, but only to get out of a bind he declared.

There it was – Jules had the “Godfather” in him all along.

“The Godfather” just needed his time to come out and retake Chicago!

Jules was a great storyteller.

Jules Marino – Teacher and Retired:

Fast forward to Jules’ sunset years. He “soft retired” working for an extremely wealthy (allegedly billionaire) that founded an art college on one of his ranches out in Colorado. He built a fancy campus to support hundreds of students but targeted to have fifty or so students at any given time.

The college was not intended to make money. It was intended to be the billionaire’s playpen complete with playmates and activities and events and guests. It was a grand adventure for the billionaire.

And Jules was his star teacher! He was enamored with Jules and his professional and personal life stories. Jules was fun, charismatic, articulate, and exciting. His energy was contagious. He was a perfect centerpiece for the unique billionaire’s art college in Colorado.

I heard Jules loved it there - and I never heard from him again.

SGI Simon, The Unlikable:

And then – there was SGI Simon, the Unlikable.

4. Simon The Unlikable Smooth-Talking Snake Oil Salesman personality – and biz expert

Thin and unremarkable in appearance Simon wore plain, young professional clothing most of the time – jeans with collared non-button polo-style and occasionally a sportcoat to look professional.

Simon came across as a smooth-talking snake oil salesman. People did not trust him on first impression. But he was tenacious. He would attach to ideas or people like a barnacle and not let go. His persistence overcame most people’s initial offput feeling.

While his integrity was flexible and ethics situational, he was clever if not smart. He knew how people thought and what motivated them. He understood leverage and manipulation like a science. He was strategic in planning.

Were it not for his sleazy demeanor Simon would have been unstoppable much like Steve Jobs at Apple Computer.

But Simon was unlikable. He was an unlikeable Steve Jobs.

Reality Bytes Never Happened - Abandoned Public Offering Company:

Simon pitched to us his idea of creating a company called *Reality Bytes* that we would take public in a year or two as the home video game market was exploding. He argued our resumes would make investors salivate and he could pitch like no one else.

Simon dreamed we would be multi-millionaires in under five years!

The dream of being independent once more but with huge resources to make the most amazing games that I wanted to make sounded too good to be true.

Things never work out the way people say. I had been betrayed and hurt by so many people – even my own mother. And Simon was sleazy and a great salesman.

I wondered if I was being suckered into a con and was being bamboozled!

Not alone, Jules and Doug also had misgivings about Simon and were especially concerned about entering a business agreement with him. We all worried he might get us caught up in some fraud or deal we could not get out of or might even get in trouble or go to prison over.

I had been involved with the Chinese mafia Thong. I had seen horrible abuses intentionally and unintentional in my life. I was not about to walk into the jaws of threat and risk when my “Spidey Sense” lizard-brain was telling me to walk away.

In the end, we abandoned the idea of *Reality Bytes*.

In hindsight – I wonder – maybe, we should have pursued it.

Life-changing Pivotal Decisions:

There are pivotal decisions like pursuing or not pursuing *Reality Bytes* or interviewing for a “shoe-in” VP of Engineering at Microsoft for a pilot game division.

Overestimate What Can Be Done in One Year, Underestimate for Three Years:

Life’s key moment pivotal decisions are small at the start but have huge, outsized effect on your life decades later.

I have often said, “People overestimate what they can do in one year, but they underestimate what they can do in three years.”

Setting the right initial course for a long journey is critical because over distance small errors amplify that the destination may be missed entirely. And even with the right up front course it is critical to formalize waypoints to course correct.

What We Do Makes a Difference:

I guess in the end – maybe my life would have been wildly different had I pursued *Reality Bytes* or Microsoft Games VP of Engineering so long ago. Or perhaps neither would have worked out and things would be worse.

Not knowing whether my trajectory would have been different or not had become a philosophical idea for me. I did not realize then how decisions in life can be so impactful both in the near and long term.

I do know now - What we make - and what do - makes a difference!

Wrong About Game Contracting Fading Away:

Another wrong prognostication I made...

I had convinced myself that the era of contract game development was fading away in preference to bigger internal corporate game development. That was why I had sought employment at Atari Games in the first place.

It became apparent that I was wrong about contract development fading.

In fact, contract development was blossoming into a huge opportunity for freelancers to grow into development studios.

But... I became an employee... perhaps another mistake...

E209 DEBAUCHERY AT ATARI



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E209 Debauchery at Atari Games.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55unf8-e209-debauchery-at-atari-games.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/7DNFvcoTFys>

Description:

Richard shares stories of debauchery and questionable morality while working at Atari Games.

He shares how Atari Games coin-op was separate and culturally very different than Atari Games consumer division called Tengen.

Hear how many people called Richard “Grampa Richard” because he did not party or goof off like most people; and he did not partake in ‘partying’ or ‘sin’ even when in Las Vegas.

And - Richard shares some of quips and anecdotes to work and live by...

Atari's 'Dark Moments'

Debauchery at Atari – Chicken Ranch and Adult Film Industry at CES:

I remember some of Atari's greater moments of debauchery. Debauchery describes them quite well.

While at one Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas we were staying at the Sands hotel which "coincidentally" was hosting an Alternative Lifestyle and Adult Film Industry event and expo. Sure, maybe it really was just a coincidence. But you will think maybe it was intentional when you hear of some other instances of debauchery.

During another CES, a game tester that came to demo games on the showroom floor, came to me and said, "We are all going to meet with Hide Nakajima [the President of Atari at the time] to go to the Chicken Ranch".

The so-called Chicken Ranch was their colloquial name for a house of prostitution located outside the Las Vegas city limit because prostitution is illegal anywhere in Las Vegas.

Well, in general I considered it potentially inappropriate to participate in paid-for "relations" but also believed like Cervantes wrote in Don Quixote that professional escorts and "service" providers are okay so long as their calling is elective and explicitly uncoerced.

Moreover, for me... I was in a committed relationship – and I was honorable, and loyal - and I believed it was unacceptable to participate, even inappropriate and rude to ask me to go to such a place - of prostitution... and of debauchery.

Debauchery at Atari – offsite:

Debauchery was infused in Atari's culture. It was evident in the hotels its management chose to stay at, in the "bonus" activities like offers to go to the Chicken Ranch and gamble with "free" cash, offsite events with illicit drugs and booze available 24/7, legal fees and private settlements paid to "bury" high performing "valued" employees, and so much more.

Grandpa Richard at Atari:

Over time - people started calling me "Grand Pa" because I did not engage in Atari's partying lifestyle in the company, at offsites, or at conferences or conventions. No – I just did my job. I championed integrity and clarity of purpose.

While I considered myself to be the moral compass and backbone of Atari Tengen, they seemed to see me more as a "Fuddy Duddy that stayed clear of parties like a grand pa". Just because I was not into drinking booze, using recreational drugs, or going to the "Chicken Ranch" in Vegas (with Atari Japanese president Hide Nakajima like many others) I became "Grand Pa".

Well, I considered the title of Grand Pa to be a complement to my integrity and firmly holding true to my beliefs.

My grandfather had high integrity... I felt it was...fine, being a grand pa.

Well Paid at Atari – But Conflicted with Consumer Downstream from Coin-Op:

Atari was a company of extraordinary people that came together to create and do extraordinary things. The culture was one of passion and excitement. Nothing was impossible. And everyone should be compensated for their genius – damn it!

Indeed, Atari engineers and artists and designers and producers – everyone – were paid handsomely in salary but excessively in bonuses.

One artist I knew, Alan Murphy who later in my career would work with me on *Prophecy: The Fall of Trinadon*, *Peter Pan and The Pirates*, and *Escape From Hell* was paid over thirty thousand dollars most corporate Quarters. That meant he cleared about one hundred twenty thousand a year beyond his salary and benefits.

While it was a great income for a graphic artist in the era it paled in comparison to the engineer's bonuses. One such engineer, Tim Crossman, earned nearly three hundred thousand dollars EACH QUARTER! That is right, he earned over ONE MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR in bonus money.

You might ask yourself why were they paid so much in bonuses and why were there such discrepancies in the payout amounts?

Atari had a bonus system whereby each project was allocated a percentage of all net game sales to be distributed to the development and non-development teams that developed, marketed, or supported the game's creation and sale. Everyone was included - artists, designers, hardware & firmware engineers, programmers, producers, managers, testers, and non-development team staff like marketing, sales, administration, HR, Legal, ... You get the idea – everyone.

Now, that might sound egalitarian. It was not. Not at all. The Project Lead, always a Senior Engineer with a penchant for leadership, would propose to the division director and vice president a split across everyone involved with the game's creation and release.

The project lead was supposed to determine the bonus distribution according to “how critical” each person was to the project which was loosely defined as “did they have special talents no one else had?” After that it was considered obligatory low percent here or there so people got something.

Central support teams may have received one or two percentage points, but they would receive that from a dozen games which added up to bonuses on par with artists on the game development teams.

Not As Well Paid at Atari Consumer Division Tengen:

While Atari Coin-Op was minting cash and paying insanely high bonuses to its staff the consumer division teams did not benefit as much because the home consumer market was still small (albeit growing quickly) and so bonuses “royalty based” were correspondingly smaller.

Tengen (later renamed to Time Warner Interactive) was Atari Games' consumer division. It was formed as a legally separate corporate entity to avoid legal entanglements with its former half which following messy lawsuits separated as Atari Corp.

Atari vs Sega Showdown – My Deal with Sega of America Was Legendary:

Sega of America suffered under its Genesis Launch leadership starting with its head of development Ken Balhasar – Ken's producers and teams were all in over their heads – trying to launch the Sega Genesis in America... and had no idea what they were doing.

Despite Sega's bad executive team and being late to market the Sega Genesis was successful. It could have been much more successful, and Sega of Japan knew it. Sega of Japan replaced much of Sega of America's leadership team in hopes of improving their console investment's return.

Sega began signing deals with quality game developers and were prepared to pay premium rates to get the best game creators working for them – exclusively if possible.

Sega was on the rise with its Genesis and was quickly becoming a serious rival to Nintendo.

Deal with Sega of America:

Seeing my “old way of life” as a contractor being viable and being frustrated with Atari Games not paying consumer division staff as well as the company compensated its coin-operated arcade game developers.

One morning I received a phone call from a producer at Sega of America. He had heard that I might be looking for something outside Atari.

With my disappointment in my compensation inequity and an opportunity to return to contracting my interest was piqued.

Within a few weeks Sega offered me a lucrative contract to deliver a Sega Genesis game that I would design and develop entirely independently with Sega publishing the game as a First Party Sega title.

I had an awesome contract with Sega of America!

Atari Games at Consumer Electronics Shows (CES):

Timing was not ideal when I learned of my contract offer from Sega of America. I was attending the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas as an Atari Games employee.

Although attending conventions was seen as a perk, I was to work the booth and talk to press and consumers alike on the floor.

Richard’s Atari Resignation:

I could not find the VP I reported to, Steve Calfee, and so informed the Consumer Division Director Bill Hindorff of my resignation. He told me that he did not want to accept my resignation letter and that I should give it only to Steve since he was my direct manager.

Bill returned to me later in the day on the show floor and told me that VP of Development Steve Calfee, President Dan Van Elderen, VP of Marketing Ted Hoff, and the CFO (who was also Atari’s Chief Attorney)... that they all wanted to meet me for breakfast.

That was a lot of “brass” that wanted to meet with me.

Richard’s Treasure Island Failed Resignation:

Due to the executive’s already established packed schedules they would meet at 6am for breakfast at Treasure Island casino to discuss my resignation from Atari.

It was surreal.

VP of Consumer Development Steve Calfee praised my amazing engineering and problem-solving talents.

Division Director Bill Hindorff, also in attendance, said he had never known anyone as fast or insightful as I was in coding.

VP of Marketing Ted Hoff extolled my design and leadership skills beyond engineering.

And President Dan Van (as the president preferred to be called) was sickeningly sweet and complimentary. He was ordinarily intimidating and not so dripping sweet. But he was clearly employing his “sweet manipulation” technique on me to gain my trust.

But I had worked with all these people, and I knew their “methods”. But I also knew they were good intentioned at their core even if their ethics were something “situational”.

Situational Ethics:

When I first learned the phrase “Situational Ethics” I was struck with how ironic it was – ethics which should represent integrity changes based on the situation.

Apparently in business, ethical decisions are different than personal decisions. It might be okay to harm people to benefit the people in your business or town or country. Of course, you would never harm your immediate people in your family or village or town or maybe in your country.

But it is okay to hurt people outside “your clan” if it benefits the group even when it might hurt someone outside “your clan”.

Situational Ethics sounded like an excuse to do bad things in the name of “not me” making decisions for the business or government or mob of people.

I abhorred the idea that integrity, ethics, and morality were malleable based on the situation.

THAT CANNOT BE TRUE – ETHICS ARE NOT SITUATIONAL unless you are evil!

“The Sandwich” – Wrap Tough Messages with Praise on Either Side:

Dan Van did teach me something constructive. I learned a technique to deliver unpleasant information in a palatable way from Dan Van, which I later coined “The Sandwich”.

“The Sandwich” concept is simple – it seeks to make unpleasant information palatable by combining the negativity with positivity in hopes of canceling out adverse reactions to the message.

“The Sandwich” premise remains the same whether spoken or written –

- 1) open with a compliment.
- 2) reveal the “meat” negative message (or new tasks/assignments).
- 3) close with praise, often related to the benefit of overcoming the negative “meat”.

The sandwich is not dissimilar to wrapping a pill in meat or cheese or bread or a treat to encourage a pet to take medicine. The same idea was here with “the sandwich” – wrap the “medicine” meat message with tasty “bread” compliments.

“The Deal” vs. “No Contract”:

And there was the CFO and chief attorney who was clearly operating more as attorney than financial officer in this morning meeting.

He asked me with a cold glare, “So Richard, if your contract that you think you have was canceled would you want to remain working for us at Atari?”

His question felt immediately threatening. I tensed and my body language was hostile.

The lawyer saw his approach was a mistake. He shifted his pitch, “I mean, we would like to offer you a promotion, a raise, and a bonus! We were already planning it all, but this contract threw a wrench in their plans. So we are offering it to you now.”

“Would you consider staying with us and taking our offer, and not taking the contract with Sega?”, he queried.

I was not expecting their offer. They had no details. They could give me a dollar raise, a dollar bonus, and call me “executive doofus janitor”. Nothing they said was a commitment at all.

I figured asking point blank for specifics I could make an informed decision instead of an emotional one. I could only challenge, “What kind of bonus are you talking about? How much of a raise? What title would I have?”

“\$35,000 cash bonus. \$17,000 raise. Whatever title you want – just tell us...just has to be corporate, company appropriate.”

Well, that was a good deal - considering as an employee - I would earn all that ongoing as a salary – all without needing to go looking for contracts. And I still worried that contract development could yet fade away...even if it had not yet faded, as I previously speculated.

I told the executive breakfast club that I accepted their terms, but only if Sega canceled my contract because I signed it and my honor necessitated, I follow through with it.

Dan Van smiled, “No problem, Richard. I will look into the contract for you. We have deal, right?”

I replied, “Yes.” I felt a bit like I was making a deal with the devil, but it was all crazy and scary and complimentary and ...

It was tough to process everything and map out what my career might be based on the choices present.

Atari Games delivered everything they offered... I have nothing negative to say of the experience – in the end.

Sega of America’s Freak-Out:

The Monday following my return from the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) my phone rang. It was the producer from Sega of America Ed Annunziata who offered me a development contract for the Sega Genesis video game console.

Ed said firmly and slowly and clearly, “Richard, I am here with the Sega of Japan Director that oversees American operations. Our president and every vice president and director are in my office with me. I am going to read something to you okay...?” He did not wait for an answer...

“I am ashamed. We are ashamed. We should not have offended you or our friends at Atari by extending a contract offer to you. It was shameful. We betrayed you and our friends at Atari. I am sorry. We are sorry,” he apparently read from his notes.

There was pause and a chorus of “I am so sorry” rang through the phone.

Another pause and Ed resumed speaking, “What the fuck, Richard!? I mean, we had a deal. Then I get a call from the President of Sega of Japan saying that I must immediately cancel the contract and talk to the Japanese Director running American operations. I do not know who the heck you are outside your reputation, but you must walk on water and code like a god to have people call across the ocean to cancel your contract just to keep you as their employee. WHAT THE FUCK!!!!”

I was almost speechless, “Umm, I don’t know what to say. It was crazy...”

Ed cut me off, “Dude, I get it. You are amazing. They love you. They have crazy close relationships with Japanese executives and so killed the deal. For me, it is over. Not worth it. Good luck, dude. You’re not working with me – again.” He hung up. I never heard from Annunziata again.

Well, I stayed with Atari Games [this time]. I would resign three total times before I REALLY left Atari Games’ employment to join Mindscape to rescue Chessmaster (more on that later).

Atari Games vs Atari Corp – Two Atari’s and Consumer Loophole to form Tengen:

So, there was Atari then there was Atari Games (Coin-op arcade games and consumer video games maker and publisher) and Atari Corp (video game console maker and consumer video game maker and publisher). Atari split into two separate companies with entirely independent staff, management, bank accounts, etc. They were entirely separate from each other legally and owned by different entities.

The intended split of market ownership was – Atari Corp owns consumer hardware and Atari games owns arcade hardware and both Atari’s can make games. Unfortunately, the two Atari’s fought and litigated over who had the rights over which Atari intellectual properties (AKA who owned the games that would become consumer games or be sequel’ed) and who should own the Atari Brand name in the consumer market.

It turned out the split was not as black and white as was originally envisioned. The trust in each other disintegrated when big money in the consumer market was becoming clear. In fact, the consumer market slowly began to overtake the Coin-op market. Atari Corp had not made much money on its Atari ST computer or new home video game consoles like the Atari Jaguar.

Atari Jaguar Game Console Fails, Fails again as CoJag Coin-op in-cabinet “console”:

The Atari Jaguar did so poorly they creatively made it into an Arcade black box called Co-Jag to swap use bespoke “giant” game cartridges in arcade machines so games could be swapped as easily as changing a computer video card and the player control panel plus cabinet artwork. It was a good idea – but it came to late. The coin-op market was already fading fast. Atari Corp never recovered. And Atari Games struggled.

The fight was on – over the living room gaming experience.

Tengen Created as Legal Loophole and Foil against Atari Corp and Nintendo:

Atari Games formed Tengen - to avoid the legal ambiguity of what games it could develop under the Atari name. Tengen formally licensed games from Atari Coin-Op and paid a royalty back to Atari Games (or Atari Corp if they owned that specific game IP rights). It all made sense. That was why Tengen was downstream from the epicenter of Atari – Coin Operated stand-up arcade video game machines.

Tengen was formed as a separate legal entity for a much different reason in parallel. Some might argue it was the REAL reason Tengen was formed...to bypass Atari Corp, all so they could make consumer games without scrutiny or limitation.

Atari wanted to make games on the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) but did not want to pay Nintendo what it considered an extortion “royalty” through an exorbitant distribution security and manufacturing license fee and additional fee for using its custom memory controller chip.

E210 Nintendo Rigid Market Control Monopoly



Nintendo Monopoly and Security Chip

Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E210 Nintendo Rigid Market Control Monopoly.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55undq-e210-nintendo-rigid-market-control-monopoly.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/MEkXzao4AW0>

Description:

Learn about the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) and how Nintendo used a security chip to create a video game console monopoly.

Nintendo Originated from Gambling and Pachinko Machines:

As an aside, few people seem to realize that Nintendo of America / Europe / Japan are all originated from Nintendo of Japan which was a gambling pachinko machine manufacturer and distributed as well as gambling establishment operator. Nintendo allegedly had ties with the Japanese Yakuza or better known as Ninjas which is why Nintendo headquarters remains in in Kyoto Japan also the capital of modern-day Yakuza.

Nintendo Rigid Policies and Direction from Japan:

Dealing with Nintendo was as much dealing with layered Japanese cultures and hierarchies and obtuse inflexible policies as it was deal with the NES tech – variable controllers, configurable Read-Only Memory (ROM) and “saved-game” RAM, and configurable multi-memory bank switch chip. There was a lot to dealing with the Nintendo from a tech perspective, but I found their corporate and employee “attitude” was extremely harsh and “superior to everyone else”.

Whenever things were not clear and by-the-book, all things were deferred to the “Japanese Director” in the office. Sometimes the in-office “Japanese Director” would not need to decide something - but usually that was only because an identical situation like it came before.

When new problems happened and came to the Japanese Director the issues would unerringly be delayed for 24 hours so a conference consultation could occur between the local in-office Japanese Director and his Foreign Counterpart remote Corporate Director including whatever staff they deemed necessary and appropriate.

Companies Compromised their Integrity to Sell on the NES:

The consequence of the remote direction - and rigid policies - was that companies grew to hate and despise Nintendo. But the NES console was selling crazy everywhere and so companies compromised their ethics and beliefs to get in on the mad selling action that was making companies and individuals rich.

There were initiatives to convince Nintendo either to change their policies or prices OR face litigation and Anti-Trust from the FTC. Nintendo held firm and hired more and more lawyers. They vowed to fight and crush the opposition before they would kau tau to pirates and thieves.

Nintendo’s views were contrary to game makers that felt they created the games entirely on their own with their money so why should Nintendo take thirty percent of anything they make just because it runs on their video game console?

Nintendo argued that game makers had no place to make or sell their games were it not for the NES console, and so they owed Nintendo for creating the platform they can make money on in the first place. And Nintendo provided licensed developers documentation on how the hardware worked. Of course, that security chip made sure developers complied (more on the security chip later)!

Nintendo Entertainment System “Security Chip” Controlled Game Distribution:

Nintendo was the first video game console platform maker to demand a thirty percent royalty for any game sold on its console.

Nintendo justified demanding a fee for licensing barebones “how to” documentation and for manufacturing the cartridge / disc and manual for distribution. Of course, the publisher had to pay the full “royalty” up front as if every copy sold regardless of whether they ever sold or had to be marked down with price protection to sell (to avoid a return). Nintendo made the money and took no risk.

To keep control from people that might not agree with Nintendo’s “licensing” policies they used a security chip that only they could manufacture.

With the Nintendo security they had the key to their kingdom, and to play in their kingdom people had follow their rules.

NES “Security Chip” Controlled Game Distribution:

Every NES game cartridge contained one or more Read-Only chips that contained the game code in native microprocessor formatted machine code and data.

Microprocessors like the 6502 CPU which the NES used had limited range of memory they could access, and so a memory controller was needed to all banks of memory to swapped in and out so the limited range CPU could access as many “banks” of memory were available to switch in and out.

Every NES also contained a broadcaster security chip which continuously generated a pseudo random number. Pseudo random numbers are not random at all. They are just a list of numbers that seemingly have no relationship to each other, but they are non-repeating seemingly unrelated numbers. There must be no repeat and every number but be used no matter how big the range of number else it is not a truly pseudo random number.

There was a matching listener security chip on the NES video game console that would match the pseudo random number sequence with itself using the same random “seed” number. If they matched the game would let the video game play. If they did not match it would blank the screen and interrupt the CPU so absolutely nothing would operate.

Impossible to Bypass NES Security Chip (or was it?):

Any company that contemplated making their own video game cartridges would need to pass the NES Security Chip validation handshake which must match the NES console’s same algorithm generated repeating number sequence of 65536 unique 16-bit integers (0-65535) in a specific order. Things get more complicated when the game console can submit a unique random number “seed” into the algorithm, so the video game cartridge generates a different but still repeating sequence of predictable repeating numbers.

To explain better - the video game cartridge generated a random 16-bit integer number of 0-65535 as the “starting seed” for a pseudorandom number generator which exists on the game cartridge and on the NES console. On Power-up the NES console sends this “starting seed” to the game cartridge both are “on the same page” and can generate identical sequences of numbers.

While the game was running the NES, console compared the random number sequence with its own and played happily until they did not match, and it would pull a Non Maskable Interrupt (NMI) on the CPU thereby stopping the NES dead in its tracks.

Nintendo did not tolerate pirate cartridges, or anyone not paying their “manufacturing” royalty fee and so went to great lengths to protect what many considered a racquet.

The probability of someone coming up with an algorithm that could generate that sequence of numbers would be near impossible, or so Nintendo thought.

Atari Manufactures Tengen Game Cartridges:

Tengen released a few games under Nintendo’s security chip constraints but decided that it had roots in manufacturing electronics and “massive game cartridges” in the form of custom coin-operated arcade games.

To support coin-operated arcade machine manufacturing, Atari Games had a full electronics assembly line with conveyor belts, robotics, huge wave solder machines, cabinet wood crafting and shaping machines and tools, metal smithing and shaping, art and decal printers and tools, and final retail unit integration and testing.

It was like walking onto a science fiction set seeing so many diverse manufacturing processes inter-connected all in the same warehouse.

Atari had a full-service end-to-end solution to build just about anything electronic or plastic or wood or even metal.

Tengen intended to bypass the Nintendo security chip and create bespoke home video game manufacturing lines. But first they had to figure out how to overcome the Nintendo security chip.

E211 Reverse Engineering Nintendo RAMBO MMC MEMORY AND SECURITY CONTROL



Local File:

._LibertyBooksVideos\E211 Reverse Engineering Nintendo NES and Rambo MMC Memory Security Chip Control.mp4

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v55unpq-e211-reverse-engineering-nintendo-nes-and-rambo-mmc-memory-security-chip-co.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtu.be/JAkoHuiw2r4>

Description:

Hear the tale of how Atari Games came to “reverse engineer” the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES) Security Chip and Multi-Memory Controller (MMC) Chip.

“Reverse Engineering” NES Security Chip:

Tengen had a big problem in manufacturing Nintendo game cartridges – the NES Security Chip.

Atari and Tengen engineers poured over the NES console and retail cartridges. They disassembled everything. They read chip outputs on oscilloscopes. They modified existing retail cartridges to see how they worked.

A quick development hack was to open a retail game cartridge and remove the game ROM chips and replace them with a socket so a new game could be hot swapped in and out of the cartridge.

Hacked Socketed NES Game Cartridges:

Using a hack socketed retail NES game allowed programmers to “burn” write their games onto a re-usable chip called an ERASABLE-PROGRAMMABLE-READ-ONLY (EPROM) which can be plugged into the socketed cartridge.

The retail cartridge passes NES security but now used the new game that had been “flushed” stored in the EPROM.

Yea, that really was complicated back then.

RAMulators:

Things got easier with “RAMulators” which were like game cartridges full of Random-Access Memory (RAM) which you could just write to from the computer. That may sound like nothing...but writing to an EPROM and trying it out would often take 5-30 minutes roundtrip.

For the Sega Genesis (the next generation gaming era after the NES) had a RAMulator that would capture CPU call stacks and registers, etc. making for an inexpensive but especially useful development kit.

In-Circuit Emulators (ICEs):

Later things became more “powerful” using real In-Circuit Emulators (ICE) to complete control the microprocessor and memory but with ICEs came a lot of additional delicate (and finicky) hardware. It became so overbearing that people only used an ICE for extremely hard to find problems.

Reverse Engineering Failed:

No matter how hard and how long Atari and Tengen engineers tried they could not replicate Nintendo’s pseudorandom number sequence. It seemed to morph and change, not behaving like it was pseudorandom but really was random.

Computers cannot be random. They are yes or no. They on or off. They are true or false. They cannot choose to go left or right; they will go LEFT if instructed to or go RIGHT if instructed to. They will not do anything else, nor will they do anything at all until instructed to do something. Computers are tools (well, until an AI directs those tools...then that statement gets a bit dicey).

So, the engineering efforts were failing in figuring out how to emulate the NES console security lockout number stream.

The Atari chief lawyer had an idea. He visited the U.S. Patent office with an engineer, Mark Phoenix, who examined the file patent with the attorney. Mark was a smart guy, and he knew immediately what he was looking at – the pseudo number random generator operators and operands. In other words – Mark had their code and algorithm with constants.

Mark wrote some of the information on his hand before they left the Patent office. He was able to transcribe it later and develop a comparable algorithm and code that successfully simulated the NES security chip without using their exact code or algorithm.

Atari Tengen had successful “reverse engineered” the NES Security and could bypass it! ...albeit, with a little help from the patent office.

RAMBO - Atari Tengen RAMBO NES Security and MMC Bypass:

Atari Tengen created their own custom NES security chip with firmware called RAMBO (named after the movie that reflected their feelings against Nintendo).

RAMBO mimic'd the NES security chip handshake and number sequence and replicated the NES multi-memory controller (MMC) to support huge game ROM sizes and persistent saved games. RAMBO completely bypassed every Nintendo security system.

NES “Clean Room” and “Clean” Developers:

But Atari could not let any developer who had ever worked with Nintendo - work with anyone in Atari Games or Tengen - and if anyone somehow already had contact with NES developers or hardware or software or documentation or ANYTHING they must isolate themselves from Atari Tengen people... that were working on Nintendo.

Tengen became its own company with its security (although it remained still in the Atari building. Tengen had to be a “clean room” which legally meant the entire company staff had to be isolated from the outside world such that they could not be exposed to Nintendo Intellectual Property or Trade Secrets.

I was a “Clean” Expert for NES “Clean Room” Development:

As an interesting point, I qualified as “clean room” developer for the NES even though I had worked already on contract and shipped a NES game Cyberball.

I qualified because I used Sculptured Software’s allegedly reverse engineered tech and docs. Similarly, EA’s allegedly reverse engineered NES tech and docs did not disqualify me.

Indeed, I knew everything about the NES and yet was “clean” and could develop NES games free of Nintendo legal threat for Atari Tengen (more on that later).

Tengen vs. Nintendo:

Tengen became a renowned underdog against Nintendo and its oppressive licensing program by manufacturing and distributing NES games without any involvement from Nintendo.

Nintendo could not let that stand both from a revenue perspective but also from a flock perspective. If the “sheep” companies, see one revolt succeed the rest will follow. Nintendo fought back hard.

Nintendo sued with impunity any company and individual that dared defy their manufacturing, security, and distribution payment program.

Atari and Tengen and Time Warner (which owned part of Atari) were all sued by Nintendo.

Employees were given pirate hats to wear representing the culture of defiance against the Empire of Nintendo. Later construction hats were handed out with stickers showing CIRCLE-SLASH over Nintendo. Everyone talked about the

lawsuit and how if we did not win it would be the end of Tengen and Atari Games consumer games. And the end of freedom of making games.

The lawsuit raged for years, and Atari lost. But Tengen did not die as prophesized. Its Vice President, Steve Calfee, used the years during litigation to pivot the division to Sega entirely. As Sony was moving into the market it was another target.

Tengen Tetris Locked Up on Injunction:

Although there are always legends of the ET game cartridges buried away, I did not witness any of that. However, I did witness the original Tengen Tetris locked away in steel cages while the Tengen-Nintendo suit raged on.

Tengen Tetris used Atari Tengen's custom created chip and firmware called RAMBO (after the movie for their feeling of independent righteousness). RAMBO mimic'd the NES security chip handshake and number sequence and replicated the NES multi-memory controller (MMC) to support huge game ROM sizes and persistent saved games.

End of Atari Games - Time Warner made into Time Warner Interactive Group:

Eventually Atari Tengen was merged with Time Warner Interactive Group, and was re-branded as Time Warner Interactive – no more Atari.

Clinging to Coin-Op Ended Atari:

Atari's executive staff would hold Coin-Op up as the hallmark of what Atari was and would always be. Atari died with those executives extoling the grandeur of Atari Coin-Op despite it becoming the albatross around its neck that would eventually sink it.

Limousines Found in Warehouse:

Many years later it was surprising that during Atari's final shutdown as auditors rummaged through the many poorly cataloged receipts and lists of company assets, they found Atari had a warehouse in Milpitas no one apparently knew about.

Much like people when companies "die" their skeletons and oddities come out for everyone to see. Atari was no exception.

It would turn out that someone in "old Atari" thought that the company had far too much money to invest in any one thing and so determined Atari should buy a fleet of Rolls Royce Limousines and store them for future resale. The cars were covered, in mint condition.

Yea, that was a weird story, but it underscores the lavish lifestyle of Atari and how the culture was completely disconnected from the rest of the world's reality.

I was very fortunate – to have worked for Atari Games.

YOUTUBE AND RUMBLE CHANNELS:

***WARNING - YouTube Censorship BLOCKS Specific Narrated Episodes & Content
(Censored Missing Videos Can Be Found on Rumble)***



Rumble Channel:

@RickLiberty

<https://rumble.com/search/all?q=%40RickLiberty>

YouTube Channel:

@HellDifficulty (CrispyHeart)

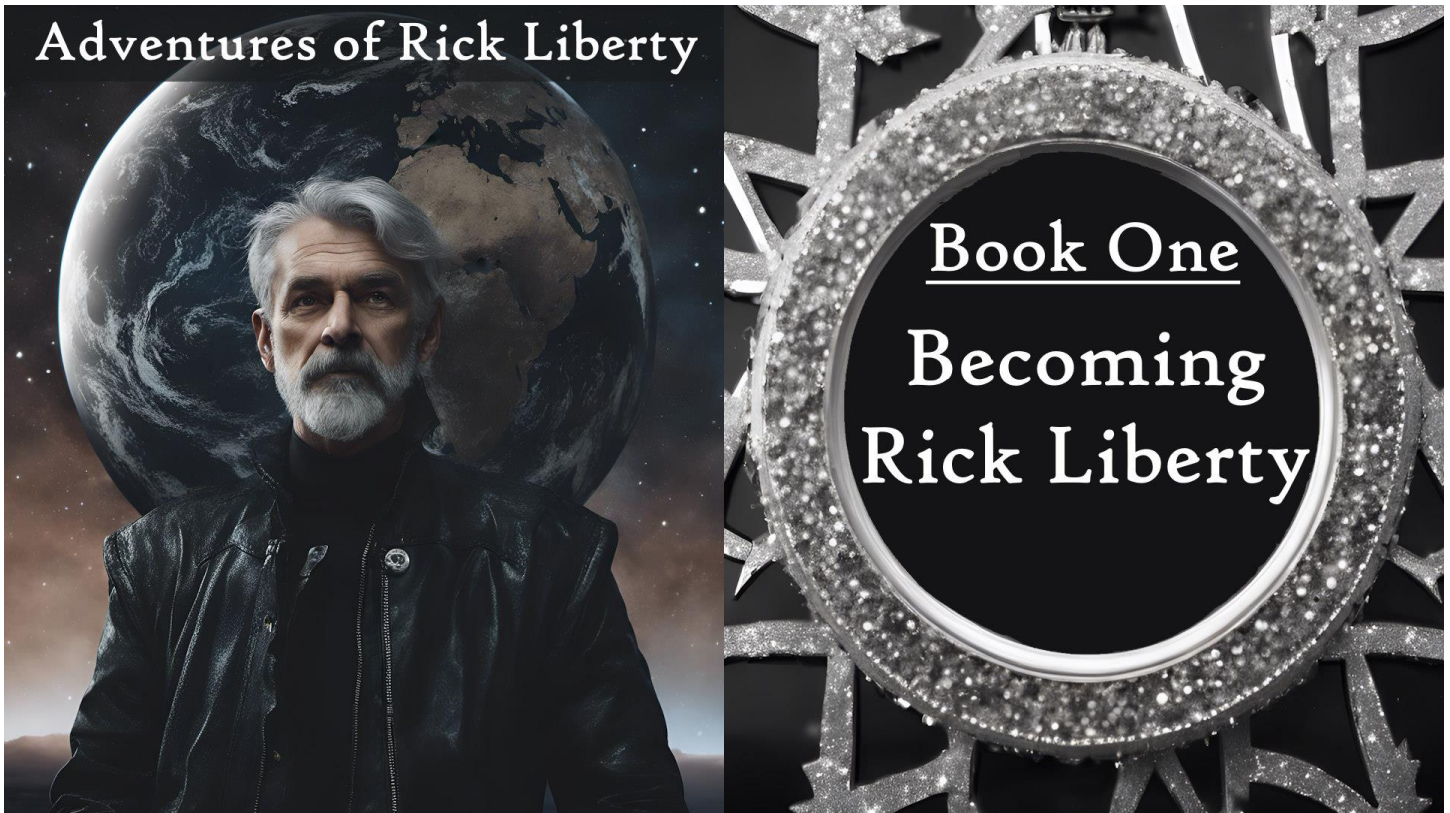
<https://www.youtube.com/@HellDifficulty>

Description:

The Hell Difficulty Saga is the woeful tale of a man - Richard Seaborne – in his sunset years – suffering from dementia. He is locked away in a psychiatric prison for the criminally insane, but believes it is unjust. Richard is losing faith in the world and humanity, but sees himself as a modern-day Quixotic hero – named Rick Liberty – whom alone - can restore the world to morality and righteousness. He must be free of the Ward to save the world.

Richard recounts his life from childhood to retirement, to a panel of psychiatrists - in this fictional story – in hopes of being freed. He weaves elements of the real Richard Seaborne's autobiography, into his epic fantastical Quixotic adventure, where he fights the Devil, the Devil's Cult of Bael, and the Seven Princes of Hell's Puppets here on mortal earth (including the World Economic Forum / WEF, Gates, and Soros).

BOOK 1: BECOMING RICK LIBERTY



Local File:

[\\LibertyBooksVideos\\E000 Rick000 Book01 Trailer Teaser Blast Splash Hell Difficulty Saga Adventures of Rick Liberty Tech Zone AI Demystified.mp4](#)

Rumble Playlist:

<https://rumble.com/playlists/Fcg6cYZLKC8>

YouTube Playlist

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3Ov-xrXhB_FScsVpOn9Ywc3QzYPOfaDR

Description:

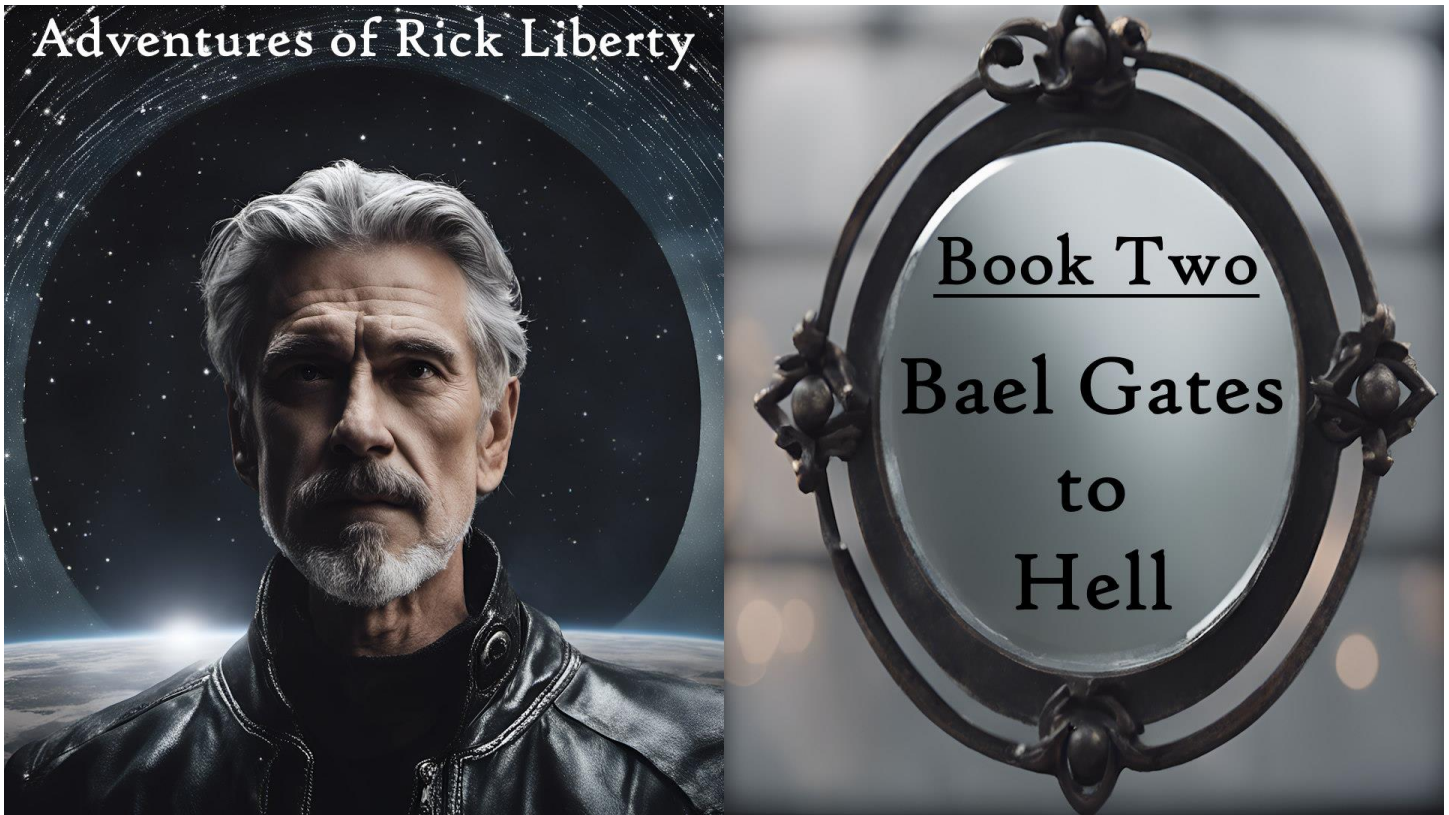
Richard's world turns upside down, as he grapples with a series of life-shattering and life-defining events. He must pick up the pieces and learn how his enigmatic past is dramatically shaping his world - and altering his perception of it.

Combating his life's turmoil, Richard befriends strangers to comfort and aid him— in his mysterious journey that seems more like a fantastical Quixotic misadventure.

Richard and his new friends seek answers from the ancient order of the Knights Templar. But things are challenging for the team, as they discover and engage with the Devil's Cult of Bael.

Ultimately – Richard solidifies his Faith in God. Richard becomes Rick Liberty, God's Champion.

BOOK 2: RICK LIBERTY AND BAEI GATES TO HELL



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E000 Rick000 Book02 Trailer Teaser Blast Splash Hell Difficulty Saga Adventures of Rick Liberty Tech Zone AI Demystified.mp4](#)

Rumble Playlist:

<https://rumble.com/playlists/EOciM3gbUY8>

YouTube Playlist:

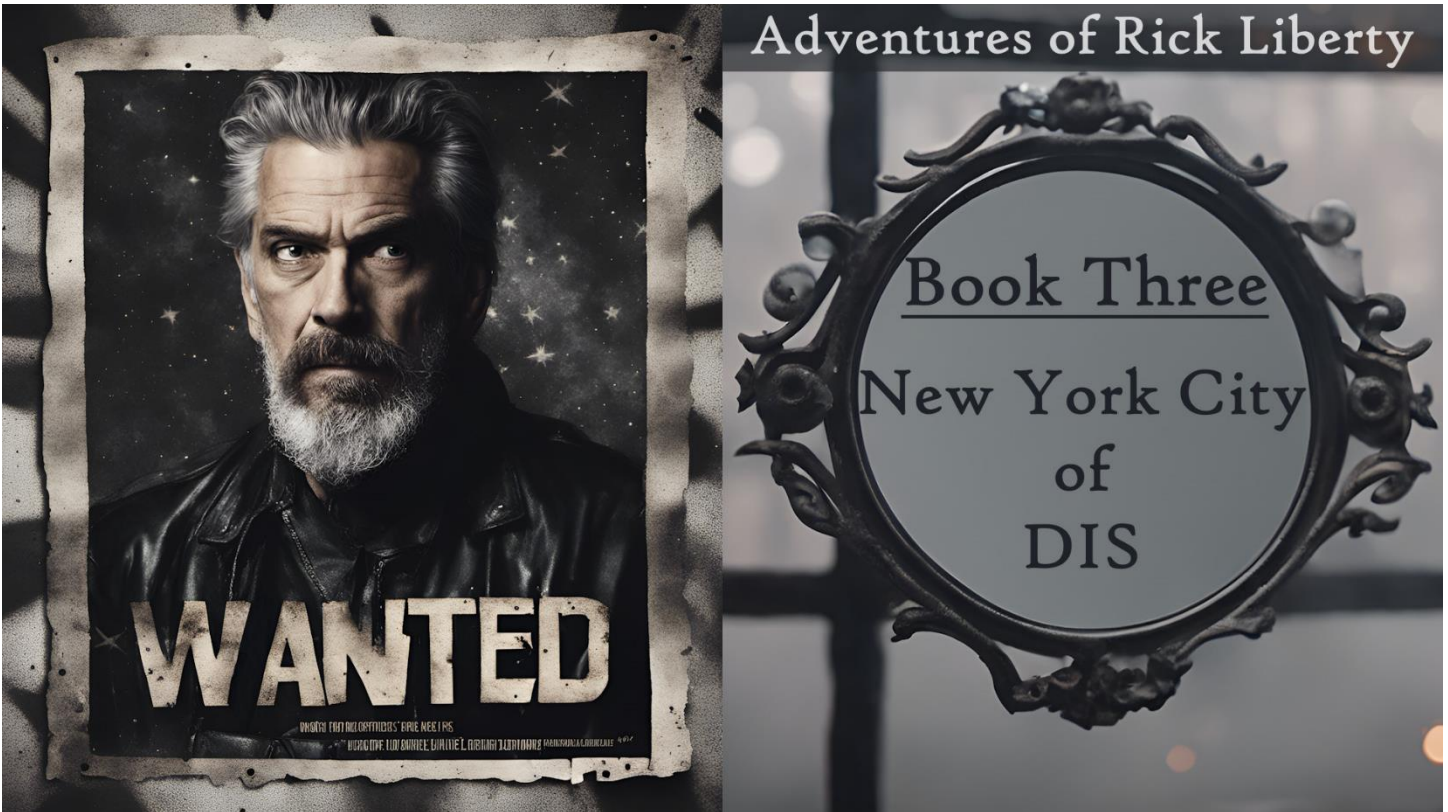
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3Ov-xrXhB_Hid_dxrI4Zu-qqpVaXB72U

Description:

The Team and Richard – as Rick Liberty of the Knights Templar must stop Bael Gates from punching a hole between the celestial planes of Hell and Mortality, thereby opening a portal from Hell to the Mortal plane and unleashing Hell on Earth.. Rick and the team – must stop The Devil’s Puppets from world domination.

Richard must stop Bael Gates from deploying his trifecta of World Controlling Technologies – Human DNA Editing, Human Brain Control Implants, and Controlled critical industries - Energy, Healthcare, Food, Waste Management, Shipping and Transport, ...

BOOK 3: RICK LIBERTY WANTED IN NEW YORK CITY OF DIS



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E000 Rick000 Book03 Trailer Teaser Blast Splash Hell Difficulty Saga Adventures of Rick Liberty Tech Zone AI Demystified.mp4](#)

Rumble Playlist:

<https://rumble.com/playlists/JNWDhyJWufl>

YouTube Playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3Ov-xrXhB_EncJfWbFmLgNKvbZa4wz4

Description:

Richard – a Psychiatric Prison Escapee - flees to New York City, where he – as Rick Liberty - and with the G-Team (God’s Team) seeks to stop the Puppet of Hell, Soros, from opening a portal to Hell with the devil’s Tapestry and Crown of Bael.

The G-Team engages and fights against the chaos and madness, in the degenerate New York City of DIS. They operate above and below board so they might succeed in stopping Soros. Extreme events blur reality and fantasy.

The team encounters a dystopian New York - Organized crime and system corruption, Human trafficking, Organ Harvesting, and soul-draining nightmares...all inflicted on countless victims.

BOOK 4: THE LIBERTY ZONE SHORT STORIES



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E000 Rick000 Book04 Trailer Teaser Blast Splash Hell Difficulty Saga Adventures of Rick Liberty Tech Zone AI Demystified.mp4](#)

Rumble Playlist:

<https://rumble.com/playlists/Q-5wriJH5Qk>

YouTube Playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3Ov-xrXhB_G5KDfTQvnEUaKLR2y5Fh8z

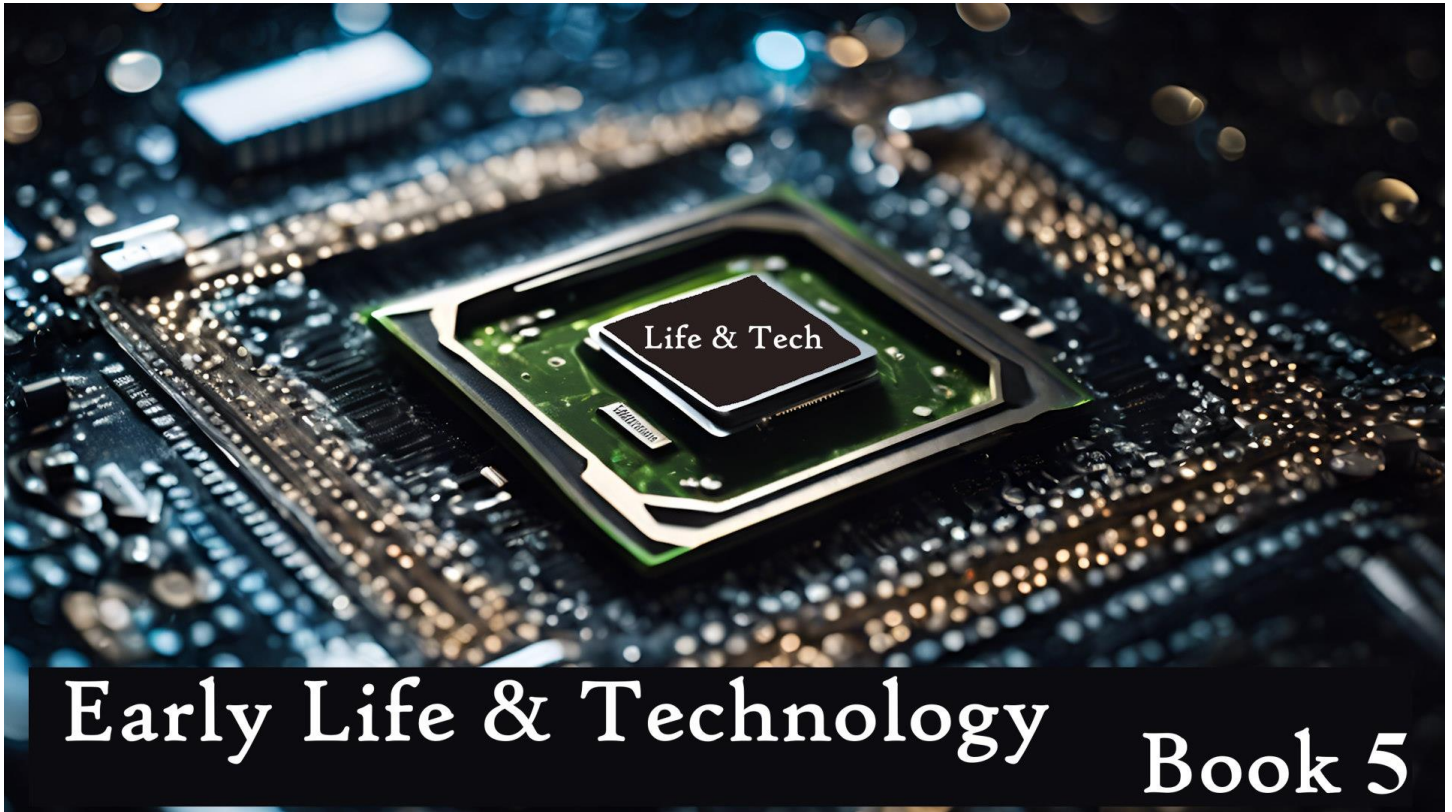
Description:

Witness the Succubus Demon Watcher Messengers report to Hell the progress of the Seven Deadly Sins against Humankind, and how it appears – Hell is Winning. Learn how Angels and Succubi observe the mortal world and report back what they see - to Hell and Heaven. Hear the Seven Succubi Messengers of Hell report their assessment and judgment of “people’s” sin’, and how they devalue or disbelieve in their souls, and most are freely willing to sell their souls to the Seven Princes of Hell for little in return.

Mitzi Ballard’s life crumbled around her, leaving her with little to anchor her to sanity or social conformity. Wickedness and cruelty befell Mitzi and her family, with such devastating evil inflicted on her and losing everything she loved... Mitzi Ballard became a Vigilante. See “what it took to radicalize Mitzi into a Vigilante.”

Experience and Remember The Holocaust through Memories and Poems written by Holocaust Survivors.

BOOK 5: LIFE AND THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY



Local File:

[.\LibertyBooksVideos\E000 Rick000 Book05 Trailer Teaser Blast Splash Hell Difficulty Saga Adventures of Rick Liberty Tech Zone AI Demystified.mp4](#)

Rumble Playlist:

https://rumble.com/playlists/dK8qrv8V_to

YouTube Playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3Ov-xrXhB_HdVKiNSAcDAxL-F8wARQg

Description:

The Hell Difficulty Saga is the woeful tale of a man - Richard Seaborne – in his sunset years – suffering from dementia. He is locked away in a psychiatric prison for the criminally insane, but believes it is unjust. Richard is losing faith in the world and humanity, but sees himself as a modern-day Quixotic hero – named Rick Liberty – whom alone - can restore the world to morality and righteousness. He must be free of the Ward to save the world.

Richard recounts his life from childhood to retirement, to a panel of psychiatrists - in this fictional story – in hopes of being freed. He weaves elements of the real Richard Seaborne's autobiography, into his epic fantastical Quixotic adventure, where he fights the Devil, the Devil's Cult of Bael, and the Seven Princes of Hell's Puppets here on mortal earth (including the World Economic Forum / WEF, Gates, and Soros).

BOOK 6: THE TECH ZONE AND LIFE ADVENTURES



Local File:

[_LibertyBooksVideos\E000 Rick000 Book06 Trailer Teaser Blast Splash Hell Difficulty Saga Adventures of Rick Liberty Tech Zone AI Demystified.mp4](#)

Rumble Playlist:

<https://rumble.com/playlists/M1oZhnxax-E>

YouTube Playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3Ov-xrXhB_GlwcNOGJgS5TMb2U8jAM6H

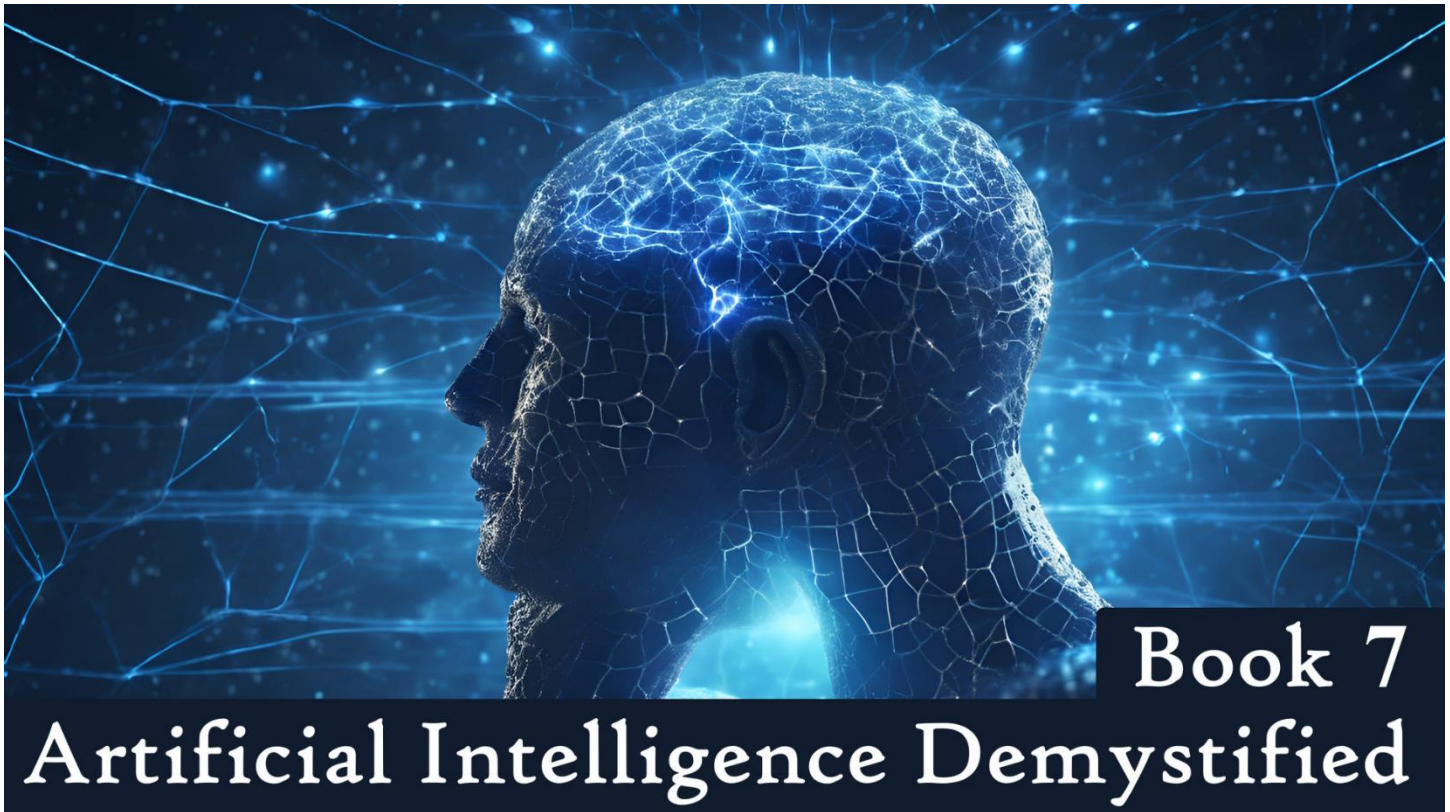
Description:

Tales from the Video Game Industry is a collection of stories and insights from my real-world adventures and experiences working in the Video Game Industry for over thirty years. I tell stories and anecdotes. I provide concrete examples, techniques, and methods to successfully operate and deliver software and video games in corporations dedicated to entertainment and creativity (and profit). Learn deep, dark, hidden secrets and many sordid tales in the shadows of the Video Game Industry's brilliance, innovation, independence, and stardom.

Lessons and Insights from the Video Game Industry is a collection of real-world stories, concepts, techniques, and methods I used while working in the Video Game Industry over thirty years. I explain detailed techniques, and methods to successfully operate and deliver software and video games in corporations that are dedicated to entertainment and creativity (and profit).

AI Demystified explains Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) – from its origin to its world-changing state today. See how A.I. works – sees the world – and learns and makes decisions. Understand how A.I. is trained and its 'values' shaped – with and without human supervision. Witness A.I.'s applications and real-world manifestations - and experience the cautionary tales of science fiction.

BOOK 7: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) DEMYSTIFIED



Local File:

[.\LibertyBooksVideos\E000 Rick000 Book07 Trailer Teaser Blast Splash Hell Difficulty Saga Adventures of Rick Liberty Tech Zone AI Demystified.mp4](#)

Rumble Playlist:

<https://rumble.com/playlists/eaXn4d1GgYw>

YouTube Playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3Ov-xrXhB_EwkM0iBmKLLX2BNQWvM-IO

Description:

AI Demystified explains Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) – from its origin to its world-changing state today. See how A.I. works – sees the world – and learns – and makes decisions. Understand how A.I. is trained and its ‘values’ shaped – with and without human supervision. Witness A.I.’s applications and real-world manifestations - and experience the cautionary tales of science fiction.

BOOK 8: IT ONLY TAKES ONE CANDLE TO LIGHT THE WAY



Book 8

It Only Takes One Candle to Light the Way

Rumble Playlist Link:

<https://rumble.com/playlists/OlwcBA4vqac>

YouTube Playlist from @HellDifficulty Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3Ov-xrXhB_GS2E_hKib-rbXF1bipHLJe

Description:

A prequel and continuation of the Adventures of Rick Liberty Zone Hell Difficulty Saga.

Learn the backstory behind the transformation of Richard Seaborne into Rick Liberty, from the perspective of Heaven and the Angels.

Discover the Signs of the Prophecy of the Fulcrum.

Hear about the Apocalypse and the Seven Seals, Trumpets, and Bowls of Revelation, Great Tribulation, and Judgment.

Learn about the Seven Days of Creation, Adam and Eve, Sodom and Gomorrah, and the significance of the number seven.

BOOK 9: STRAIGHT OUT OF DEMENTIA WITH RICK LIBERTY



Rumble Playlist Link:

<https://rumble.com/playlists/PVvaomT54kY>

YouTube Playlist from @HellDifficulty Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3Ov-xrXhB_F2btPhjKc5LAO08Osv9qIp

Description:

BOOK-9 VIDEOS PAGE 8 - BOOK-9: STRAIGHT OUT OF DEMENTIA

- Hear directly from Rick Liberty about his experience and journey in life with Dementia...
- Check back - to see when new episodes are posted.
- Subscribe to the YouTube or Rumble Video Channels - to be notified of new videos - as they are released.

Hear directly from Rick Liberty about his experience and journey in life with Dementia...

Presenting as Rick Liberty – this is Richard Seaborne's Podcast - called Straight out of Dementia.

The Podcast focuses on Philosophy, Insight, Prose, Poetry, Problems, Ideation, and Perspective, Coping & Management Skills, Tools, and Approaches for Caretakers and the Dementia Afflicted... ...as seen through the Dementia Neurodegenerated Mind of Rick Liberty

ADVENTURES OF RICK LIBERTY – BOOK 5
LIFE'S ADVENTURES + THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY
PART OF THE HELL DIFFICULTY SAGA

RICHARD SEABORNE

TEASERS & TRAILERS – VIDEO PLAYLIST:



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E000 Rick000 Trailer Teaser Blast Splash Attract for the Adventures of Rick Liberty from the Hell Difficulty Saga.mp4](#)

Rumble Playlist:

https://rumble.com/playlists/AHjfK_JVp0E

Rumble “Jumble” @[Search for RickLiberty]:

<https://rumble.com/search/all?q=rickliberty>

YouTube Playlist:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL3Ov-xrXhB_H05LqWV3Y0yIct5c-a74B9

YouTube Channel @CrispyHeart:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbTGI543FFzcoMkdv8UzyHg>

Description:

Watch the many teaser and trailer videos for The Adventures of Rick Liberty, The Liberty Zone, , AI Demystified, The Tech Zone, Tales and Lessons & Insights from the Video Game Industry, and The Hell Difficulty Saga.

ADVENTURES OF RICK LIBERTY – BOOK 5
LIFE’S ADVENTURES + THE VIDEO GAME INDUSTRY
PART OF THE HELL DIFFICULTY SAGA

RICHARD SEABORNE

The Story – as Rick Sees It (Splash)



Local File:

[\LibertyBooksVideos\E000 Rick000 Trailer Teaser Blast Splash Attract for the Adventures of Rick Liberty from the Hell Difficulty Saga.mp4](#)

Rumble Episode Link:

<https://rumble.com/v3x5c2a-rl-s1e01-intro-and-setup-for-the-adventures-of-rick-liberty-ai-art-video-bo.html>

YouTube Episode from @HellDifficulty Channel:

<https://youtube.com/shorts/q15d8IB6Vis>

Description:

Watch the ‘Story Narrative - As Rick Liberty Sees It’ -Teaser Video for The Adventures of Rick Liberty.

The World is in Decline... Fewer and fewer “elites” control the world and futures of many people. Among those “elites” are Puppets to the Seven Princes of Hell... to The Devil. The Puppets do Hell’s bidding - to erode and destroy people’s lives.

The Seven Princes of Hell are about to unleash Hell on Earth. One man stands between The Devil Bael and Opening the Gates to Hell. That man is – Rick Liberty!

But – Rick Liberty – is a Persona – created by a man locked away in a psychiatric ward for the criminally insane.

Rick recounts his tale in hopes of securing his freedom and ability to resume his Mission Quest for God.

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