special guest stars
nmap’s fyodor
hitb’s l33tdawg

CLUSTERMIND

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WHERE AM I?

PROFESSOR SHROEDER... THE SUBJECT IS WAKING UP. HIS ALPHA WAVE LEVEL DROPPED SUDDENLY...

WHAT HAPPENED TO ME?

GIVE HIM ANOTHER DITRIZAPAM SHOT. CHECK THE POTASSIUM LEVEL, I DON'T WANT HIM TO COLLAPSE RIGHT NOW...

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT TO OPEN MY EYES?

...!?!
HE'S WAKING! INCREASE THE SODIUM PENTOTHAL LEVEL.

YES PROFESSOR SHROEDER

HERE WE GO, BILLYBOY IS BACK ASLEEP.

WE ARE READY TO PROCEED. AS SOON AS THE SUBJECT IS STABILIZED WE WILL START WITH THE RESECTION.
Minutes later...

OK, let's rock! Pass me the laser knife.

Get ready with the extrabody circulation. We need to support all the vital functions.

I will start inserting a jugular bypass.
EASY WITH THAT SURGICAL THREAD, YOU ARE NOT TAILORING AN XXL SUIT

THE CIRCULATION IS NOW ENTIRELY EXTRA-CORPOREAL. ALL THE TISSUES ARE PROPERLY IRRORATED, SHALL WE PROCEED WITH THE SPINAL RESECTION PROFESSOR SHROEDER?

WITHOUT HESITATIONS! I AM CURIOUS TO SEE THE RESULTS

AHHH VERY, VERY GOOD WE ARE BECOMING ARTISTS...

PROFESSOR SCHROEDER, I AM NOT HERE TO LISTEN YOUR SELF-COMPLIMENTS, I WANT RESULTS

AHH DON'T WORRY MR. MATSUMOTO, WE ARE OBTAINING OUTSTANDING RESULTS...
PERHAPS I SHOULD LEAVE TO THE BEAUTIFUL MISS MAJA THE HONOR OF RETRIEVING THE GLASS INTERFACE...

MR. MATSUMOTO, I AM PLEASED TO TELL YOU THAT THE CLUSTERMIND EXPERIMENT IS FINALLY READY TO BEGIN.
TWO WEEKS LATER, MATSUMOTO'S HEADQUARTER...

HELLO, MR. MATSUMOTO
HELLO, MR. FOCALUT

IT'S A PLEASURE TO HAVE YOU HERE, SIR

THE PLEASURE IT'S MINE. I AM HERE TO DISCUSS THE EXCEPTIONAL RESULTS COMING FROM THE CLUSTERMIND EXPERIMENT

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WE ALREADY GOT BACK ENOUGH RESULTS TO JUSTIFY OUR INVESTMENT, NONETHELESS WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE DURABILITY OF THE CLUSTERMIND ARRAY. THERE IS A LOT OF WORK THAT THE CLUSTERMIND MIGHT DO IN THE OIL INDUSTRY FIELD...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY, MR. FOCault... THE CLUSTERMIND ARRAY IS A STABLE PLATFORM. YOU CAN TELL TO THE BOARD OF THE TOTFINELF CONSORTIUM THAT THEY CAN SLEEP GOLDEN DREAMS.

LET ME SHOW YOU HOW DOES IT WORKS...
THE CLUSTERMIND ARRAY HAS BEEN BUILT TO BE A POWERFUL MILITARY AND INDUSTRIAL ESPIONAGE TOOL.

IT EXPLOITS THE CAPABILITY OF INDIVIDUALS IN GATHERING INFORMATION USING DIFFERENT APPROACHES AND MEANS...

SELECTED INDIVIDUALS WITH POWERFUL CAPABILITIES HAVE THEIR BRAINS CONNECTED AND INTERFACED IN A CLUSTER MANAGED BY A CENTRALIZED SERVER. THEY ARE ALSO CONNECTED TO THE INTERNET TO PERFORM ASSIGNED TASKS.

IN THE CLUSTERMIND WE INCLUDED JOURNALISTS, AS WELL AS SCIENTISTS AND SEVERAL HACKER BRAINS.

JOURNALISTS HAVE THE TASKS TO GATHER INFORMATION FROM OPEN SOURCES, HACKERS MUST VIOLATE SECURED SERVERS, WHILE SCIENTISTS’ BRAINS MUST VERIFY THE CREDIBILITY OF THE COLLECTED DATA.

EACH BRAIN IS ARTIFICIALLY SUSTAINED AND IS INTERFACED THROUGH DIRECT IMPLANTED NEURAL CONNECTIONS TO THEIR NATURAL TERMINAL SECTIONS: EYES AND EARS.

THE BRAINS ARE CONSTANTLY SUPPLIED BY HYPNOTIC DRUGS TO KEEP THEM AT THE SAME LEVEL WHERE BRAINS USUALLY ARE DURING IMAGINATIVE DREAMING STATE. UNDER CHEMICAL HYPNOSIS THEY ARE ALSO INSTRUCTED ON THE TASKS TO BE PERFORMED.

THOSE NEEDLES ON THE TOP OF EACH HEAD ARE ALPHA WAVE PROBES, WE USE THEM TO CONSTANTLY MONITOR THEIR STATUS. WE DON’T ALLOW THEM TO WAKE UP.

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WHY DO YOU NEED TO KEEP THEM ASLEEP??

HOW DO YOU THINK YOU WOULD FEEL, MR. FOCALUT, IF YOU SUDDENLY WOKE UP AND DISCOVERED THAT YOUR HEAD HAS BEEN SEVERED FROM YOUR BODY?

WOULDN'T YOU BE JUST MAD?
MEANWHILE... FAR AWAY FROM MATSUMOTO'S HEADQUARTERS...
IN THE DIGITAL WORLD...

CLUSTER 13 READY
CLUSTER 12 READY
CLUSTER 11 READY
CLUSTER 10 READY
SET CLUSTERMIND READINESS = 1
CLUSTER 9 READY
CLUSTER 8 READY
CLUSTER 7 READY
CLUSTER 6 READY
CLUSTER 5 READY
CLUSTER 4 READY
CLUSTER 3 READY
CLUSTER 2 READY
CLUSTER 1 READY

-- OPENING ALL CONNECTIONS TO THE MAPPED INTERNET
-- LOADING ONION ROUTING MAP
-- ASSIGNING TARGET: HOLLYBURTON INC.
-- ASSIGNING SUB-TARGETS:
  * CLUSTERS 1 TO 4: OPEN SOURCES RESEARCH
  * CLUSTER 5 TO 8: MAILSERVER BRUTEFORCE
  * CLUSTER 9 TO 14: MASTER SERVERS COMPROMISSION
  * CLUSTER 15 TO 16: VERIFY THE COLLECTED DOCUMENTS

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CLUSTER 3 - OPEN SOURCES LINK TREE COMPLETED

CLUSTER 6 AND 7 - MAIL SERVER ENUMERATION COMPLETED

CLUSTER 8 - MAIN MAIL SERVER COMPROMISED - BUILDING MAIL CONTACTS RELATIONSHIP TREE

WARNING CLUSTERMIND INTERRUPTED
CAUSE: ELEMENT 13 NOT RESPONSIVE

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OOHH BILLY BOY, YOU ARE ALWAYS WAKING UP BREAKING THE CLUSTERMIND CHAIN...

YOU MUST BE A GOOD BOY, LET DADDY SETS YOU ASLEEP WITH A BIT OF HYPNOTIC ENDOPHINS...
SWEET DREAMS BILLY BOY...

...SWEET DREAMS
- Successfully re-established connection with Element 13
- ClusterMind responsiveness test: passed
- Unfreezing suspended jobs
TWO MONTHS LATER, SYS AND DIVINE SHADOW ARE BRIEFING EVIL ANGÉLICA ABOUT THE DEFCON CONFERENCE...

HAHAHA! I CAN IMAGINE

... AND YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE FACE OF THE FED THAT THE DEFCON GUYS SPOTTED THANKS TO HIS SMTP ON THE CLEAR! THE DEFCON CROWD WAS LAUGHING SO LOUD AT THE FINAL CEREMONY....

AT LEAST THE FED GUY HAD ENOUGH BALLS TO STAND ON THE STAGE AND SHOW HIS FACE TO THE HACKER CROWD! GOOD SPIRIT INDEED!

BY THE WAY, HOW WAS YOUR MEETING WITH FYODOR?

WELL, WE HAD OUR TRADITIONAL LUNCH AT THE EL-VEE HARD ROCK CAFE

AND HOW WAS IT?

IT WAS NICE IF ONLY FYODOR WASN'T SO WORRIED ABOUT HIS FRIEND BILLY WHO WAS KIDNAPPED NEARLY TWO MONTHS AGO.
Guys, believe it or not, I sense (** an incoming videocall that seems to originate from Fyodor's hideout (**). I will transfer it to the holo-wall.

Yeah, a very strange story, this billy guy was kidnapped after a local hack-meeting. He is an Nmap core developer and top notch hacker.

See Episode Zero: Prologue

(**) http://www.insecure.org

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HELLO SYS, I SEE YOU HAVE COMPANY, I HOPE I AM NOT DISTURBING YOU.

HEY FYODOR, DON’T WORRY! WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT YOU.

...AND ABOUT BILLY, DO YOU HAVE ANY NEWS ABOUT HIM?
I am actually calling you about Billy. I recently started to receive on my personal server a lot of weird packets.

The interesting thing is that some packets translated in ASCII are carrying a repeating pattern of characters: IFMQNF

IFMQNF? What is this? A kind of acronym? IRC rants?

This is what I also thought in the beginning but then I realized that if you shift by minus one in the ASCII table all the received characters they end up forming the words: "HELP-ME"

Now, given that my server’s IP is known only to a few people, including Billy, I believe it might be him trying to contact me asking for help.

Oh god, and why then is he sending you the help signal in such a pseudo-crypto way?

He might be using a line with strong content filters or even with fully supervised traffic. This pseudo-crypto was probably his solution to get his message through the filters while still being somehow understood by me.

Fyodor, how can we help you?
I'd like you to double-check the dump of such traffic, I have an idea but I want to verify.

Can you store the dumped traffic if I send it to you right now?

No problem, Fyodor, I am already dumping this videocall. Hehe!

Ahh, you must be evil. Sys and Divine Shadow told me a lot about you in Vegas... Nice to meet you!

Let our boyz at the office analyze the dumped data. Evil video-call them and also transfer Fyodor's stream in it.

Video-Skype?

No, Skype isn't safe. It can be used for espionage purposes.

Really? How?

I'll explain to you another time. Trust me.
HELLO GUYS
HELLO EVIL AND HELLO FYODOR

HERE WE GO, ANALYZING THE TRAFFIC WE DISCOVERED THAT IT'S ALL ONION-ROUTED LIKE IF THE SOURCE NETWORK IS TUNNELING THROUGH AN ANONYMING TOOL SUCH AS TOR (*)

AFTER THE GUYS ANALYZED THE DUMPED TRAFFIC...

YUP, THIS IS ALSO WHAT I GOT AND UNFORTUNATELY I HAVE NO WAYS TO CIRCUMVENT TOR

(*) HTTP://TOR.EFF.ORG
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YES, WHAT FYODOR DOESN’T KNOW IS THAT WE POSSESS THE ACCESS CODE TO MATSUMOTO’S NETWORK CHIPS (*).

THIS ALLOWED US TO TRACE EACH HOP OF THE ONION NETWORK DESPITE THE ENCRYPTION LAYER.

COOL! AND WHERE IS THE ORIGINATING POINT?

OH GUYS, YOU ARE INDEED SURPRISING ME!

IT SEEMS TO BE COMING FROM A STRANGE LOCATION IN MALAYSIA.

MOUNT KINABALU, A ROCKY MOUNTAIN ON THE ISLAND OF BORNEO.

WHAT THE HELL IS BILLY DOING THERE?

I GUESS WE HAVE TO GO AND FIND OUT.

SEE EPISODE ZERO: PROLOGUE.
ARE YOU READY TO COME WITH US TO MALAYSIA, FYODOR?

YEEPEE!

HEY, I LIKE IT!

YOU BET YOUR ASS! DO YOU HAVE ANY HACKER FRIEND THERE WHO MIGHT HELP US?

HACKER FRIEND? MALAYSIA? UHMMM...
THREE DAYS LATER
KUALA LUMPUR,
PETRONAS TOWERS...

SPOONFORK,
ARE YOU
READY?

SURE
LE3TDWG!

COOL MAN!
THREE...
TWO... ONE...
WWWOOOOOW

YEEHAAA!

PULL! NOW!
...WEEEOOWWWOOWWW...

HEY, THEY ARE LOOKING FOR US!

POLICE ARE COMING! AS SOON AS WE TOUCH DOWN WE HAVE TO RUSH AWAY!
RUN SPOONFORK, RUN! WE ARE ALSO LATE TO MEET SYS AND COMPANY. THEIR AIRPLANE SHOULD HAVE ALREADY LANDED.

I AM RUNNING L33TDAWG, AHNF AHNF, I AM RUNNING!
LATER ON, IN HITB’S HIDEOUT...

HEY GUYS, IT'S A REAL PLEASURE TO HAVE YOU HERE AT KUALA LUMPUR

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TERUTAMA SEKALI GADIS JELITA (*)

WHATEVER YOU SAID TO ME, DON'T EVEN DREAM ABOUT IT

EASY L33DTAWG, EASY... YOU ARE ON A THIN ICE WITH HER

OH SYS DON'T WORRY, I AM USED TO THE MOMPRACEM'S TIGERS (***)

HEY, DIDN'T YOU KNOW THAT SANDOKAN AND JANEX WERE GAY?

(*) ESPECIALLY YOU, BEAUTIFUL LADY

(***) READ THE CLASSIC SALGARI'S NOVEL: THE TIGERS OF MOMPRACEM
Anyway, we are here to help Fyodor find his friend Billy.

I am really worried about him.

Sure mate, let's move along.

You are free to use our equipment. We have top-notch gear, right Spoonfork?

Yeah, we also have the best connection available in Malaysia.
I GUESS THE BEST THING TO DO IS A LITTLE NETWORK MAPPING OF THE ORIGINATING POINT OF THE DATA FLOW THAT YOUR FRIEND IDENTIFIED.

I'LL CONFIGURE THE LOAD BALANCER TO GIVE YOU MAXIMUM BANDWIDTH.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO USE?

I WILL USE AN UNRELEASED VERSION OF NMAP.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENCES WITH THE KNOWN NMAP VERSION?

THE MAIN DIFFERENCE IS THAT THIS VERSION PROBES SEVERAL LAYERS.
SOON FYODOR SORTS OUT THE RESULTS

I CAN'T BELIEVE THE RESULTS! THIS IS TRULY SCARY...

WHAT DID YOU GET, FYODOR?

FIRST OF ALL, MOST OF THE RETURNED TRAFFIC IS INCONSISTENT IN TIMING AND MEANING, LIKE IF IT WASN'T GENERATED BY A DETERMINISTIC MACHINE BUT WAS HAND-TYPED BY A DRUNK HUMAN OPERATOR

BUT THE MOST INTERESTING THING HAPPENED WHEN I STARTED A NORMAL PROGRESSIVE PORT-SCAN

I SENT SCAN PACKETS TO PORT 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 0, 11, 12 ETC., BUT INSTEAD OF RECEIVING MATCHING RESPONSES I RECEIVED THEM FROM PORTS: 9, 7, 15, 20, 18, 11, 15, 13, 12, 26, 24 AND 17
Rather than matching the port number of my queries, responses were offset by a repeating pattern of 8-5-12-16-13-5.

Fuck!

Shit!

8-5-12-16-13-5 in the alphabet is again: "help me."

Now I am sure, only Billy could contact me in that way expecting his codes to be deciphered.

Interesting, veeery very interesting...

We must do something!
THE IP RANGE FYO DOOR JUST SCANNED BELONGS TO A CHOCOLATE FACTORY LOCATED AT THE BOTTOM OF THE KINABALU MOUNTAIN. I CHECKED THE EXACT LOCATION USING THE REGISTRANT WHOIS INFORMATION AND INSERTING THE ADDRESS IN A FREE SATELLITE MAP SERVICE.

CHOCOLATE FACTORY? SENDING CRYPTO S.O.S.? NO WAY!

LAZY ASSES! WHAT ARE WE STILL DOING HERE? LET'S GO TO KINABALU!

CARS? I HAVE A BETTER IDEA...

WE NEED A COUPLE OF CARS...
SEEMS OUR FRIENDS ENJOYED YOUR IDEA, L33TDANG.

HEHEHE!

OOH THE DUNE BUGGIES! YES! YES!

I'M AFRAID I KNOW WHO WILL BE THE THIRD DRIVER, BESIDE SPOONFORK AND L33TDANG...

BELIEVE ME SYS, I SHARE YOUR SAME CONCERNS.
CONCERNS FULLY GROUNDED...

EVIL, FOR CHRIST SAKE!

SKREEEK

WHAT? ARE YOU FEELING... INSECURE?
After a few hours trip, at the bottom of Mount Kinabalu...

So this is the famous chocolate factory?

Seems abandoned.

We have to find the way to get in.

No reason to get in, believe me. You won't find anything in there.

See that antenna on the roof? That's a microwave link to something located at the top of the Kinabalu mountain.

I can sense an active data flow in Class 10, like if this link is serving a DMZ network behind the public address Fyodor scanned before.
SEEMS THAT THE PEOPLE BEHIND THIS WERE CONFIDENT THAT THE ONION ROUTING PLUS THE WIRELESS LONG DISTANCE LINK WAS ENOUGH TO PROTECT THEIR ANONIMITY.

WHATEVER PLACE IS KEEPING BILLY PRISONER, IT MUST BE AT THE TOP OF THAT MOUNTAIN.

CAN'T YOU INTERPRET THE DATA TRAFFIC ON THAT MICROWAVE LINK?

NO, IT'S CRYPTO, I CAN ONLY SEE THE CLASS 10 IP ADDRESSES IN CLEAR.

MOREOVER, I CAN ONLY DETECT THE OUTGOING TRAFFIC AS THE INCOMING TRAFFIC NEEDS A PARABOLIC ANTENNA TO REACH INTERCEPTABLE LEVELS, WE ARE TOO FAR FROM THE TRANSMITTING POINT.

LET'S MOVE THEN...
THE VIEW FROM MOUNT KINABALU IS TRULY BREATHTAKING

THAT'S THE MICROWAVE ANTENNA

WE CAN'T PROCEED WITH THE DUNE BUGGIES, WE HAVE TO WALK TO THE ANTENNA

INTERESTING, VEEERY VERY INTERESTING... THERE ARE NO BUILDINGS AROUND

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There is nothing around beside this locked hatch.

I guess it's an entrance to the place where Billy is prisoner.

OHH L33Dawg, don't make me blush.

I just won the Asian lock-picking contest three years in a row...

IMpressive! If I ever had a watch I could have said... two minutes and twelve seconds.

Mmmhh I guess it's time to show why Spoonfork has this nickname. He can open whatever lock with virtually any piece of metal.

Done!

CLACK!
AFTER A VERY LONG DESCENT...

HEY... TELL TO FYODOR TO BRING DOWN HIS LAPTOP, I THINK WE'LL NEED IT

OHH YEAH!

HEY SPOONFORK, TENGOK PUNGGUNG NYA! INILAH PUNGGUNG YANG PALING BESS SEKALY! SEDAP RASA NYA! (**)

THERE IS AN ELECTRONIC LOCK, NO PLACE FOR BADGES OR KEYPADS...

IT MUST BE A KIND OF RFID TRANSPONDER BASED LOCK

SPOONFORK, CAN YOU BRUTEFORCE IT?

I CAN TRY TO BRUTEFORCE THE CASE BUT THEN WE WILL HAVE TO DEAL WITH THE ELECTRONICS

(*) HEY SPOONFORK, WATCH HER ASS! IT'S A TRUE MASTERPIECE... TASTY!

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The front panel seems to be easily detachable.

OHH NICE! AS STATED BY EVII, THIS IS AN RFID CONTROLLED LOCK, ATTACHED TO A TCP-IP NETWORK AND RECEIVING THE OPENING AUTHORIZATION PROBABLY FROM A CENTRALIZED SERVER THROUGH AN SNMP COMMAND.

Let's try to connect Fyodor's laptop to the network bus.

It works! I can see traffic passing.
Hey Fyodor, aren't those some H323 packets?

Yes evil, there are some H323 packets within the traffic.

(**) Audio/video streaming protocol.

I have an idea! Can you bridge that network with your wireless card?

Uh? Sure, why?

I can try to dump(**) the traffic and rebuild the H323 stream, sending it back to your computer so we can visualize it.

(**) See episode zero; prologue to understand the nature of evil Angelica's powers.

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BRIDGE ESTABLISHED...

OK, I AM STREAMING BACK TO YOU THE FILTERED H323 SIGNAL.

UHMM YES, I AM RECEIVING IT, LET'S OPEN A PROPER CLIENT IN ORDER TO VISUALIZE IT...

HERE WE GO! IT'S A VIDEO STREAM FROM THE INTERNAL SURVEILLANCE SYSTEM.
I can see a room with two people, probably a guard and a doctor.

Then there is a view from a corridor. I can see another shut door. The corridor has windows to the first room.

Then I see a kind of laboratory with a mainframe, some monitoring equipment and some tables with something on the top. I can't see clearly as the camera is not watching directly there...
SOON EVIL AND FYODOR FIGURE OUT HOW TO OPEN THE DOOR

ET VOILÀ!
IT WAS JUST A MATTER OF THE PROPER SNMP PACKET

HEY, GOOD JOB!

HEY, THAT ROOM WITH THE TWO GUYS WAS JUST BEHIND THIS DOOR!

I WILL LEAVE THE PC CONNECTED HERE SO THAT EVIL CAN USE THE WI-FI BRIDGED NETWORK.
SSSSH! THE GUARD IS ARMED!

LET'S DAWG COME BACK, I HAVE AN IDEA

???

TUHF!

???
WHO THE HELL IS THIS?
AHNF!

SBAM!

THUD!

THE MOTHERFUCKER FAINTED, WE BETTER TAKE HIS GUN

I TEND TO AGREE WITH YOU

GREAT PUNCH LÉTTDAWG, ALMOST LIKE MINES!
Hey! Who are you? What are you doing here? You can't...

Yes we can!

Click!
Y.. YES YOU.. YOU CAN!

OH SHIT HE FAINTED!

SHIT IS THE RIGHT WORD! JUDGING BY THE SMELL HE MUST HAVE FILLED HIS PANTS

YEAH! JUST FAINTED, NO HEART STROKE

LET'S CHECK THEIR ROOM!
THE GUARD ROOM...

STRANGE EQUIPMENT INDEED

WHAT THE...?!?

THIS LOOKS LIKE A MAINFRAME TERMINAL

GUYS, I AM WATCHING...

...THE UNWATCHABLE!

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SHIT! CAN I VOMIT?

I CAN RECOGNIZE BILLY AS THE LAST IN THE ROW

THEY SEEMS TO BE ARTIFICIALLY SUSTAINING LIFE ALL MANAGED BY THOSE MONITORS BEHIND EACH HEAD

GUYS, WHAT DO WE DO NOW? THIS IS THE MOST HORRIBLE THING I EVER SAW

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WE HAVE TO GET INTO THAT ROOM.

THE GLASS SEEMS BULLETPROOF, A FULL INCH THICK.

THIS DOOR HAS NO LOCK, I CAN'T BRUTEFORCE IT.

LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT THESE TERMINALS.

UH? YOU CAN HAVE A SYSTEM PROMPT ON THIS ONE.

I WONDER WHO IS BEHIND THIS NIGHTMARE.
Hey Fyodor, seems we have another network on a different class than the one managing the doors.

GREAT! Let me bridge them so that Evil can access it through my laptop's wireless.

Evil, can you set the bridged connection?

UHM... let me try.
LET ME CONCENTRATE...

UHMMM... WHERE AM I?

WELCOME!
I WAS WAITING FOR YOU

UH?

WELL, THAT’S NOT TRUE, I WAS WAITING FOR ANYONE

WHO ARE YOU?
MY NAME IS BILLY AND I LIVE IN A DIGITAL HELL

WE CAME TO SAVE YOU, FYODOR IS HERE WITH US

TO SAVE ME? IT MIGHT BE A LITTLE... COMPLICATED

I DON'T KNOW IF YOU NOTICED, BUT NOW I WOULD BE DEFINED AS "PHYSICALLY IMPAIRED" AS I SEEM TO HAVE LOST MY BODY

Yeah, we saw the horror show

Do you understand what happened to us?

Not really, I am still recovering from the shock actually

It's Symple! We have been kidnapped, our head severed from our body and connected to this mainframe

Why?

We are the most efficient form of cyber spies ever

Each of us has a task to perform on the Internet. My task is usually to hack servers, get information that is usually analyzed by some other heads

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To force us to follow the orders they use a kind of hypnotic drug that I can somehow resist.

This is why you have been able to contact Fyodor?

Yes, from time to time I can wake up from the hypnosys and can use the line to send messages outside.

Ahh, the good Fyodor! By the way, where am I? I couldn't determine it due to the onion routing of my data...

Yup, we got your messages and Fyodor was smart enough to decrypt them.

You are in a laboratory located under a Malaysian mountain.
WE ENTERED THE LABORATORY AND DISARMED THE GUARDS, NOW IT IS UNDER OUR CONTROL.

UHM, NOW I UNDERSTAND WHY THEY DIDN'T COME TO PUT ME BACK ASLEEP.

ANYWAY, I ALREADY MANAGED TO INFORM THE OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE CLUSTER ABOUT OUR SITUATION. THEY DELEGATED ME TO TALK TO YOU AND MAKE A DECISION.

DECISION ABOUT?

THE WAY TO END THIS NIGHTMARE.

DO YOU THINK WE WOULD LIKE TO LIVE WITHOUT OUR BODIES? OUR HEADS HANGING IN A CYLINDER FULL OF AMNIOTIC LIQUID?

?!
BUT... YOU CAN'T ASK US TO TERMINATE YOUR LIFE!

I AM NOT ASKING IT! WHAT I AM ASKING YOU IS TO HELP ME TO FIND THE WAY TO "PULL THE PLUG", THEN WE WILL DO IT OURSELVES.
YOU ARE OUR ONLY CHANCE TO ESCAPE FROM THIS DIGITAL HELL...
PLEASE, HELP US

OK, OK! I WILL TALK TO THE OTHERS, LET'S SEE WHAT WE CAN DO

GREAT! I WILL WAIT FOR YOU HERE
ONCE BACK IN THE REAL WORLD, EVIL EXPLAINS THE SITUATION TO THE GUYS

AND THEY ARE ASKING US TO FREE THEM FROM THAT NIGHTMARE

A SUICIDE!

I'D RATHER CALL IT THERAPEUTIC EUTHANASIA

WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO?

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU GUYS, BUT IF BILLY ASKED ME SUCH THING I AM GOING TO HELP HIM

THEN WE ARE GOING TO HELP YOU AS WELL. I HAVE AN IDEA, LET'S CHECK IF THE LABORATORY POWER SUPPLY IS MANAGED BY A SCADA (*) SYSTEM

(*) SUPERVISORY CONTROL AND DATA ACQUISITION INTERFACE

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AFTER A WHILE, FYODOR FIGURES OUT HOW THE ELECTRIC SYSTEM WORKS...

OK, A SCAN TO THE FULL IP RANGE REVEALED AN INTERNAL WEBSERVER HOSTING THE ELECTRIC SCADA. NO AUTHENTICATION IS REQUIRED SINCE THEY APPARENTLY CONSIDERED THE INTERNAL NETWORK SECURE FROM ATTACKERS.

FROM HERE WE CAN SHUT DOWN THE LABORATORY POWER GRID. EVIL, I CREATED A SPECIAL LINK TO THE SHUTDOWN PROCEDURE, ARE YOU READY TO BRING IT TO BILL?

I UNDERSTAND NOW, YOU CREATED A LINK TO THE POWER DOWN PROCEDURE SO THAT BILLY CAN ACTIVATE IT TO CUT OFF THEIR LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS...

I HATE TO DO THIS, BUT I AM READY TO GO BACK AND BRING THE LINK TO BILLY.
WELCOME BACK

I AM NOT HAPPY ABOUT WHAT I AM DOING
WHAT IS THIS?

That is some hyperlink to the shutdown command of the SCADA power system of this laboratory.
I see... what a convenient way to put an end to this story...

Are you sure you really want this?

Yes, wouldn’t you do the same if you were in my place?

Probably yes.

No regret then and no epic last words!

Click!

BZZZZZZZ
POWER DOWN...

THE LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS HAVE BEEN DOWN FIVE MINUTES

NO BRAIN CAN SURVIVE THAT LONG WITHOUT OXYGEN

THEY MUST BE GONE BY NOW... BYE BYE BILLY

I WONDER IF I DID THE RIGHT THING

YES EVIL, YOU DID THE RIGHT THING, WE ALL DID THE RIGHT THING

TIME TO GO MY FRIENDS, THERE'S NOTHING ELSE WE CAN DO DOWN HERE...
SWEET DREAMS BILLY...

... SWEET DREAMS
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SOME TIME LATER, SOMEWHERE IN THE ANTARCTIC REGION, HIDDEN BELOW THE ICE...

...MATSUMOTO IS OVER-VIEWING THE REALIZATION OF ANOTHER PROJECT...

ABOUT THE MALAYSIAN INCIDENT, WE HAVE THE RECORDED IMAGES OF THE GROUP OF PEOPLE THAT RAIDED THE LABORATORY... A FEW OF THEM ARE FAMILIAR BUT I CAN'T RECALL WHERE I SAW THEM...(*)

(*) SEE EPISODE ZERO: PROLOGUE
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FIND THEM AND KILL THEM
Fortunately the ClusterMind experiment can continue without delays.

There are no more weaknesses now; the control of the subjects is total...

...as total is the usage we do now of their bodies. The ClusterMind reliability is now close to perfection...
CLIENTS ARE ALREADY LINING UP...

END OF THE EPISODE