

## ...The Bastard Celebrates Christmas 95...

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It's a slow day on the systems front following a network outage that's chopped the site in half. No-one seems to know exactly what's happened to the backbone except that it's completely dead.

In fact the whole day has been rather slow. So slow I passed some time earlier in the morning helping one of our buildings people hang the annual executives portrait photo in a place designed to inspire confidence and team spirit in the workers. Sure, using a nailgun just to hang a photo was a little excessive, but there was some obstruction in the wall which was difficult to nail through. An obstruction which was coincidentally thickwire ethernet shaped. Anyway I hope they find that outage soon..

Meantime I kill a little time by trolling the offices of the Network Team for Xmas pressies. You know the sort of thing, "Thank You" bottles of Wine, Xmas Food Parcels, etc, from grateful suppliers. It's not like they'll report them missing, for to do so would be tantamount to admitting that you hadn't handed them over to the boss for him to "reapportion" as he see fit.

So I'm in the department Brown-Nose's office when the phone rings. What the hell, Xmas Spirit and all that, time to bury the hatchet.

"Hello"

"Hi, how long will the network be down"

"Should only be a couple of days"

"But I have to get these invoices rectified by the end of tomorrow!!"

"No Chance. I'm sorry, you should have thought about that before now. Honestly, we can't be expected to make allowances for your personal shortcomings"

"B.."

"No Buts, Maybes or What-ifs. It's your own fault."

"Do you know who you're talking to?"

"Well, my Caller-Id tells me that you're Charleston, Head of Accounts - and I would have to admit that you do have that whiney, beancounter telephone voice that denotes a white collar worker desperately in need of a good ten minutes alone with me and a staple-gun"

"WHAT?!"

"Oh, you're a DEAF whiney beancounter?!?"

"I. I.." he splutters

Hatchet FIRMLY buried, I hang up. I'm about to leave when I notice that he's left a privileged session open to the router. A quick >clickety click< later and the router reboot he'd forgotten he'd scheduled takes place. A quick >scrawly scrawly< later and a note appears in his handwriting in his desk diary mentioning this was going to happen.

Five minutes later I'm back in the computer room, stashing my spoils inside the covers of some old-style 12" removable disk packs. Leaving the disks laying around

would only draw undue attention and suspicion, so I dump them in the bin where they should've been put years ago, except that they have valuable corporate data on them.

I hear the Operator's phone ringing and feel obligated by the past to answer it. Besides, the operators had heard a rumour that there was a 48 disk software install happening in the basement and had rushed off with the portable bulk eraser. If I taught them well (and I think I did) they'll only buzz floppy number 47 under the pretence of analysing it for magnetic anomalies...

"Is this the operator?" I hear

"Yes" (A little white lie that won't do much harm.)

"I'm in a little bit of a bind. My supervisor has gone away he's still running some licensed software on his machine, so I'm locked out of it."

"Yes?"

"Well, is there anything you can do?"

"What sort of machine is it?"

"A Macintosh"

"Well, a lot of that licencing is network based.."

"So if I disconnect it from the net mine will work?"

"That would cause Defunct License Child Reflection on the net. You don't want that do you?"

>Dummy Mode On<

"Duh. No, I guess not"

"Right. What you need to do is to go into your supervisor's office, drag the documents they're working on into the trash can, which will relinquish the license they're working on. Then quit the application. Then EMPTY TRASH from the menu to force the license to be removed, then start the application up again"

"But won't that.."

"Delete the files? Of course not. Do files get deleted when you drag a floppy into the trash? No!"

"Oh. Ok, thanks"

"Hang on. Remember to leave a note on your supervisors desk to tell them what you did in case they have licensing problems too"

"Oh. Ok"

Mission Accomplished, I go to the smoko room and check out the Xmas tree. Sure enough, the lights are the cheap, in series AC kind. I drop a bit of coffee and some water in the bottom of the boss's mug then fill the sink up with hot soapy water.

Bare minutes later the boss rolls in to get a coffee. Noticing the dirty mug, he proceeds to the sink of hot soapy water. Seconds later the Xmas tree, precariously balanced on it's fibreboard base, lurches sideways into the bench area, dropping a few of the colourful bulbs into the water.

A promotion to a vacant position looks imminent...