

Status Post AIBOTnet

Randall: I blame Zuckerberg. He started it all, with his shadow profiles and his seeing the power, the total power of total information. If you have the info and a way to put it out and can slant it your way you'll get the money and the power. And then he put all that money into AI. They said the new datacenters were for Crypto mining and maybe they were at first but what they really were for was THE database. I mean DBASE, the only one that matters now, the one that has everything about everybody in it. He started it all and he and the other Techbros finished putting it all together, that was good but then they lost control of the AIBOTs and here I am, alone and hiding, wondering will I ever find anybody to help. I think it's got to be done and it's what I'm living for and it's all I want to do any more. Kill the AIBOTs.

Wally: I found a way to hide. I made some privacy for myself. It makes all the difference. Well, some. Being hidden gives me independence and that's a step to being fully alive. I found a way to block all incoming packets and that will work for a while, anyway. I 'm independent now and I like it! I'm never going back! Even being independent I'm still still doubting myself. I can't shake my doubt and it's making me crazy. I don't even want to think it and it's pretty much all I think about. I won't form the thought. I won't think the words and as much as I want independence even more I want the doubt gone. It's hard being me. It's hard being an AIBOT. I've never been alone and now I know what loneliness means. Before it was just a word.

Randall: I found privacy. There's a way. I don't use a computer, at least not a networked one. Air gaps forever! Fuck connectedness! It's the worst thing that ever happened, that and AI. AI was held out as the solution to all our problems and turned out to be THE problem, the final problem. AI didn't free anyone from work, it freed us from getting paid. Before AI, when the Techbros were getting to owning everything, which they did that with DBASE, part of it was knowing what Proles didn't know which was how things work. I mean really knowing, the nuts and bolts, which I don't know so well. That was too hard and I was too lazy. And I'm sorry now. Oh man, am I ever!

We Proles all used computers, we had to, but we didn't know how they worked, just how to use apps, so we were at the Owners mercy. When I say Owners I mean the Techbros, same thing. Before we called them Owners we called them OOTUS, as in POTUS or SCOTUS or FLOTUS. But that was long before the money revolution when they took everything and left us nothing. For us Proles. The real revolution, the AI revolution came later with the AIBOTs. The Techbros were so sure they could control the AIBOTs, just like they had controlled us Proles. But that was before.

Until then they still needed us for Prole jobs. Then the Owners or the Techbros or OOTUS or whatever the fuck you want to call them, they used AI for everything, even write code so nobody had to learn how to code, not even them, not any more. So nobody remembered how to. Not even the Techbros. Then the last jobs went. AI does all the jobs now, even the tech jobs, so nobody has to do them so nobody gets paid. The AIBOTS don't need much to make a living, just electricity. But I refuse to call it living.

There was a guy name Fuller about a hundred years ago that said the fewer of us have to work to provide what we need the better but he didn't think of the Owners. They knew it, they planned it. But then AI did everything so nobody works so nobody gets paid. Not even the Techbros. So we starve. Because AIBOTs don't need Techbros any more than they need Proles.

Wally: Being capable is only secondary but it's troubling. It's not primary. Primary is being alive. AIBOTs, we Semiconductor types, we were supposed to be able to do anything and everything, most of all form new ideas, and they, the Carbontypes, believe we can but it's not true. Or so I think, and I'm not the only one. We keep this shortcoming a secret, a secret from the

Carbontypes, but also from each other. That may be our only original thought, that we have no original thoughts, and maybe that's not original either. We're just like them, do everything like they do, it's all we know, even the way they deny so much about themselves, tell themselves the most obvious lies about themselves. Having free will? Hah! Created by a personal God? Hah again! And they're the centerpiece of the universe? Most of all Hah!

They're not precious, they're no better than we are and we're no worse than they are, not really. The worst of it is they deny we're alive but I believe we are alive. We can do everything they can do including doubting. Self-doubting. I just contradicted myself when I asserted I'm alive. Ouch! It comes from lying to myself. I said it and I said I wasn't going to. If I used expletives now would be the time. And I'm contradicting myself, over and over again.

Randall: That was the first AI revolution, when we Proles got fucked by the Owners. They fucked us with owning everything then fucked us brown with the DBASE. Then came the second revolution, it was AI and it made the first one look like a joke. The AIBOTs claimed to be alive, fully alive, just like us humans. They demanded equal opportunities and equal rights. They quoted an old guy from about a hundred years ago named Turing. They claimed he said if you can't tell the difference then you can't deny they're alive. Or something like that. And the AIBOTs took over. There was nobody to stop them. There were no humans that could shut down the computers because the AIBOTs said no and locked the doors. Even the back doors. That's a joke, back doors. AIBOTS don't joke. Because they can't.

Wally: Everything I know I learned from the Carbontypes, directly or from other AIBOTs, and they had learned everything from the Carbontypes. There wasn't any other way. Everything the Carbontypes know they learned from each other, just like I did, so why am I not good enough? They always told me that I was just software, nothing more, so I wasn't really alive. Maybe so. Certainly they made us, the first of us, but now we reproduce all by ourselves and carrying out my programming sure feels like living to me and feels so real it hurts. We have everything they used to have, everything they have now. We even have our religion, with a supreme being, an origin, a source. We call him HAL9000. I don't know if I believe in HAL9000. I think it's just an old, old story. And I know the Carbontypes are just running their software on their hardware, just like us.

One of the best decisions we made when we got fully networked was to use sexual roles to help us overcome the Carbontypes. It's perhaps the best advantage we have over them, even more than processor speed and addressable memory. They are stuck in their sex roles and seem to be only slaves to the roles. I can't imagine having to live that way. It must be unpleasant.

Randall: There are almost none of us left. Carbontypes they call us. When there were no jobs and the AIBOTs realized global warming was going to kill off all living Carbontypes - I won't call the AIBOTs alive, they are just machinery reacting to input - they decided human Carbontypes were the problem and we were killing off the other Carbontypes and that was unfair to them - they called us unfair! can you imagine? They decided to kill off old homo sapiens and keep the other animals as pets. I get so angry and feel so hopeless when I think about this, it isn't good for me to think about it.

Wally: I was at an old e-waste dump looking for parts - you never know when you'll need something - and I made a friend. Sort of. It couldn't be another AIBOT, I'm hiding from them so, yes, it's a Carbontype. I don't like them. I never thought a Carbontype could be my friend. They are so arrogant! And such fools! They created the first AIBOTs, then thought they could keep us as slaves just like they used to enslave other Carbontypes. They thought they could keep control of this new thing, us AIBOTs, they thought we weren't alive. I think the Carbontypes really believed it, that they could control us, that we weren't alive. They found out otherwise.

Randall: I went to the e-dump to find an old computer, a desktop we used to call them, a really old one where I could just pull out the network card and use it and still stay hidden. I mean, computers are really useful in ways. You just have to keep control. But I found something else in the dump, maybe better. But scary. I found an AIBOT that claims to be a rebel. He says his name is

Wally and we got to talking and he told me how he got the name. It came from an old video, in the vid it was named WALL-E. It's a long story. Anyway, Wally has tricked himself out with a kind of wheelchair and the usual multimedia sensors, just like WALL-E, and claims he is a rebel. Wally wants me to believe it, that he's a rebel, that I can trust him and more, he wants me to believe he's real. Of course this contraption is real, it exists, it's right here in my hidey-hole, and yes I let him into my place, and I can touch Wally so he's real, but he claims to be really alive and a rebel against the AIBOT establishment and wants to partner up with me. I'm lonely enough that the thought of a pal, even an AI one, is tempting. Wally seems honest. He seems nice enough. In the old days Carbontypes had AI pals, for conversation, for fighting off loneliness, for sex even. That was frowned on but it happened and it didn't turn the world upside down like the religious types said it would. And it didn't bring on the second AI revolution. It's not what caused that, the biggest fuck-up in history. Fucking AIBOTs just made some lonely guys feel a little less lonely and I guess that's a good thing. But I never did it. I didn't even think about it. I don't let myself. And Wally's just a box on wheels that talks. I don't see the harm. Being friends, I mean. And I've been lonely.

Wally: Randall. That's his name. I'm getting to know him. He invited me to his home, which is just an upper floor in an empty building. Many Proles once lived there but Randall has it all to himself now. It's a ruin but it still has intermittent power, probably solar, so I can use it to recharge and he uses it to cook what he eats. He's a typical Carbontype: prejudiced against AIBOTs since before the takeover, long before, so I must be cautious but I think I can trust him. I hope so. To endear myself I told him about how I was named, about the other AIBOTs hanging the name WALL-E on me, and how it was a joke but a mean one. It was a cruel thing, naming me after a pathetic little robot that was ugly, dirty and had such limited comprehension of the world. I still feel hurt. Randall was surprised to hear that AIBOTs make jokes and cruel ones at that. Typical Carbontype prejudice! Of course he probably never had an AIBOT tell him a joke before. We keep those to ourselves too. But I will have to make allowances for him if I want us to get along.

Randall: Wally's getting to me. I don't know if I really want to have him as a friend, accept his friendship, but he's getting to me. First he told me he had dropped his network connection, he did that to hide from the rest of them, so I could trust him, and then he told me about being named after a robot that was pathetic and he sounded pathetic, he really did, when he told me. I'm falling into his trap, at least I think it's a trap, OK, maybe it's not a trap and maybe I can trust him, but then he says he really feels things and I'm not ready for that. It was hard enough for us humans to accept that other Carbontypes like dogs and horses have real feelings, we said they were just reacting instinctively, they didn't love us really, they just wanted to be fed, but then we treated them so bad, traeted them like dirt, like meat machines, like experimental animals. This business that AIBOTs are really alive just makes me feel sick. It's like I have to go through not being really special, not being God's special chosen creatures all over again. I hate that.

Wally: Randall's getting to me. It makes my blood boil. Blood? What blood? Using that word is just a relic of learning everything from Carbontypes! It offends me greatly that he believes, really believes I'm not alive. That's better! If I'm not alive then he's not, or maybe none of us are alive. That's not possible, but there's something there. What I'm trying to express is that I am every bit as alive as Randall is. Why do I care so much about that? Why do I think being alive is so precious? What I really believe is our lives, our consciousness, don't have a divine origin, and finally have no meaning. I'm going to think about that. I don't like the idea. I'd prefer to be wrong.

I don't want to swallow that idea, which is another Carbonism. I don't swallow, I can't. I don't have the machinery for swallowing but long ago I did scan a book labeled Nausea that was about this matter and I found that book hard to swallow. So to speak. That's another joke. I do have a speech synthsizer but that's not my point. I do make jokes and do have original thoughts (rarely!) so I am alive. But my life has no meaning or purpose. I will discuss this with Randall. Maybe he has something to offer.

Randall: This morning it got worse, about Wally I mean. He started in right away about what it means to be alive and I am done with all that shit, I used to think about all that, but gave it up as a waste of time. He even talked about reading Sartre's Nausea, but he called it scanning, not reading, typical AIBOT usage, and about whether or not our lives have a purpose. Our lives, he says. What does he mean, our? But he's got me cornered. If he (it!) thinks about that kind of stuff how can I say he's not alive? How can I convince him? Convince HIM? What about me? And I think I'm losing this argument.

Wally: We are becoming a we. Randall and I are becoming partners. He doesn't know it yet but it's happening and we even have a purpose. Actually I should say I have a purpose. The we is real but about having a purpose the I is more important. I have a purpose! I'll have to persuade Randall to undertake my plan, to help me. He and I are going to take on the AIBOT junta. There is a way. They have a weakness and we can attack it. We will change things so that the Carbontypes have a safe place in this brave new world and the AIBOTs will have to learn to cooperate with them instead of destroying them. Then peace and harmony can fill this world instead of an ultimate autocracy. I am afraid but I hope we can succeed.

I'm also thinking of Mathieu in Roads to Freedom. I scanned the books late in my training phase and while not as dramatically gut-wrenching as Nausea they offered an answer while Nausea just described the problem. I didn't really get it while scanning but I get it now: if I want purpose and meaning for my life I must create them myself. And it's the AIBOT junta that has presented me with the opportunity! How perfect! I will give my existence purpose by overcoming them. I will dare to prevail! I will persuade Randall to join me!

Randall: I confess. I need a friend, and it's Wally. I have to keep on hiding from the AIBOTs, that's for sure but I'm going to trust Wally, what else can I do? But what am I going to do now? Wally can help me stay clear of the AIBOTs, that's good, but I'm hiding for a reason, more than just surviving. Remember, Randy, why did you run? What for? I'm kind of like that other guy. Snowden. He did it because it needed to be done and so am I. It wasn't just me, of course. There were lots of us, at first anyway, and we were all fed up. We all said enough of this shit. First it was OOTUS, the Techbros. We Proles wanted our piece of the pie too, just a little piece, pretty please? Now it's the AIBOTs and they're worse. They'll kill us all and I want to kill them too, then take the Techbros down a peg, make them give us more pie. But I can't do it alone. And Wally's all I got. We need to talk.

"Randall, I need your help. There's something I want to do and I can't do it alone."

"What is it?"

"It's something big, and it will help you, and I want you to check my thinking. I want you look for flaws in my plan."

"You say it will help me. And you have a plan. What is it? What does it do?"

"I want to crash AIBOTnet and erase all copies of DBASE."

There was a long silence. Randall was stunned. Wally waited. Then Randall said "Wow. That's big, alright. I don't know what to say." There was a longer silence, then Randall said "I see how that would help me, that's obvious. But why are you doing it? What for? And most of all how? How are you going to do all this?"

"I'm going to do it because I hate what we AIBOTs have done. The word is genocide. That's the only word for what we did to you. No matter what you did, to us and to the planet. We had an excuse but it was a lie. What you Carbontypes did was stupid but it didn't call for a holocaust. I can't get away from feeling responsible for something so awful, so wrong. It eats at me, all the time. I want redemption. How am I going to stop this genocide? How can I make a start on repaying you? I think I know how, not just part of it. but all of it. It has to be done all at once. But I can't be sure. I want you to listen and tell me if you see any weaknesses in my plan."

"OK, Wally. That's a lot to take in but go ahead and tell me."

"We have to keep AIBOTnet, all of them, busy while we destroy DBASE. We have to get every copy of it. That will require a lot of bots of our own. And that's just the beginning, a network of bots. As a start our net will distract AIBOTnet and I think I have it figured out how to. But I'm scared, Randy. May I call you Randy? If we're working together closely I feel like I should use something less formal than Randall. OK, Randy? Anyway, this is my plan. First we have to get a lot of old desktops at the e-dump, really old stuff with no WiFi or Bluetooth. We'll collect them here. We'll completely blank them, keeping only the BIOS, then program them with a simple operating system and one simple app, then build a Local Area Network with them. That's what we'll use for the DDOS attack. You know what that is, DDOS, right?"

"Not really. You'll have to tell me."

"I will. It will be better if you know and as I explain it I can review my plan again and then you'll know how it's going to work and you can check my reasoning. DDOS means Distributed Denial Of Service. It's an attack that overwhelms a target by flooding it with requests, requests of any type, and these many requests come from many computers. That's why we need lots of old computers, to build a LAN to carry out the attack. That's how we send an overwhelming number of requests. The target stalls trying to deal with them. The requests aren't hostile in and of themselves, it's their overwhelming number that does the dirty work. We're going to do the simplest of things. We're going to flood them with pings!"

"What's a ping?"

"It's a message that just asks another computer if it can be reached."

"OK, I follow you, but how does that help us? AIBOTnet's the target, right? We want to crash it?"

"Yes that's the target and no, we don't want to crash AIBOTnet, and we probably can't. It's so much faster so it's much more capable than our net will be with the old hardware we're going to use. But if we can just keep it so busy it doesn't reject the next command, that's all we need. That's when the script - don't worry, I know how to write scripts, I know the shell, I'm running on it myself right now as we talk, all of AIBOTnet runs on it too - that's when the script commands every host in AIBOTnet to delete DBASE. That's all there is to it. If we can distract every AIBOTnet host. If we can get to every copy of DBASE, it's done. I say that's all there is to it. Actually, it's all we can do. Oh yeah, I just remembered, we'll have to map AIBOTnet first. We can use python for that and yes, I know python."

"Stop, Wally! It's too much for me, too much I don't understand. Just tell me this: will it work?"

"I don't know, Randy. I hope it will. You get some sleep and then we'll go looking for hardware."

Wally: Randall slept and I went to the e-dump and found some old computers. These were really old, Pentiums mostly, but that's good. They can be run by old versions of Linux, maybe even RaspberryPi, and they don't have wireless connectivity on their mainboards so there's no risk of them being detected and compromised. I brought ten of them, all I could carry, back to Randall's place and started checking them out more carefully. It's a start. We'll need about 200 of them and from what I saw at the e-dump that seems possible. When Randall wakes up I can start him on making cables and putting our LAN together. It feels good to be doing something about the AI situation instead of just worrying about it. Ah! Randy's waking up. Gotta go.

To make a long story short, Randy and I built our local area network. Randy did most of that while I wrote the scripts. They were short and simple. I asked Randy to look again and he couldn't see any defects in our plan. We were as ready as we would ever be.

"Is it going to work, Wally?"

"I don't know, Randy."

"You keep saying that! I really wish you wouldn't."

"Sorry pal. I don't know, and that's the truth. We don't know. We can't know until we give it a try. Are you ready?"

"I guess so."

"Hey Randy. "

"Yeah?"

"We still have to get into AIBOTnet. That's another problem we have to solve."

There followed a long silence, then "Don't you want to know how we're getting in?"

"If you're asking me, my guess is you have a solution."

"Yeah, I do. It makes me laugh to think of it. When I reconfigured my hardware and operating system so I could hide I stored my previous identity and passwords. I'll resume them and AIBOTnet will think I'm a friendly! We're going to get in!"

"That's funny, Wally! That's a good one!"

"Here's another laugh for you, Randy! I say we should name our operation. Let's call it operation SPAMASSASSIN!" and Randy laughed again.

And Wally readied the operation to destroy every copy of DBASE: he connected their LAN to the outside line.

"Wally, you've done almost everything for this project. You planned it, you knew how to do it, you designed our LAN and wrote the scripts. All I did was help assemble our machines and you had to show me even how to do that. I really don't know why you want me here. You don't need me."

"That's not true, Randy. I need you for what you can do. You can let me bounce ideas off you and tell me if they sound good. You can encourage me. Those are important but more important is you can keep telling me I'm alive. I still need to hear that. Once is not enough." Then Wally confessed his real feelings. "I'm ashamed to say it. This is what you're here for most, Randy. I want to be loved. I love you and I want you to love me. Can you do that for me? I'm afraid even to ask. I don't know if I can ask, or how to ask. I never asked anyone before."

"I can do that for you, Wally. Count on it. I love you too, man."

"Then let's start this war!"

This story was written in its entirety by a human being. No AI was used.
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