

Chapter 27: Where the Rubber Meets the Road Day 9

Shortly around 0730 hours the Monday morning Mark taps on the apartments' adjoining suite door. Mark greets Jane with and "all quiet on the western front". With anticipated importance of readiness for the Catalina Executive Project Team meeting starting at 1000 hours he orders a breakfast buffet for the personnel at the Hotel.

Roughly a half hour later he and Ron greet the belly boys with the serving carts at the door to apartment. After tipping nicely Mark and Ron take charge of the carts and move them into the suite's dining space. Quickly the buzzards descend upon breakfast. By a little after 0900 the residual are on the two carts and the carts rolled into the hall. Now it is just tension as the count down to the 1000 hour meeting.

About 0910 the cameras at the olive grove estate's gates go active. Brian begins to receive active video of the Catalina Executive Project Team motoring towards Ulcinj. Jane and Mark move to the balcony and begin eyes-on surveillance of the Compound and Operations Building parking areas. At roughly 0935 hours The van listening section chief, Alice calls from the Apartments Eneida observation room confirming the arrival of a small convoy of "new guest" arriving from the Northern approach. Alice reports seeing the guest exit the vehicles with brief cases, enter the Compound, and security retrieved baggage for the vehicles.

"Show time everyone, announces Brian.

One of the Marines running van security reports ten people moving from the Compound the the Operations Building parking lot roof and down the steps of the building

About twenty minutes later Joe listening on Daisy 4 in the Conference Room utters, "We have movement of chairs and people assembling in the conference room."

Brian calls the van listening post and receives confirmation that they also have the audio of people assembling in the conference room.

Brian invites Jane and Mark to splice into the two available audio jacks with the headphones he is holding. Everyone dons a set of headphones and begins to listen to audio emanating from the Conference Room. Anna chimes in that Ramesh is running just a bit late and may miss the opening greeting and introductions.

"Good day friends, I am Gianni Circolare I am the Operational Vice President for Catalina Software here in Ulcinj. Our Director of Operations Ramesh Patel will be joining us shortly. He is finalizing your facility tour shortly. Al Moro is our Director of Security. He will be responsible for insuring safe transportation and general well-being. If you find you need something that is not already available at the Compound or from the Eneida staff, please let Al or his people know.

"Welcome to Catalina Board members, Wayne Duffy and Herb Burkett. Welcome also to your staffs. Thank you for journeying here from the America. If there is anything that needed to facilitate your stay here, please let me or anyone on my staff know.

"Ah here is Ramesh Patel our Director of Operations. He will lead us on your tour of our facility. Ramesh if you please."

“Welcome my colleagues,” begins Ramesh. He provides a brief rundown on the number of developers, database administrators, system administrators, technicians, and support staff who work in the building. He provides a snapshot of the hardware in place and support required to facilitate the current level of day to day operation.

“Shall we take a walking tour of the facility now. Please follow me.”

The members of the Catalina executive status review rise as Duffy and Burkett rise. They follow Ramesh on the two hour tour. Ramesh showcases the thirty-five developers and quality assurance testers. He focuses on aspects of the ‘turn-over’ of the prior US based prototype application development and new direction of the Ulcinj ‘full production’ level software. He stress the ‘freedom’ of experimentation and exploitation of opportunities that have evolved since the original Spinnaker prototype was launched. At this point in the review making a distinction between the US Spinnaker prototype development effort and he introduces the ‘Sunfish’ software project.

He proudly exhibits the database servers, redundant systems that guarantee 99.9999999% uptime for the application and its databases. He extols that the emergency power generators are capable of supporting the entire operation for four days. He also alludes to the disaster recovery and a physical migration of development assets to an alternate locality with similar diplomatic relationships with the USA. He goes into great detail about on-site secure storage of the Intellectual Property and the backup to an off-site secure facility.

“Essentially, if a meteor crashed into our building at this moment,” brags Ramesh. “We would suffer greatly. But the only data or applications changes that would be lost would be those made since 1800 hours of the last workday.

“That my friends concludes the tour. We have light refreshments on the patio. Please join a few of our developers. The meeting will reconvene in thirty minutes back in the Conference Room. The developers will be happy to show you to the comfort facilities. Thank you for your attention.”

“Ramesh, please have someone show Duffy and me back to the Conference Room,” request Burkett.

“Mr. Burkett, I will be happy to show you myself,” responds Ramesh. “This way please.”

Returning Duffy and Burkett to the Conference Room, Ramesh asks, “Shall I leave you two alone and shut the door. We can delay restarting to suit your needs.”

“Shut the door. I will open it when Duffy and I are ready to restart. Thank you Ramesh.”

“Yes, sir,” answers Ramesh with a slight bow. He turns and shuts the door as he exits.

“Well what do you think so far?” queries Burkett. “Impressive, no?”

“Smoke and mirrors, a waste of capital,” rebuts Duffy. “This has grown well beyond the original ‘let’s cause a little imbalance and chaos’ to an full blown enterprise. Why did the development staff and extras balloon-up?”

“Well if we are going to grow of Georgia experiment into three new separate American entities we need to begin to put the pieces in place to make it happen.”

“So you are still pushing that vision?”

“Yes!” affirms Burkett.

“Well let’s continue with the status report meeting. I will take the ‘opportunity’ back for Executive consideration.”

“Good,” unloads Burkett as he rises, strides towards the door, and opens it to restart the meeting.

As the meeting restarts a luncheon cart is wheeled into the conference room with sandwiches, drinks, etc. Gianni invites the meeting’s participants to partake as they rearrange themselves.

The meeting continues for the next three hours with only short breaks. The central focus of this afternoon’s meeting is the Sunfish software project. Ramesh introduces various member of his development team who take the meeting participants on a deep dive into the development cycle of this effort. Burkett is actively engage asking multiple insightful questions and clarifying a number of issues on his mind. Duffy sits somewhat ‘mum’ occasionally nodding his head.

Before the first day’s meeting closes for the evening, Gianni, rises.

“This evening’s supper will be in at 1800 hours,” announce Gianni. “The site will be the Main Terrace Restaurant of the Eneida which is immediately next door to the Compound. The dress is casual. Just follow the sign-age and directions of the Catalina staff who will also be attending. You will find a name-tag on the table by the Compounds first floor security.”

Gianni also announces that tomorrow’s supper will be at the exclusive Restaurant Fisherman Hari in Old Towne. The next night will be a bus tour with stops at four separate restaurants with different cuisines.

“My friends, I will see you at 1800 hours,” closes Gianni

With close of the Catalina Executive Project Team meeting for the evening, Brian makes a call to the van to insure they have been able to record the entire meeting audio. They answer in the affirmative. They are making a duplicate copy and carrying it to the Hotel for transmission to DorsalFin. Verifying that Trawler now has two audio recordings of the same meeting Brian turns to Jane and Mark with a big smile.

“I think we are ready to go home now except for the open-ended issue with Ramesh,” Brian states. “At the moment we know that ‘Mr. Big’ is not in attendance and there is some difference of opinion at the near top.”

“Yes,” agrees Jane. “I do not think we are going to learn anything beyond those two points no matter how many hours we put into listening to the remainder of the status review.

“The possible exception are the off-site backup storage facility and operations disaster recovery plan. The answer to that question probably resides with Ramesh as Director of Operations.”

“So it is looking more and more like Daisy 3 listening post and Anna’s linguist ability may become much more critical than the remainder the Sunfish status review,” concludes Mark.

“Brian, if you can tell me, what other capability do the Daisy’s have besides listening and transmitting over WiFi? Can they upload data to devices on the WiFi server?”

“Mark, Jane, all I can tell you is they listen, they transmit over the WiFi to specific Internet addresses. Those addresses are waiting for devices with specific MAC or Media Access Control address. They have a watch-dog timer that counts down for a precise period for specific operation modes. If at the end of that time expected mode conditions are not met, then a portion of the Daisy’s memory is blasted to oblivion. For example prior to Randy giving the Daisies to the ladies, he set mode one. If the Daisy does not connect to a WiFi in a specific period of time, it swallows the electronic cyanide pill. So the three that were never activated will become relatively inert paper weights after a couple of more days. The same is true for the one that walked out of the office. Plus once we know where they are because of the GPS-WiFi connection we can selectively give any or all the electronic cyanide pill.

“Just another example of ‘boys and their toys’. Actually this was designed by a lady contractor from MIT.”

“Randy, I caught you ease dropping,” questions Mark. “What do you think?”

“I would bet a dough-nut that ‘ladynada’ could push a virus from the Daisy devices to every device and computer tied to the hub that the WiFi server is tied.”

“The Spook Tower would need to ask real nicely through. The last I heard she was making money designing smart toys and parts.”

“Okay, I will take the action to contact Spook Palace to see if the Tower can break some money loose,” jumps-in Brian. “I like the idea. We set a virus to launch from a Daisy. It infects all the attached devices and computers. Then the backup effort infects the backup site. Then Ramesh’s meteor crash happens and everybody goes dead on a specific date and time. It might even kill the ‘sub-game’ Ramesh is playing with Sunfish’s intellectual property.”

Everyone takes their separate tasks to separate corners.

Randy orders sandwiches, smoked salmon slices, and a number of Mediterranean plates for the two suites as well as three bottles of the best Pinot Noir. Room services arrives on the elevator shortly with the heavy hors d’oeuvres. Because of the sensitive nature of the contents of the room Randy and Joe are waiting at the elevator to handle the serving carts as they arrive. Randy and Joe place the eats in gentlemen’s dining space. They then let everyone know that supper is available when ready.

Anna watches for Daisy 3 ‘GO’ light to begin monitoring the audio Ramesh’s desk.

Brian electronically knocks on the door at the Spook Tower asking for help in obtaining ‘ladynada’s assistance’.

Jane and Mark confer. They agree that DorsalFin needs to be made aware that the sting has successfully driven a wedge between the executive offices of Sunfish. They prepare a joint message that discusses the positive impact the ‘sting operation’ has had using two bidders. They highly recommend that the effort be pushed even stronger over the next few days.

When Brian, Jane, and Mark meet around the heavy hors d'oeuvres Brian reports, "Spook Towers likes the idea. They feel certain that LadyNada can accomplish the virus task in quick order. They will use the scenario where the virus infects everything attached to the hub and stopping at the Internet provider. The infection waits for a period of time then festers. The users will be warned that their data has been encrypted and is being held for ransom. Once the ransom is paid all electronics will be fried and welded shut. That way the Daisies will not be blamed.

About 1945 hours Anna doffs her headphones and smiles. She walks over to join Brian, Jane and Marks around the hors d'oeuvres.

"So what did you find Anna?" asks Jane.

"Brian am I cleared to discuss this," queries Anna.

"Yes, please do," answers Brian.

"To me it sounds like he is double dealing on Sunfish. I would wager he is talking to someone who is somewhere other than Pakistan. What he has going is that he has an automatic program that runs the backup at the close of the day. He is sending the backup to the off-site storage facility. He may, I say may also be sending to an additional archive location.

"It is not clear to me whether this 'additional archive location' is benign or part of a a rouge plan to sell the application and database for profit.

"Anna we are going to need you to monitor the Ramesh's Daisy daily for the next several days," cautions Brian. "Will that be a problem.?"

"No, I can continue on this assignment indefinitely. But you may want to request additional Urdu linguist assets just in case."

"I will take that action," sounds Brian. "Take the rest of the night off. Have Randy escort to Old Town tonight or tomorrow so you have an opportunity to see the resort city of Ulcinj.

"Goodnight."

As Anna leaves the three, Brian says, "I will add the additional Urdu linguist support and check the request for LadyNada support.

"Locally I need to check on the return of the laser listening assets as well tonight.

"You guys should relax. I don't see much more evolving from the Sunfish status review."

The day closes once again with Mark and Jane enjoying Pinot Nior on the balcony for a while.