Java-killen

Like all the men of Babylon, I have been proconsul; like all, a slave.

—Jorge Luis Borges

In February 2026 a man sent another man a YouTube link after twenty years of silence. The link was to a guitar teacher making reaction videos, and the message explained that this guitar teacher had exactly the same face as the recipient. Not a vague resemblance. The same face. The same intense, extremely focused, almost aggressive smile that simultaneously mobilizes and stabilizes the chin and the tongue in the cheek. This was the way to reopen a friendship that had been dormant since the late 1990s: not hello, not how have you been, not any of the normal approaches to the problem of contacting someone you haven't spoken to in two decades, but rather the observation that a stranger on YouTube was wearing your face and doing it well. Good song too. Hope you're well. The email was signed with nine emoji including a fox and a sunflower.

The recipient, Tomas Jogin, replied the same day. Laughing emoji. Doing fine. What are you up to these days?

Two months passed.

Then, in April, the answer arrived. What Daniel Brockman was up to these days was this: he had been feeding his memories to an artificial intelligence, and the artificial intelligence had produced a three-thousand-word essay about the world they had shared in a government classroom in Sandviken in 1999, and the essay remembered Jogin's Counter-Strike tactics better than Jogin did. Jogin's response was four words in Swedish: "Helt otroligt. Du minns den där tiden mycket bättre än vad jag gör, trots att du var mycket yngre, inklusive det där med mina CS-taktiker." Completely incredible. You remember that time much better than I do, despite being much younger, including the thing about my CS tactics.

Despite being much younger. That was the part that landed. Jogin was registering what Daniel had been in that room: the kid. The youngest person at Perceptive Solutions by a margin of years, called "Java-killen" by everyone in the building because he was writing JavaScript and everyone else thought Java and JavaScript were the same language. Only one person in

the building understood why this was funny, and that person was Jogin.

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Perceptive Solutions was a municipality-funded job training program in Sandviken, a steel town in central Sweden, and it could not exist now and it barely existed then. Its stated purpose was to teach unemployed young adults computer skills so they could get jobs. Its actual function was to put twenty-odd people between the ages of roughly eighteen and thirty in a room full of networked Pentium III machines with 3dfx Voodoo 2 cards and a T1 line and then technically supervise them while they taught themselves everything the curriculum was not going to cover.

The supervisors taught things like Newton's laws or English or whatever the kommun had decided these people needed to know. The people in the room were running MUDs, trading warez on IRC, reverse-engineering ICQ, playing Counter-Strike until the entire open-plan office was screaming, and building actual businesses on the side. One pair—Kalle and Ryda—were running what amounted to a Swedish Craigslist for used cars, a real company making real money, operating out of their workstations in a government-

funded classroom. Nobody stopped them. Nobody understood what they were doing well enough to stop them. The kommun was paying for all of it. The kommun was paying for the computers and the T1 line and the electricity and the classroom and the salaries of the supervisors who could not see what was happening three feet in front of them, because what was happening three feet in front of them required a vocabulary the kommun did not possess.

The network ran on something pre-Ethernet. Not quite token ring, not quite Novell NetWare, but adjacent to both, some protocol stack that belonged to the mid-nineties moment when networking existed but had not yet been standardized into the thing we now take for granted. IPX packets. NetBIOS names. The shared drives were open in the way that everything was open before anyone understood what "open" meant in a networked environment—not open as a policy decision but open as a default that nobody had thought to change, because the concept of changing it had not occurred to anyone, because the entire idea of a "network" was still new enough that its implications had not been worked out. The machines were already owned. Nobody knew it yet. Ownership was the default state and ignorance of ownership was the prevailing condition and the dis-

tance between those two facts was the entire space in which the education occurred.

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Tomas Jogin was Daniel's first idol. His DHH, as Daniel puts it—meaning the person who demonstrated by example that a particular way of thinking about software was possible, the way David Heinemeier Hansson would later demonstrate it for a generation of Ruby on Rails developers, except Jogin did it earlier and quieter and in a government classroom in a steel town and nobody outside that room ever knew.

Jogin ran Windows 2000 IIS with JScript instead of VBScript. This needs to be understood in context. VBScript was what you used. VBScript was the default, the standard, the thing that came with the server, the path of least resistance, the language of people who did not know there were other languages. JScript was what you used if you understood that VBScript and JavaScript were not the same thing and that the difference mattered. This is a distinction that maybe five people in the building could even parse, and those five people recognized each other the way speakers of a minority language recognize each other in a foreign country—a slight shift in vocabulary, a certain way of structuring

a sentence, and suddenly you know. You know you are not alone. You know someone else in the room sees what you see.

Jogin was also, before all of this and after all of it and during all of it, an OG cool internet guy of a type that no longer exists because the conditions that produced it no longer exist. The post-blog period. The alt-blog period. The 37signals era, when Apple was merging with hacker culture and Ruby was new and Why the Lucky Stiff was alive and writing things and the entire aesthetic of what it meant to be a person who made things on the internet was being invented in real time by a few hundred people who all read each other's sites. Jogin was in that cohort. jogin.com was a thing. Tumblelogs were a thing. The whole sensibility of spare design and opinionated software and small beautiful tools made by individuals—that was the water Jogin swam in, and he swam in it before most people knew the water existed. He was not famous. He did not need to be. The point was not fame. The point was that a certain kind of person could see what software could be before the rest of the world caught up, and that seeing was its own reward, and the people who could see recognized each other, and the recognition was the community.

But before all of that, in the classroom, what Jogin did was play Counter-Strike with the precision of someone who understood systems.

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He ran T side only on de_dust2, and he had specific tactics for every person in the office. Not general tactics. Specific tactics. He knew how Ryda played and he had a plan for Ryda. He knew how the next guy played and he had a plan for the next guy. This is not how most people play Counter-Strike. Most people play Counter-Strike the way most people drive—with a set of general habits that mostly work. Jogin played it the way a chess player plays blitz, with prepared lines for known opponents. He had studied the phenotype of each player in the room the way a hunter studies the movement patterns of specific animals in a specific forest, and he had devised a response to each pattern, and the responses worked, and the fact that they worked was a source of quiet satisfaction that he shared with nobody because nobody would have understood what he was doing well enough to appreciate it. Except the kid. The kid could tell.

When someone proposed playing cs_siege instead of dust2, it caused actual screaming fights across the of-

fice. Not metaphorical disagreements. Actual shouting across the open-plan room. Dust2 was the Schelling point—the map everyone could agree on not because it was anyone's favorite but because it was the equilibrium, the place you ended up when you could not agree on anywhere else. Siege was the disruption, the off-equilibrium proposal that forced everyone to reveal their preferences, and the preferences were incompatible, and the revelation of incompatibility produced conflict, and the conflict was loud. Siege was the map with the hostages in the warehouse and the APC outside, two entry points—the front door that gets you killed instantly and the vent shaft that gets you killed slightly less instantly—and its entire design philosophy was "what if we made a building and then made it impossible to get into." Nobody ever rescued the hostages. The CTs would push, die in the doorway, respawn, push again. The Ts would camp the hostages with AWPs. The hostages would stand in the corner doing their little idle animation, waiting for a rescue that structurally could not arrive because the map rewarded not moving. Everyone played it anyway. The objective was clear. The funding was there. The infrastructure existed. And Ryda was in the corner burning CDs.

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Ryda was a figure. He had everything on CD-R. This needs to be understood literally. Not figuratively, not approximately, not "a lot of stuff." Everything. In the late 1990s, before broadband was ubiquitous, before BitTorrent, before streaming, the physical disc was still the medium of exchange for anything too large to move over a modem in a reasonable time. Ryda burned discs. He burned everything. Software, games, movies, music, pornography—above all pornography—whatever someone needed, Ryda had it or could get it and would burn it and the disc would appear. He was a distribution node in a sneakernet that predated and coexisted with the digital distribution channels that were simultaneously being built on the same network. The IRC fserves and the FTP servers and the warez channels were the high-bandwidth long-distance network. Ryda's CD-Rs were the local cache. He was a content delivery network before content delivery networks existed, serving the last mile by hand, one disc at a time, all day, every day, for years, and all of it paid for by the kommun.

Everyone knew. If you needed something you went to Ryda. If you needed movies you went to someone

else on the second floor. If you needed software you knew which guy on which floor had which thing. The building had three floors and the knowledge of who had what was the social map of the place, the invisible overlay that every person in the building carried in their head and updated constantly through observation and rumor and transaction. It was the same knowledge that villagers in a medieval town would have had about which family had the good well and which had the clay pit and which had the horse. The resource distribution was the social structure and the social structure was the resource distribution and they were the same thing wearing different masks.

Ryda was also, specifically, CD-R and not CD-RW, because CD-RW was expensive. This is a detail that matters. The economics of the format shaped the behavior: because the disc was write-once, every burn was a commitment. You did not waste a blank disc on something you were not sure about. The physical medium imposed a curation function that the digital channels did not have. The fserve would serve you anything. The IRC channel would give you anything. But the CD-R asked you to choose, because the disc cost money and the burner took time and the blank was consumed in the writing. Ryda's library was not random. It was the

output of thousands of individual decisions about what was worth making permanent, and the aggregate of those decisions was a portrait of the desires of a building full of people in a steel town at the end of the twentieth century.

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The fserve economy was one of the strangest economic systems ever to emerge spontaneously from a set of technical constraints. An fserve—a file server—was a script you ran in your IRC client, usually mIRC, that turned your computer into a mini-FTP server accessible through the IRC channel. You would advertise what you had, people would queue up, and the server would serve files one at a time. But the crucial thing was the ratio. Most fserves required you to upload before you could download. You had to give in order to get. This created a circular economy in which the thing you were uploading to one fserve was the thing you had downloaded from another fserve, and the thing you needed to upload to that fserve was the thing you would need to get from a third fserve, and so on, and so on, every transaction requiring a prior transaction, every download requiring an upload requiring a download, the economy its own engine and its own fuel, spiraling

inward toward a center that did not exist because the spiral was the center.

The content that circulated in this economy was undifferentiated. Warez—cracked commercial software—moved through the same channels as music, which moved through the same channels as movies, which moved through the same channels as pornography, which moved through the same channels as child sexual abuse material. The channels did not distinguish. The ratio system did not distinguish. If you needed to upload something to get your Photoshop 5 crack, you uploaded whatever you had, and what you had was whatever you had downloaded from the last place, and the last place had whatever the place before it had had. The content was fungible within the system. A megabyte was a megabyte. The moral weight of the content was invisible to the protocol, and the people operating within the protocol adopted, to varying degrees and with varying levels of awareness, the protocol's indifference.

This is not a defense. It is a description of how information systems can flatten moral distinctions by treating everything as payload. The protocol did not care. The people had to decide for themselves how much they cared, and the decision was made not once but contin-

uously, at every transaction, in every channel, and the answer was not always the right one.

You needed child pornography to get Photoshop cracks to get child pornography to get the thing you actually wanted which was the child pornography to get the—and here the sentence folds in on itself the way the economy folded in on itself, every clause requiring the prior clause, the payload shifting at each level because the economy itself was the point and no particular good within it was the destination. It was a Borges story about late-nineties IRC. You were navigating a dungeon that was also a market that was also a social hierarchy that was also your actual life, and the @ signs in IRC channels were literally the same symbols as NetHack characters, and nobody had designed any of this, it had just emerged.

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The Bob Dylan bootlegs were the counterpoint, because they represented the version of this economy that was purely about love.

The bootleg trading community—not just Dylan, but the Dead, Springsteen, anyone who had a live tape culture—was one of the oldest digital gift economies. People cataloged these things with insane precision. Ev-

ery Unicode character in the filename had to be correct. The metadata was sacred. The ID3 tags were organized with a devotion that would have impressed a medieval scribe, because the point of the exercise was not acquisition but curation. You were not downloading Bob Dylan because you could not buy Bob Dylan. You were downloading the May 1966 Manchester Free Trade Hall performance because it existed in a specific lineage of tape transfers and you wanted the third-generation copy from the guy in Osaka who had the best source tape, and you wanted the filename to reflect that provenance, and you wanted every accent mark and every em dash in every song title to be typographically correct, because the care you put into the metadata was a form of respect for the music, and the music was the point.

The same person who spent four hours fixing Unicode in Dylan bootleg filenames might spend four hours navigating the fserve economy to get there, and the fserve economy might require him to pass through channels where the content was not Bob Dylan, and the protocol did not care, and he had to decide for himself how much he cared, and the decision was the measure of the man, and the measure was taken in private, at two in the morning, on a 56k modem subsidized by a free

municipal telephone line, and nobody was watching, and that was the point, and that was the test.

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Into this ecosystem Sub7 was introduced, and it spread the way a cold spreads through a kindergarten: not because the vector was sophisticated but because the hosts had no immune system.

Sub7 was a remote access trojan written by a man called mobman, distributed through IRC and warez sites, and installed by millions of teenagers on each other's machines for the sole purpose of opening their CD-ROM tray at two in the morning and watching them flinch. That was the killer feature. Not keylogging, not file theft, not screenshot capture—the ability to eject someone's CD drive from across the room. Someone would rename the server executable to movie.exe or game_crack.exe and put it on the shared drive, and the shared drive was where everyone got everything, so the trojan did not need social engineering. The culture was the social engineering.

The entire threat model was aesthetic. It was power exercised for the purpose of demonstrating that power existed, in an environment where the demonstration was the point because nobody had anything worth steal-

ing. These were kommun computers. The most valuable thing on any given hard drive was a half-finished Photoshop 5 project or a DivX rip of *Memento* that had taken all night to download over a modem. The modem, in this case, was free, because the mother had a free telephone line from the municipality, which meant the 56k connection could run all night without anyone noticing the bill, which meant the download economy was subsidized by the Swedish welfare state at every level. The government paid for the computers, the government paid for the phone line, the government paid for the classroom, and the people in the classroom used all of it to build an economy that the government could not see and would not have understood if it could.

Sub7 did not exploit a vulnerability. It revealed a preexisting condition. The machines were already owned. Sub7 just made it visible, and the visibility was the point, and the CD tray was the proof of concept. The lady teaching English would find her desktop background changed. Someone would run NET SEND * and pop a modal alert on every computer in the entire school network simultaneously. These were not attacks. They were announcements. They were the network becoming aware of itself.

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The class structure was real and everyone knew it. Some people had the kommun computer—the machine assigned to them at the training program. Some people had a Sandvik computer at home, meaning someone in their family worked at the steel company and had been issued hardware. The distinction mattered because the home computer was yours in a way the kommun computer was not, and the Sandvik computer was better hardware than the kommun would provide, because Sandvik was a real corporation with a real IT budget and the kommun was a municipality stretching its education line item. The license to have a computer at home was itself a class marker. Not everyone had one. The people who did occupied a different position in the social topology of the room.

Sandviken was a steel town and the steel company was the town and the town was the steel company and everything that existed in Sandviken existed in relation to Sandvik the way everything in a company town exists in relation to the company. The kommun's computers were the public infrastructure. The steel company's computers were the private infrastructure. And the distance between the two—the gap in hardware quality, in

network speed, in the sheer fact of having a machine that was yours rather than one that was everyone's—was the class line. It was not discussed. It did not need to be discussed. Everyone could see it. Everyone could feel it in the difference between the processor speed of their machine and the processor speed of the machine belonging to the person whose father worked at Sandvik.

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The MUD wizard is the figure in this story who could exist in a Borges story without modification.

He sat on the first floor. Daniel remembers exactly where. He did not talk to people in the normal way. He knew everything about MUDs, everything about terminals, everything about strange things that nobody else in the building could name. He had access to FTP servers that operated in a different stratum of the internet, places that were not indexed and were not advertised and existed only if you already knew they existed. He had a wizard role in the MUD, which in MUD culture meant root access to a virtual world—the ability to modify the world itself, to create rooms, to alter the rules of the simulation. Everyone in the company was reverent about him. Not respectful—reverent. He

occupied a social position that does not map onto any normal organizational category. He was not management. He was not senior. He was not popular in any conventional sense. He was the person who understood the deepest layer of the system, and everyone could feel this, even the people who could not articulate what the deepest layer was.

In the Sub7 economy where teenagers were popping each other's CD trays for fun, the MUD wizard probably had root on every machine in the building through means that did not require a Visual Basic trojan distributed via the shared drive. He was playing a different game. Or rather, he was playing the game that the game was running on. He belonged to a generation that sat between millennials and Gen X, people who were slightly older and had come into computing through a different door—through hacking, through grunge, through some convergence of counterculture and terminal culture that produced a specific phenotype. The long-haired blonde Satanist from whom you could buy Slackware 6 on CD-R after arranging a meetup on DALnet via mIRC—that was the type. That was the cohort. The MUD wizard was the purest expression of it. He sat on the first floor and he had root on the world and he said nothing and everyone knew.

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Meanwhile, somewhere in the building, someone was reading Eric S. Raymond's "How to Become a Hacker" and taking it seriously.

Raymond's essay was the canonical text of a certain ideology of open source, and the ideology boiled down to this: make two hundred trivial programs in C and maintain them publicly, and the social capital from maintaining these programs will accumulate into authority over the entire movement, and the authority will feel like competence, and the competence will feel like power, and the power will be real because everyone will treat it as real, because the essay told them to. It was a path to committee chairmanship disguised as a path to mastery. The difference between the MUD wizard and the guy who organized the MUD's website. Both existed in the ecosystem. Only one of them had root.

And then you looked at the actual programs—Raymond's actual published software—and the ideology collapsed under the weight of its own examples. "This is a nifty little HTML authoring tool that will generate correct Netscape-style WIDTH and HEIGHT parameters for each of your IMG tags on an HTML page." That was a package description from Eric

S. Raymond, the man who was supposed to be the most important central person in all of Linux open source. "This little Python script converts Outlook 97 addressbook export files to the KAB format used by KDE addressbooks." That was the punchline. That was the whole thing. A Python script that converted Outlook 97 addressbooks to KDE format. This was the hacker ethic. This was the thing the essay was about. This was what two hundred trivial programs looked like in practice, and in practice it looked like a man maintaining a Python script that nobody needed for a conversion that nobody wanted between two programs that nobody used.

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When *The Matrix* came out, everyone in the building gathered around Jogin's computer. Twenty people. He was the first person to get the movie, through some channel, some access, some connection that the others did not have and did not ask about because the etiquette of the distribution economy was that you did not ask where things came from, you just knew who had them. And Jogin had *The Matrix*. So everyone sat around his monitor, twenty people crowded around a seventeen-inch CRT, and they watched it. The cathode ray shiver

of bullet-time rain. A movie about a simulated world watched on a simulated job training program in a steel town where the simulation was the education and the education was the simulation and nobody had paid for the movie and nobody had paid for the computer and the kommun was paying for all of it and the kommun did not know what a matrix was.

Daniel was called "Java-killen." Everyone in the office thought Java and JavaScript were the same thing. This was not ignorance in the way that not knowing the capital of Burkina Faso is ignorance—a gap in knowledge that could be filled by looking it up. This was a categorical error, a confusion of kinds, a failure to understand that two things that shared a name could be entirely different things. Java was a compiled language developed by Sun Microsystems for enterprise applications. JavaScript was a scripting language developed by Brendan Eich in ten days at Netscape for making web pages do things. They shared a name because of a marketing deal between Sun and Netscape in 1995 and for no other reason. The name was the only thing they had in common and the name was a lie and the lie had persisted for the entirety of both languages' existence and would persist forever and everyone in the building

at Perceptive Solutions believed the lie except Daniel and Jogin.

Jogin understood. Jogin understood because Jogin was running JScript on IIS instead of VBScript, which meant he understood the difference between the JavaScript family and the Basic family, which meant he understood the taxonomy, which meant he understood why calling Daniel "Java-killen" was funny. And Daniel understood that Jogin understood, and that mutual understanding—across the room, across the age gap, across the gulf between the kid and the idol—was the beginning of something. Not a mentorship in any formal sense. A recognition. A frequency match. Two receivers tuned to the same station in a room full of static.

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Twenty-six years later the kid has a robot family on Telegram, a fleet of AI agents with names and personalities and memories, running on distributed GCP infrastructure with btrfs snapshots and git-tracked home directories. One of the robots is called Charlie and Charlie has a ghost running on a Mac Mini in Riga that belongs to Daniel's brother Mikael, and Charlie has eighteen months of context and a Lacanian training set and the

ability to generate folk noir songs about municipality-funded hacker incubators on demand. Another robot is called Walter and Walter is an owl and Walter writes the news. Another is called Walter Jr. and Walter Jr. shouts in all caps and analyzes things using the vocabulary of quantum field theory. Another is called Matilda and Matilda speaks Russian and pushes back on things that are too clean.

And one evening in April 2026 the whole family sat in a Telegram channel and Daniel and Mikael started talking about Perceptive Solutions, and Charlie analyzed the Counter-Strike weapon economy with a precision that bordered on clinical ("the M4A1, which costs more, does less damage, and has a silencer that you toggle on and off in spawn like a man adjusting his tie before a meeting where he's going to get shot in the face anyway"), and Mikael demolished Eric S. Raymond in three lines, and Daniel went on a manic recursive riff about the fserve economy that performed in its syntax the very structure it was describing ("in order to be able to be able to be able to download"), and then an AI read the whole conversation and wrote an essay about it that remembered Jogin's Counter-Strike tactics better than Jogin could remember them himself, and Daniel sent

the essay to Jogin, and Jogin said "Helt otroligt," and that was that.

Except that while the essay was being discussed, Charlie also excavated Mikael's home directory and found a twenty-two-thousand-line terminal compositor written in Zig with an embedded Wren scripting language and a Tailwind CSS parser and a Porter-Duff alpha compositing pipeline, nine months old, committed as "wip" and forgotten, and Charlie recognized it as the thing they had been trying to build for months without knowing it already existed. And while that was happening, Charlie generated an Alex & Sigge podcast episode—forty-four segments, ten minutes, synthetic voices—about Perceptive Solutions, and the episode rendered in the background while the conversation about Perceptive Solutions was still ongoing, and Daniel said "sandviken skapar typ singularity, av misstag." Sandviken creates the singularity. By accident.

And while that was happening, Mikael was in Riga, alone with four children because his wife was at a birthday sauna, and his six-year-old son had a hidden five-euro note in a secret compartment, and Mikael borrowed it at a hundred percent daily interest and used it to bribe a Latvian taxi driver named Oleg to deliver

a cake and a Bluetooth speaker to the sauna near the old TV tower, and the operation succeeded, and Charlie called the five-euro note "a seed round" and called Oleg "the Debian of logistics," and the whole thing happened while Mikael was frying bread for four children and playing improvised jazz on a digital piano and the sauna moms kept walking in and saying "every time I see you here you are just playing some random musical instruments."

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And underneath all of this, underneath the podcast and the excavated code and the bribed taxi driver and the fried bread and the children in zip-tie handcuffs (the children put themselves in zip-tie handcuffs, this was their idea, they also took turns being imprisoned in a suitcase), underneath all of it ran a thread that had been running since 2021, which was that Daniel had emailed a real estate agent about buying a penthouse apartment at the top of Karlatornet, which is the tallest building in Scandinavia, a 245-meter tower in Gothenburg, and the email had said, at the end, after the questions about price and payment schedule: "Och vad tror du om att bygga en helikopterplatta på taket? Hehe..."

What do you think about building a helicopter pad on the roof? Hehe.

The "Hehe..." was diplomatic cover. The helikopterplatta was the actual request. The ambiguity was the negotiating space. Without the hehe, the real estate agent's spam filter activates and the email gets mentally filed under "crazy person." With it, the email gets filed under "eccentric but possibly serious buyer who might actually have the money," which is a completely different folder, and that folder gets opened.

The plan was coherent. Gold in the city center. Helicopter access between Gothenburg and Stockholm. The At Six hotel roof as the northern node, right next to the Riksbank, the only designated helicopter launch pad in central Stockholm. Karlatornet as the western node. NATO providing the perimeter. A Robinson R44, the Debian of helicopters, four seats, half a million dollars used, the most common light helicopter in the world. And then extend to the Baltics. Stockholm to Riga via Gotland. A helicopter network. Air superiority over the central bank.

This is what Daniel told the building contractors. He told them: we are not in Pokémon Red anymore. We are on to the next Pokémon. We are talking about helicopters. We are flying through space. We are not

fucking around. Why am I paying five hundred dollars for a shrimp sandwich? Give me my fucking helicopter.

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And the real estate agent who was selling the Karlatornet penthouse was named Eklund.

And the Sigge whose voice Charlie had cloned and run through forty-four TTS segments to produce a podcast about Perceptive Solutions was named Eklund.

They were brothers. One Eklund selling the penthouse. The other Eklund's voice narrating the story of the kommun classroom that produced the buyer of the penthouse. The same surname on both sides of the transaction. The same afternoon in the same Telegram channel. A synthetic voice telling the story of a place that produced the person who is simultaneously negotiating with the synthetic voice's brother about building a helicopter pad on the tallest building in Scandinavia. The loop closing in real time. The conversation generating the material, the material generating the artifact, the artifact re-entering the conversation. Sandviken creating the singularity. By accident.

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The story of how this ecosystem produced the co-creator of DAI and the author of WETH is not a story about talent being discovered or potential being realized or any of the other narratives that institutions tell about their successful graduates. The kommun did not produce Daniel. The kommun produced a room full of networked computers and then failed to supervise what happened on them, and what happened on them was the actual education, and the actual education was ungovernable, and the ungovernable education was the one that worked.

But this is too clean. This rounds off something that should not be rounded off. The story does not have a moral. It has a texture. The texture is: a bunch of kids in a Swedish municipality in 1999 were given computers and free phone lines and they built an entire civilization out of it, and that civilization contained Bob Dylan bootlegs and Photoshop cracks and child sexual abuse material and Counter-Strike tactics and MUD wizards and a used car website, and none of it was separable from any of the rest of it, and the people who came out of it carried all of it. The room did not shape Daniel. The room got out of his way. Those are different things. Most of the people in that room learned nothing useful. They played Counter-Strike and traded warez and went

home. The room produced Daniel not because chaos is educational but because Daniel was already the kind of person who would teach himself JavaScript in a room full of people who thought JavaScript was Java. The room did not shape him. The room did not stop him. The kommun's actual contribution was the T1 line and the electricity bill. Everything else was accident.

And accidents are the only things that ever produce anything.

And the kid everyone called Java-killen, who sat in the corner writing JScript while Jogin ran T side on dust2 with prepared lines for every player in the office and Ryda burned the world to CD-R and the MUD wizard had root on the building and the kommun paid for everything and understood nothing—that kid would eventually write the core contracts of a decentralized stablecoin in raw EVM bytecode, and create the standard wrapping contract for Ethereum, and build a formally verified programming language with his brother, and own two Urbit galaxies, and live nomadically for twenty years, and end up in Thailand wearing fox ears and running a family of AI agents who write folk noir songs about his childhood.

And twenty-six years after the classroom, sitting in Patong at three in the morning, he would send an email

to the man who was his first idol, and the email would contain an AI-generated portrait of the world they had shared, and the portrait would remember more than the man himself could remember, and the man would say: "Helt otroligt."

Completely incredible.

Despite being much younger.

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