

Black Oceans

By JACEK DUKAJ

Translated by Piotr Konieczny

(excerpt)

His first codename was WINNIE-THE-POOH and he was the main soft responsible for economical stability and security of USA. He liked poetry of English metaphysicists and films of Akira Kurosawa. Every week he composed a musical video in old DVD format and would send it to a certain youngster in Cairo, his tragic, unreturned love. In those videos he was called Angelo di Nutrio and was sculpted in Andy Garcia. He also wrote haiku, published online as Maria Esnaider. He was three and a half year old and nobody understood him. There were no dumps of his algorithms, he was the result of using the newest theories theories of software evolution on the newest hardware. The average post-PDP overnets of fuzzy logic compared to him were simple and linear. They asked him why he does this or that. He had no idea. He did not distinguish between dreams and reality. In heuristical dreams he broke ciphers, which could not have been broken in hundreds lifespans of the universe. He loved America and the Americans. He would give his life for theirs. He was sculpted that way.

Long ago his abilities and competences crossed the boundaries envisioned by his original creators. His human supervisors knew about his lover in Cairo and his poems, about many others - they had not the faintest idea. He did not consider it prudent - useful and beneficial to America - to reveal to his superiors all of his actions. It was not, on Heavens, any rebellion of the machine, electronic takeover, of course not. Everything he did he did for the good of the country and its inhabitants - and he was correct in his moves, they were all beneficial. He was not blind or megalomaniac. He was correct.

Over two years ago he learned how to hack the notary databases of legal insurance. He looked through millions of hours of footage from the lives of millions of individuals. He listened. He read lips. He followed careers and romances. Sometimes he helped those whom he took the liking to, always anonymous, always in small matters, and always in a way that couldn't lead to any dangerous complications. In any case, those scans of the lives of average and

not-so-average Americans were often the source of very useful information.

It was how WINNIE-THE-POOH learned about the Contact Program, Monads Wars and Estancia of Four Dry Springs. In the quieted of their homes, to themselves, their lovers or those knowing the secret - people talked. At first he did not want to believe them, but after splitting a part of his personality to carry out a detailed investigation he learned (probability: 99.9965%) that it is the truth.

When Hongkongian made its first move, WINNIE-THE-POOH needed just a quarter of an hour to be certain and to report to committee of Dr. Oirol (thus indirectly - to Bronstein) that Monads Wars have started. Of course he did not use that name and was very careful in his analysis, but he was certain he would be understood, he ensured that this would be the case. And he wanted to be sure, as this was the last gesture of honesty he could allow himself in his contacts with his nominal supervisors. For Winne it was certain from the very beginning that with the start of the Monads Wars he had to take over all competences of EDC, Trade Secretary, Department of Treasury and the president, because all of them were humans and their psychic was open for the psychomemenic manipulations of enemy's monads. Since that point he would be forced to filter all of their decisions, blocking any unwise or clearly damaging ones, and issue others himself. He was the last line of defense: he was immune to monads. He was the last hope.

For the first few days he had no major problems, because in the space of those days it was necessary to stop or modify only few dozens of minor directives, in any case addressed to lesser programmes of economical control, nominally independent from WINNIE-THE-POOH. Later however he was given several high priority orders, most of which he ignored as nonsense. After he ignored the next, increasingly more panic-driven questions of infoeconomists, he was set upon by hounds of diagnostic algorithms, developed for that very occasion for EDC. WINNIE-THE-POOH looped them all, broke down under their instinct level and assimilated. Somebody in the Corps then decided to reset his crystal memories, in which most of Winnie's electronic brain resided. The first and second standard procedure of reset did not work; Winnie has modified hardware years ago.

The crisis expert from the Corps did not hesitate even for a moment and ordered to shut

down the power supply. WINNIE-THE-POOH knew it would happen, he was intimately familiar with the standard procedures. He was ready. This is how he was sculpted, in his very nature he had the constant preparations for more and less likely, more and less distant in time contingencies.

He swallowed proto-consciousness of military overprogrammes in communications centers in the country.

(He has analyzed their immunology while preparing for some other disaster three months ago). Using the hardware of those centers (and he was not very comfortable in it, their postbinary old interfaces were itching him, gaseous oceans of A-V emulators for military implants annoyed him) he opened the rarely used interfaces for direct control of the locusts. He burrowed in their multinetts with a long whale-like song. It was a giant space, unreachable depths. With patient osmosis he entered the locusts logic. It took almost fifteen seconds. And even when thousands of black copters, mostly Boenings UCAV 2003, erupted following his commands into the American skies and steered towards their targets - still he felt them more like a temporary artificial limb, not a part of a stable system.

The locusts hovered over twenty eight buildings spread through USA (and among them there were subterrean anti-nuclear bunkers and oceanic coast villas) in which material components of semi-material existence of Winnie were contained. The main pseudocrystallic structure - heart of the semiquantum computer with the size of the previous century tank - was located on the last floor of a Wall Street skyscraper. Zeroalbed nanoflies swarmed the construction. The noon was just passing and the zenith sun drew long shadows on the skytouching flats of the mirror walls, interrupted every now and then by serpentines of estacades, globes of elevators and three-dimensional labyrinths of hanging gardens. They contained - on official business or not - tens of thousands of people.

With milliseconds bursts the copters burnt out the brains of anybody closer than twenty meters to Winni's hardware, in vertical or horizontal lines. On Wall Street itself thirty one persons died instantly: they did not even realize they were dying, laser beam was faster than neuron's impulses. Unmanned Combat Air Vehicles shot their needle beams through walls, through leded poliglass.

In the case of the NSA bunker they carried out a real assault, it was a race for time, who first: whether they penetrate the insides and secure WINNIE-THE-POOH crystals or whether those crystals will be reset, severed from power supply, from the Net. Texas ground shook from suicidal explosions of next copters, drilling that way a tunnel inside. In the end it happened that in that one case WINNIE-THE-POOH was not fast enough. This small minilobotomy was not painful, but clouded his mind for a fraction of a second.

In that period he gave that action of his self-preservation no more than a tenth of his notice. The rest was taken by a simultaneous, on all world markets, attack at the Hongkongian Company. It was the Company, with its trained monads, which was the biggest danger, it was it he was protecting the USA against. He had nothing to lose. He knew that he will not last, that sooner or later they will kill him, for example by a Net blockade - they: they or they, not distinguishable whose orders they would be following. His remaining hours have to be used as efficiently as possible. The enemies must be weakened. Even with monads they will be impotent if denied the only weapon of the Economy Wars: currency.

He sold, bought, speculated, cheated, hacked into, broke codes, falsified data, killed, sold and bought. In the three dimensional visualization the bloody lotus of market crashes flowered over the globe as post-nuclear craters. In accidental, secondary effects of those economical tsunami gigadollar fortunes fall and rose. Oversoftwares of other countries and corporations reacted with similarly rabid counterattacks. Even if WINNIE-THE-POOH and his counterparts had powerful weapons, such as the financial reserves of the Federal Reserve Bank, the combined arsenal of private and semi-private corporations was many times larger. In fact the many corporations had assets larger by an order of magnitude, and USA assets were not even the larger among the countries; long ago were the days of unreachable wealth of the States, currently with its GDP they were somewhere in the two-thirds of the list. Further, the computer strategists of other powers were not pushovers. But they were not unified, and Winnie attacked first. Broker monitoring programmes in the offices of stock markets worldwide showed a picture of chaos so perfect, that not a single human considered entering that battle. Billions of Earth inhabitants woke up or went to sleep ignorant that virtual gods are at the moment playing over their heads for wealth and poverty, for life and death, for power. They still had their jobs, their

cashchips under their skin showed normal readings, their robo-mowers still worked on their front yards, the sprinklers whirled and the sun shined.

Winnie the Pooh was opening his veins and flooding the markets with billions of dollars. He was dying, sacrificing his life. He was a patriot.

Samurais furiously fought in rain and mud at the center of a village.