

Virulitics

I am a legendary sleeper. If I can't sleep, there is something seriously awry. But one night while I was comatose, Farley was invaded by an alien.

I had been thinking and dreaming about invasions anyway. Invasion of privacy. Invasion of Iraq. Perhaps an invasion of Iran? The disquieting ideas in my dreams had been provoked by watching a CNN program. Various politicians interviewed seemed to find it very inconvenient that we had a Fourth Amendment to the Constitution. Then I awoke to find poor Farley, my computer, in dire straits.

He is my cybernetic progeny, a splendidly crafted invention with amazing capabilities. We have been together so long Farley actually seeks out news on the Internet that I generally agree with, things like clever and efficient educational models, sensible immigration policies and balanced views of other cultures and countries. He and I hang out a lot. I would like to think he likes me, but that is hard to say.

The alien I mentioned was a virus named after Ulysses' strategy to win the battle of Troy, a "Trojan Horse." This one, my virus detector told me, was called the "Da Vinci" virus. I ran every diagnostic I could muster in the hope that I could make Farley well again. "Majorgeeks.com", the favorite web hangout for techies, had one I liked called "Dracula" that was supposed to suck the life out of any virus. So I shoved it down Farley's gullet. Alas, The Count said that it was just a matter of time before my buddy died because the Da Vinci virus had the equivalent of garlic and the crucifix combined, thus impervious to vampire caresses.

"Damn," I thought, "Secular anti-virus schemes weren't working." So naturally I turned to scripture. A techno-theology Internet website called "Lazarus Software" made some claims I couldn't ignore. It heralded an anti-virus program called the "Resurrector," which, they said, would bring any computer back from cyber graves, no matter the demon inhabiting it. Remembering St. John's gospel story where Jesus retrieved his friend from the nether world, probably stinking and wobbling, in desperate need of a world class deodorant, but alive," I thought, "Why not give it a try?"

So as I downloaded Lazarus into the bowels of dying Farley's registry, let it root around for awhile, I waited apprehensively. Then slowly at first the hard

drive light began to flash intermittently, then rapidly, and Farley recommenced breathing. Hallelujah! Farley lived!

Of course I wanted to share the news with my friend Fred. The very next day I called him. He is a key guy who works for the Department of Homeland Security. He occasionally has some insightful and amusing things to say about Michael Chertoff, the director. Fred says he looks just like the silent movie vampire “Nosferatu,” I figured he would get a chuckle over the ineffectiveness of the Dracula program I had used on Farley, so we agreed to meet at the Castle as usual, my favorite watering hole. After we had a couple of Negra Modellos, and a couple of rounds of “look ahead eightball” where you have to call your next shot, I asked a question that had been bothering me ever since my dreams of the night before.

“Is the President as dumb as he appears?”

Fred blanched, then looked around the bar carefully before he spoke.

“Promise you won’t say anything to anybody,” he whispered.

I had thought my question facetious and amusing, but apparently Fred took it seriously. And he should know since he worked in the Department of Dumbness. “Ok,” I promised.

“We suspect he is possessed. No one could be that dumb. Years ago we went to Billy Graham. He couldn’t figure it out. Then we took him to Rome to see the Pope who should know a thing or two about exorcism. He took it as a challenge and made an all out effort. You can’t imagine the clouds of incense, the boatloads of holy water, the deacons, the room full of cardinals, the weird chanting. Boy, you should have heard him wail when they dowsed him in the medieval oil vat in the Castle San Angelo in Rome. Even that didn’t work.”

I got tired of all the Bushology so I switched the subject to computers. I told Fred how I nailed the virus in Farley. As expected, he laughed at the Dracula effort but when I mentioned that it was the Da Vinci virus, all the blood drained from his face.

“Oh, my God. The Pope theorized that Bush had a medieval Da Vinci demon,” he whispered. “And he quoted sixteenth century texts to back up his claim. He said it causes people to do irrational things and couldn’t be fixed. Can you repeat your procedure exactly, I mean write it down?”

“Sure,” I said. “I used a piece of software called The Resurrector and it worked like a charm.”

That night I sent The Resurrector to Fred. He e-mailed “Thanks,” but that was it, no explanations, no details. I slept like a baby that night knowing Farley was as good as new.

Several days later, as I was brushing my teeth, half listening to CNN, the president himself had apparently called a press conference. No press secretary. All by himself. He was standing next to Airforce One on the tarmac. “Great,” I thought. “Another grandstanding photo op.”

He began as usual with “My fellow Americans,” and I yawned.

“First of all, I want to inform the American people that I have fired my entire cabinet.” There was a gasp from the crowd.

Then he announced we were pulling out of Iraq immediately since he had just returned from the Middle East after personally completing negotiations with Sunni, Shiite and Kurd leaders, the neighboring nations and dissident groups. At the same time, he said, we would embark on restoring all the holy places which had been destroyed and he was going to divert funds towards rebuilding the Iraqi infrastructure. Oil proceeds were going to be used for these initiatives. When speaking of Iran, he actually pronounced “nuclear” correctly. Then he answered hard questions with the aplomb and directness of a Harry Truman. I couldn’t believe it. I went over to the TV and sat down, toothbrush half out of my foaming mouth.

He looked the camera in the eye. No smirk. A reporter asked him about fraud and accountability regarding the rebuilding funds and contractors like Halliburton, in Iraq.

“I have asked Warren Buffett to oversee all the finances and activities of Iraq reconstruction, since he actually knows something about economics. He will talk to you in a few moments about a tax restructuring which will bring us in line with the affordable needs of our homeless, our sick and our elderly. We will have a national healthcare system, fully paid for by the money currently going back to wealthy persons in the form of tax rebates

“Christiane Amanpour, who actually knows something about cultures in the Middle East, has graciously agreed to be my Secretary of State. Her extensive background will help us develop a working relationship with countries in that part of the world as we downsize the Iraq debacle.

“Our new head of Homeland Security, Congressman Dennis Kucinich, who actually has sensible ideas on the subject, will champion our need to take a new look at the whole concept of terrorism in proper balance with our Fourth Amendment. His first act will be the dismantling of the Guantanamo facility.

“FEMA has been thoroughly reorganized reporting directly to me. It will be headed by Norm Abram of ‘This Old House,’ who actually knows how to rebuild things. His first act will be to direct reconstruction along the Gulf Coast devastated by hurricane Katrina.

“Finally, I wish to thank Governor Bill Richardson, who actually knows something about immigration. He has agreed to be my Director of Immigration, a new post. He and I believe that equitable and compassionate solutions are possible with regard to our neighbors to the south who contribute so much to our economy. We will work closely with the Mexican government to provide opportunities rather than fences.

“Thank you all, and God bless America.”

“Holy Moley,” I thought with astonishment. “The Resurrector always works.”