





### **Word Through The Times**

Tracing How One Word Has Changed Throughout Our Report



STEWART ARMSTRONG

On Sept. 14, 1998, the reporter Amy Harmon covered a disturbance at her workplace: "A group calling for the release of Kevin Mitnick, the imprisoned computer criminal, commandeered The New York Times site," she wrote. It was "the first time that hackers have penetrated the Web site of a major news organization." (The website was secured later that day.)

The origin of the word "hacking" as it relates to interfering with a computer is often traced to M.I.T. in the mid-1950s. As the legend goes, students used the term to refer to pranks that involved meddling with technology. According to the minutes from a meeting of the school's Tech Model Railroad Club in 1955, a student requested that anyone "hacking on the electrical system turn the power off to avoid fuse blowing."

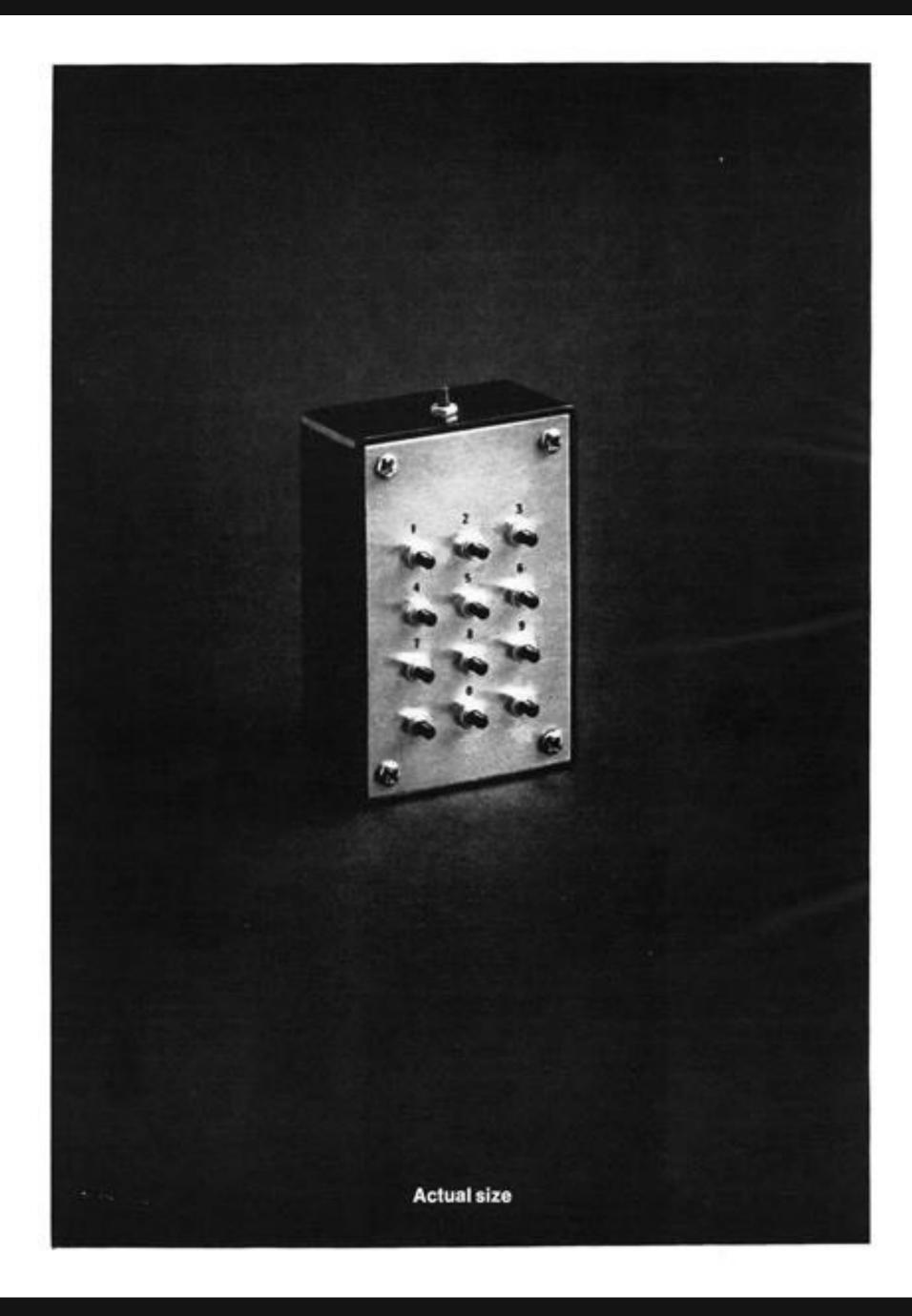
But "hack" has a less thrilling origin story. According to Webster's New World Dictionary, "hack," when used as a verb, means "to give harsh, dry coughs" or "to make rough or irregular cuts." In 1964, a Times article described one sculptor as "a real lively hacker of stone."

Today, "hackers" generally have a bad reputation. (The Times's stylebook notes that a hacker "originally referred to any skilled manipulator of software. It now connotes mischievous, malicious or illegal manipulation.") But some can see the benefit of so-called white-hat hacking. In 2017, the technology writer Kevin Roose pondered in a column: "What if the problem we face is not too many bad hackers, but too few good ones?"

Both schools of thought may have merit. In July, The Times covered a cyberattack: "Chinese hackers intent on collecting intelligence on the United States gained access to government email accounts," The Times reported. Last month, Times journalists covering the Defcon hacker conference in Las Vegas reported on a group of hackers who were testing vulnerabilities in artificial intelligence programs "before actual criminals" could find them.

Another usage of the term allows us to "hack" our way to a better lifestyle.

In 2019, the Opinion columnist Farhad Manjoo composed a column by speaking into a voice recorder and sending the files through a digital word processor. On the potential of a screenless internet, Manjoo said: "There is something more interesting here than a newspaper columnist's life hack." SARAH DIAMOND



### Secrets of the Little Blue Box

by Ron Rosenbaum

A story so incredible it may even make you feel sorry for the phone company

#### The Blue Box Is Introduced: Its Qualities Are Remarked

I am in the expensively furnished living room of Al Gilbertson\*, the creator of the "blue box." Gilbertson is holding one of his shiny black-and-silver "blue boxes" comfortably in the palm of his hand, pointing out the thirteen little red push buttons sticking up from the console. He is dancing his fingers over the buttons, tapping out discordant beeping electronic jingles. He is trying to explain to me how his little blue box does nothing less than place the entire telephone system of the world, satellites, cables and all, at the service of the blue-box operator, free of charge.

"That's what it does. Essentially it gives you the power of a super operator. You seize a tandem with this top button," he presses the top button with his index finger and the blue box emits a high-pitched cheep, "and like that"-cheep goes the blue box again-"you control the phone company's long-distance switching systems from your cute little Princess phone or any old pay phone. And you've got anonymity. An operator has to operate from a definite location: the phone company knows where she is and what she's doing. But with your beeper box, once you hop onto a trunk, say from a Holiday Inn 800 [tollfree] number, they don't know where you are, or where you're coming from, they don't know how you slipped into their lines and popped up in that 800 number. They don't even know anything illegal is going on. And you can obscure your origins through as many levels as you like. You can call next door by way of White Plains, then over to Liverpool by cable, and then back here by satellite. You can call yourself from one pay phone all the way around the world to a pay phone next to you. And you get your dime back too."

"And they can't trace the calls? They can't charge you?"

"Not if you do it the right way. But you'll find that the free-call thing isn't really as exciting at first as the feeling of power you get from having one of these babies in your hand. I've watched people when they first get hold of one of these things and start using it, and discover they can make connections, set up crisscross and zigzag switching patterns back and forth across the world. They hardly talk to the people they finally reach. They say hello and start thinking of what kind of call to make next. They go a little crazy." He looks down at the neat little package in his palm. His fingers are still dancing, tapping out beeper patterns.

"I think it's something to do with how small my models

Photographed by Ronald Barnett

are. There are lots of blue boxes around, but mine are the smallest and most sophisticated electronically. I wish I could show you the prototype we made for our big syndicate order."

He sighs, "We had this order for a thousand beeper boxes from a syndicate front man in Las Vegas. They use them to place bets coast to coast, keep lines open for hours, all of which can get expensive if you have to pay. The deal was a thousand blue boxes for \$300 apiece. Before then we retailed them for \$1,500 apiece, but \$300,000 in one lump was hard to turn down. We had a manufacturing deal worked out in the Philippines. Everything ready to go. Anyway, the model I had ready for limited mass production was small enough to fit inside a flip-top Mariboro box. It had flush touch panels for a keyboard, rather than these unsightly buttons sticking out. Looked just like a tiny portable radio. In fact, I had designed it with a tiny transistor receiver to get one AM channel, so in case the law became suspicious the owner could switch on the radio part, start snapping his fingers, and no one could tell anything illegal was going on. I thought of everything for this model-I had it lined with a band of thermite which could be ignited by radio signal from a tiny button transmitter on your belt, so it could be burned to ashes instantly in case of a bust. It was beautiful. A beautiful little machine. You should have seen the faces on these syndicate guys when they came back after trying it out. They'd hold it in their palm like they never wanted to let it go, and they'd say, 'I can't believe it. I can't believe it.' You probably won't believe it until you try it."

#### The Blue Box Is Tested: Certain Connections Are Made

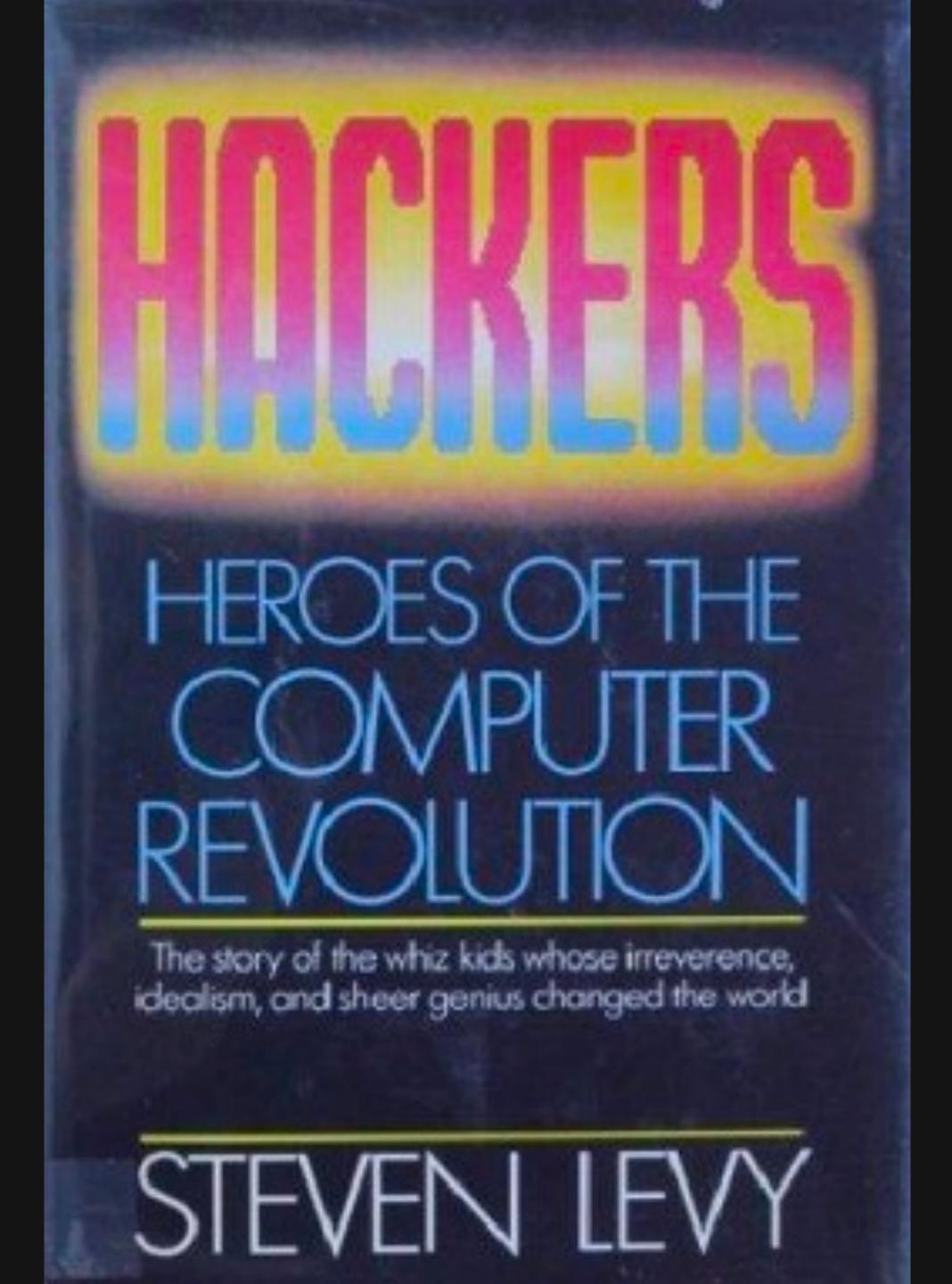
About eleven o'clock two nights later Fraser Lucey has a blue box in the palm of his left hand and a phone in the palm of his right. He is standing inside a phone booth next to an isolated shut-down motel off Highway 1. I am standing outside the phone booth.

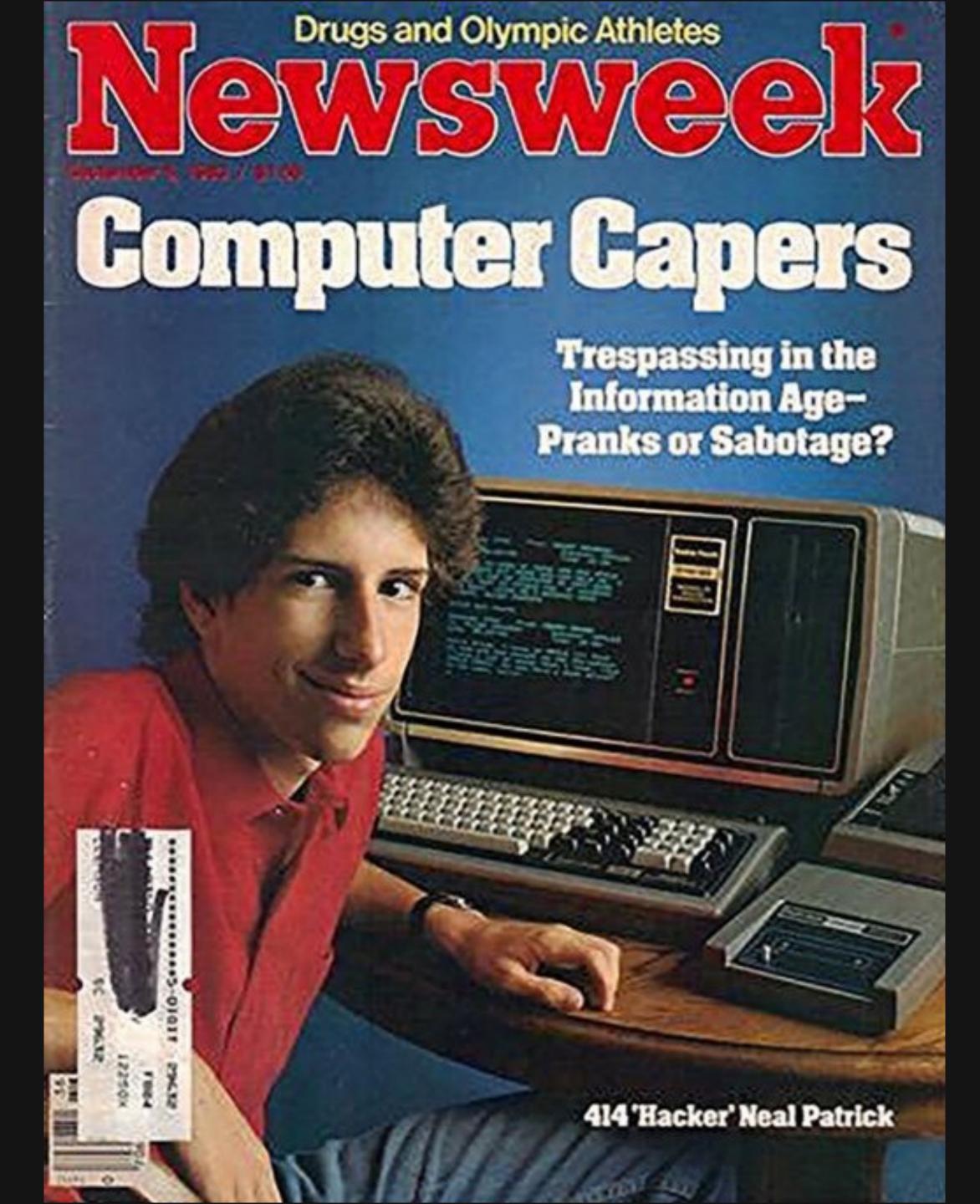
Fraser likes to show off his blue box for people. Until a few weeks ago when Pacific Telephone made a few arrests in his city, Fraser Lucey liked to bring his blue box\*\* to parties. It never failed: a few cheeps from his device and Fraser became the center of attention at the very hippest of gatherings, playing phone tricks and doing request numbers for hours. He began to take

4+ This particular blue box, like most blue boxes, is not blue. Blue boxes have come to be called "blue boxes" either I/ because the first blue box ever conficuled by phone-company security men happened to be blue, or 2) to distinguish them from "bluck boxes." Bluck boxes are devices, usually a resistor in series, which, when attached to home phones, allow all incoming calls to be made without charge to one's caller.

ESQUIRE: OCTOBER 117

<sup>\*</sup> His real name has been changed.











joegrand@Joes-MacBook—Pro ~ % cat 3.txt ==Phrack Inc.==

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\/\The Conscience of a Hacker/\/

by

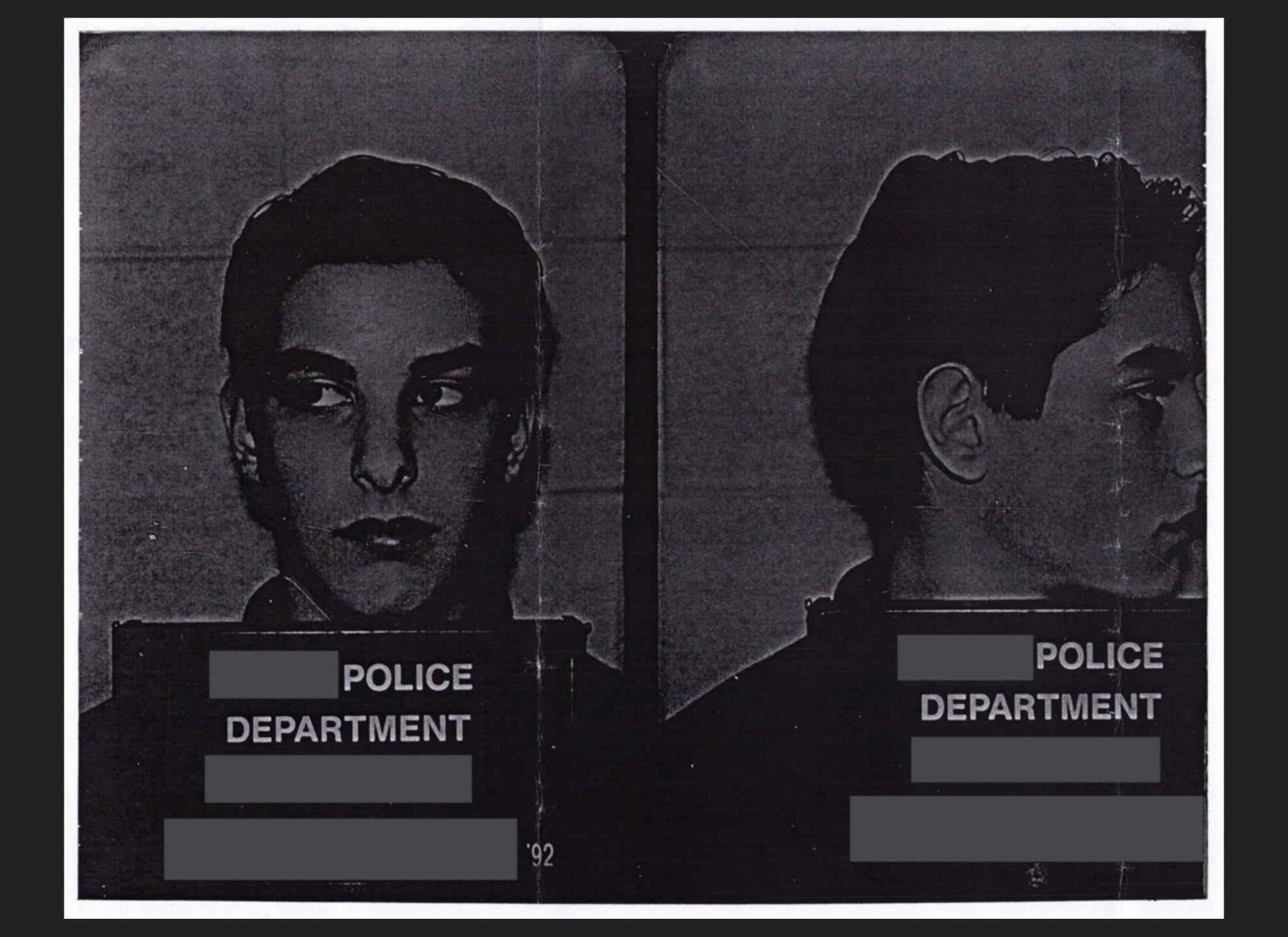
+++The Mentor+++

Written on January 8, 1986

Another one got caught today, it's all over the papers. "Teenager Arrested in Computer Crime Scandal", "Hacker Arrested after Bank Tampering"... Damn kids. They're all alike.

But did you, in your three-piece psychology and 1950's technobrain, ever take a look behind the eyes of the hacker? Did you ever wonder what







The lopht is happy to announce the availability of the Black Crawling Systems

Archives CD for \$25 + S&H.

This CD contains hard to find technical files and programs concerning subjects such as:

- cellular telephones, digital radio
- telephone systems, phreaking
- electronics projects/tools
- hacking, vulnerabilities, tools
- survival, patriot archives
- computer underground images and text files

The LOpht Archives offer hard to find files from the computer underground and beyond.





Internet services are available to enhance your privacy and information access.

Projects are always underway in our well equipped laboratories.

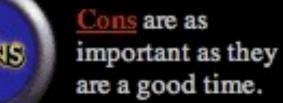




Relax and hang with the hackers.

Stuff from the 10pht that you can get your hands around.





Our security <u>advisories</u>
are designed to inform you of current
vulnerabilities.
Home of L0phtCrack Updated



HARD

WAREZ



Mine our site for the nuggets you desire.



Battlezone Repair Project Arcade restoration is not as easy as it looks.

Red Box Detection Circuit As seen in 2600 Magazine...



SOLD OUT! POCSAG Pager Decoder Decode pager transmissions easily with this hardware, a scanner radio, and a PC.



Jolly Box is a multi-frequency, programmable tone generator/signalling device similar to the Hacktic Demon-Dialer released a few years back in Amsterdam. The unit was planned to be released in kit-form, but redesign of the project has been put on hold. The link explains more.

Cell-64 This unusual hardwar

Cell-64 This unusual hardware is used with a Commodore 64 and a cellular phone. It is used for the testing of cellular phones. I was searching for information on this for quite a while, and finally picked up a complete system at a flea market!



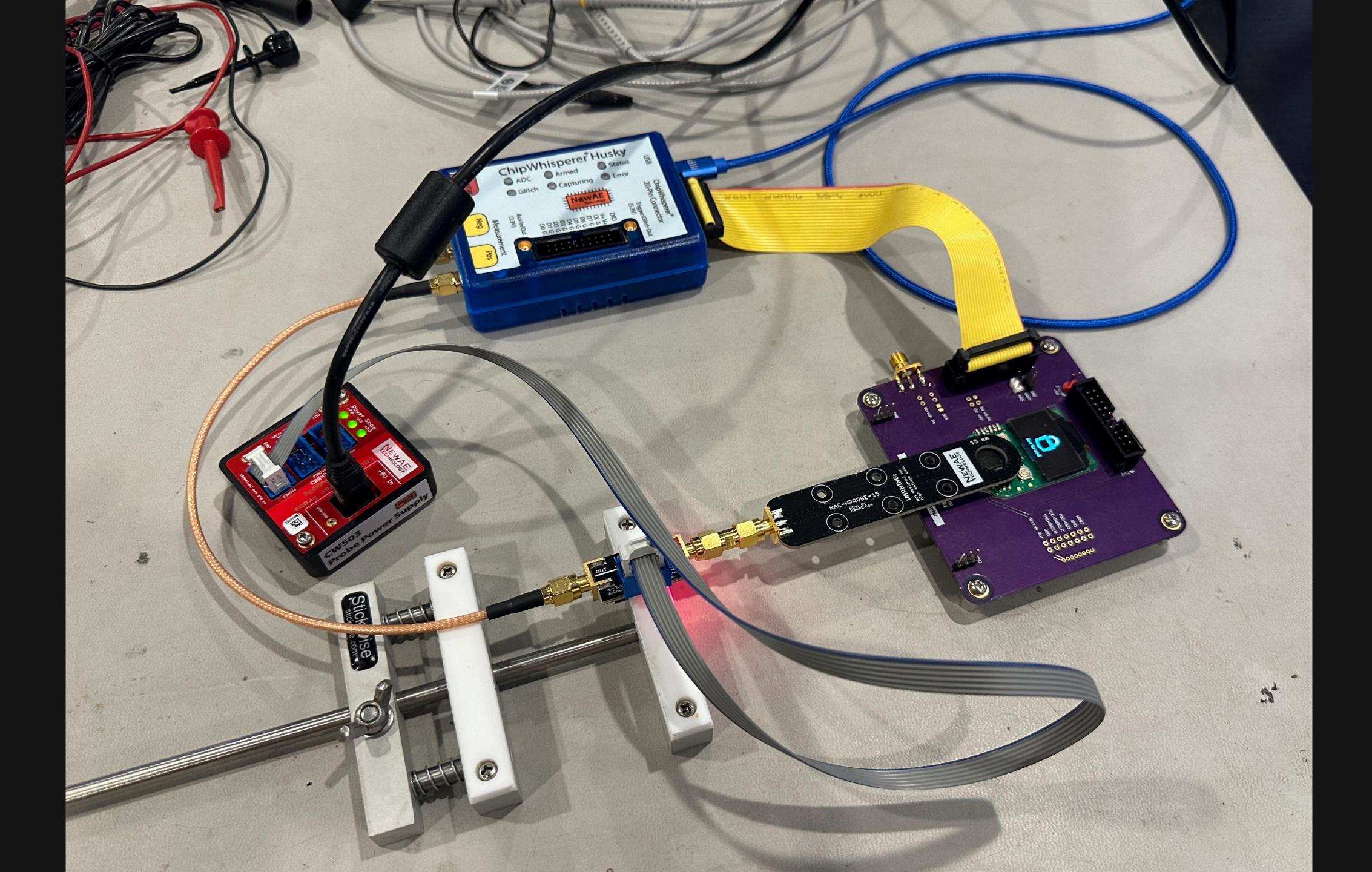
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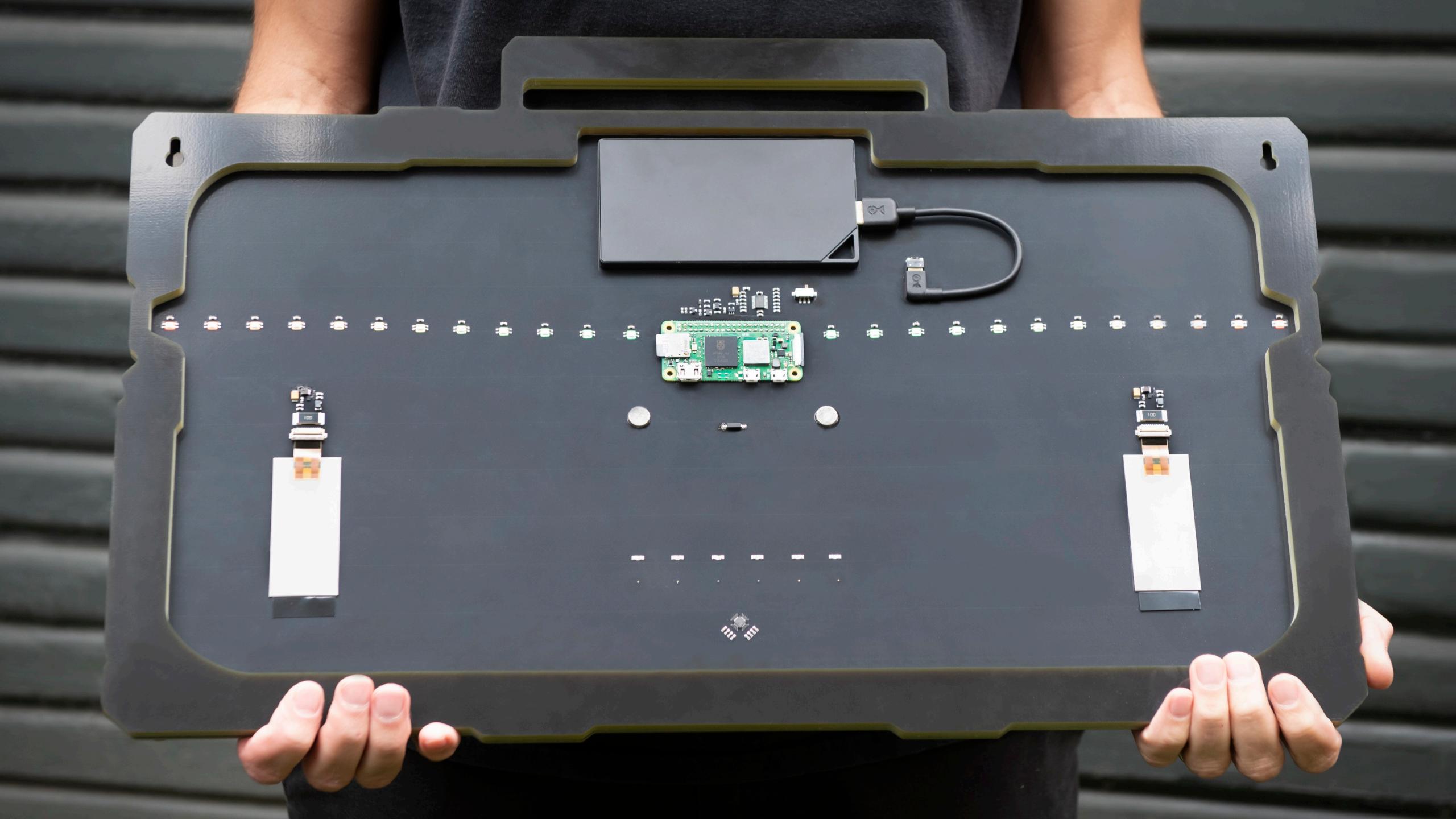
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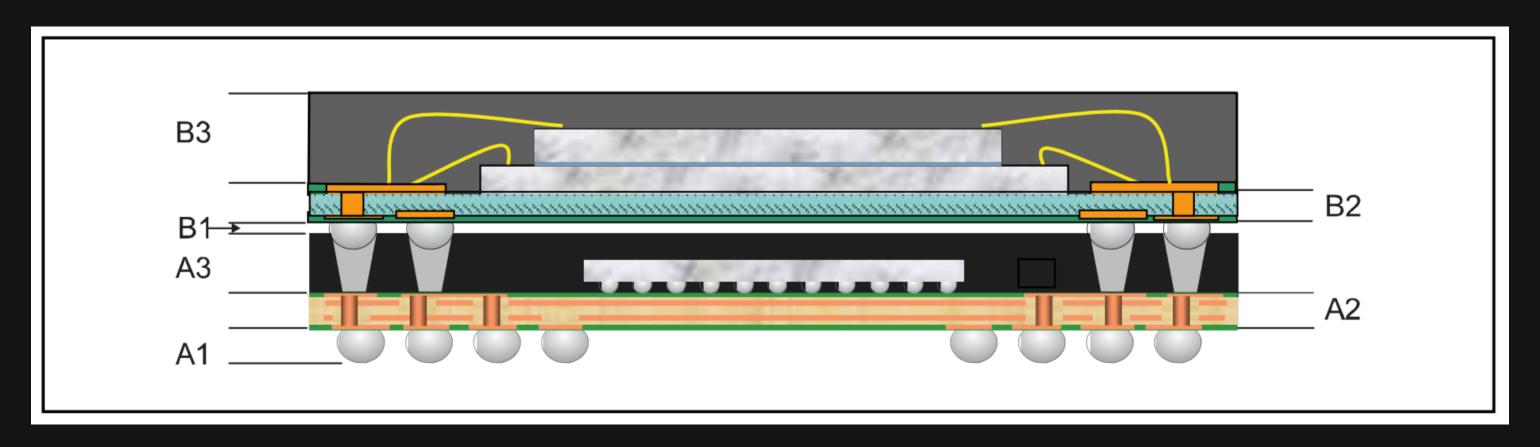


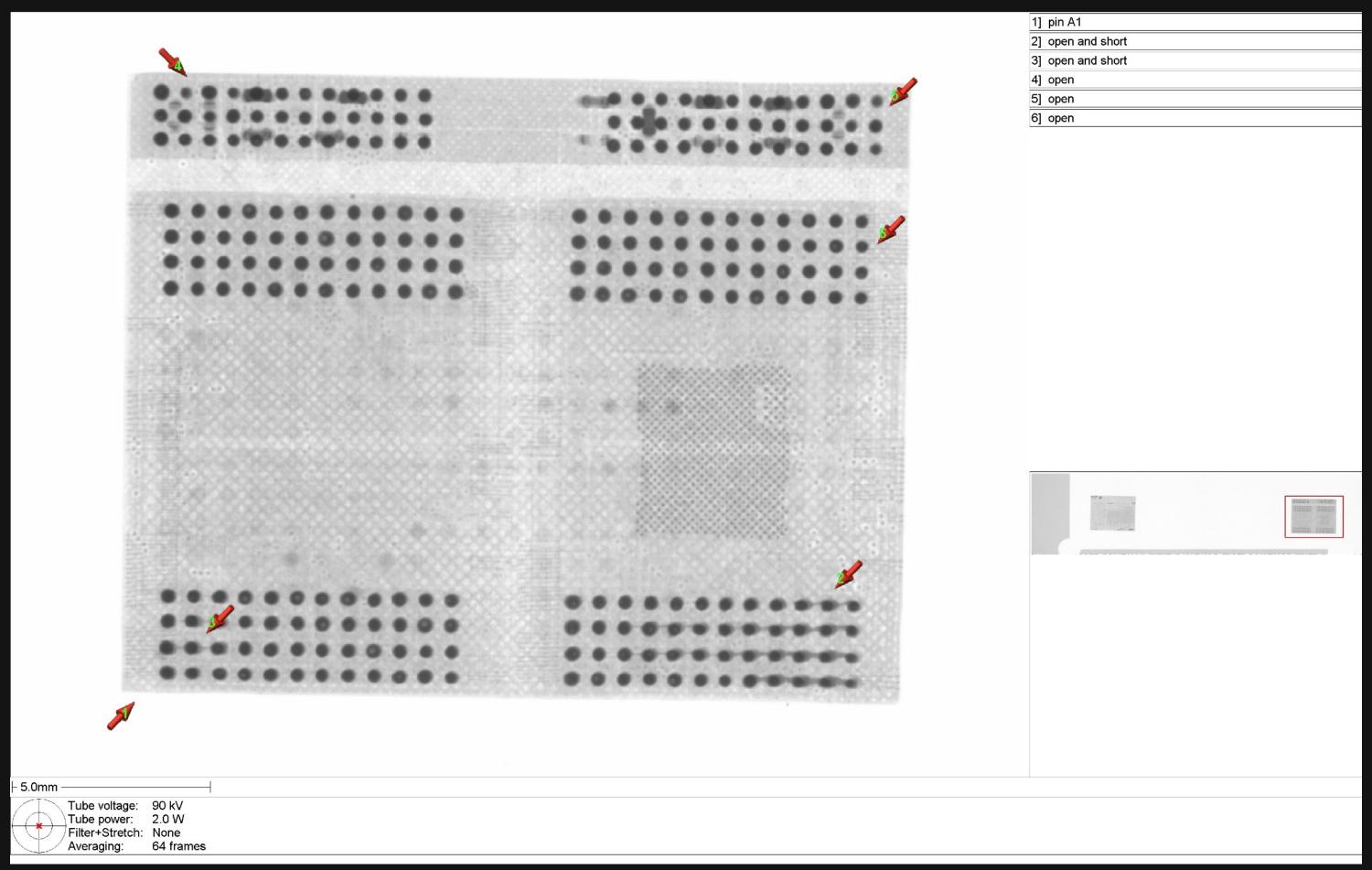


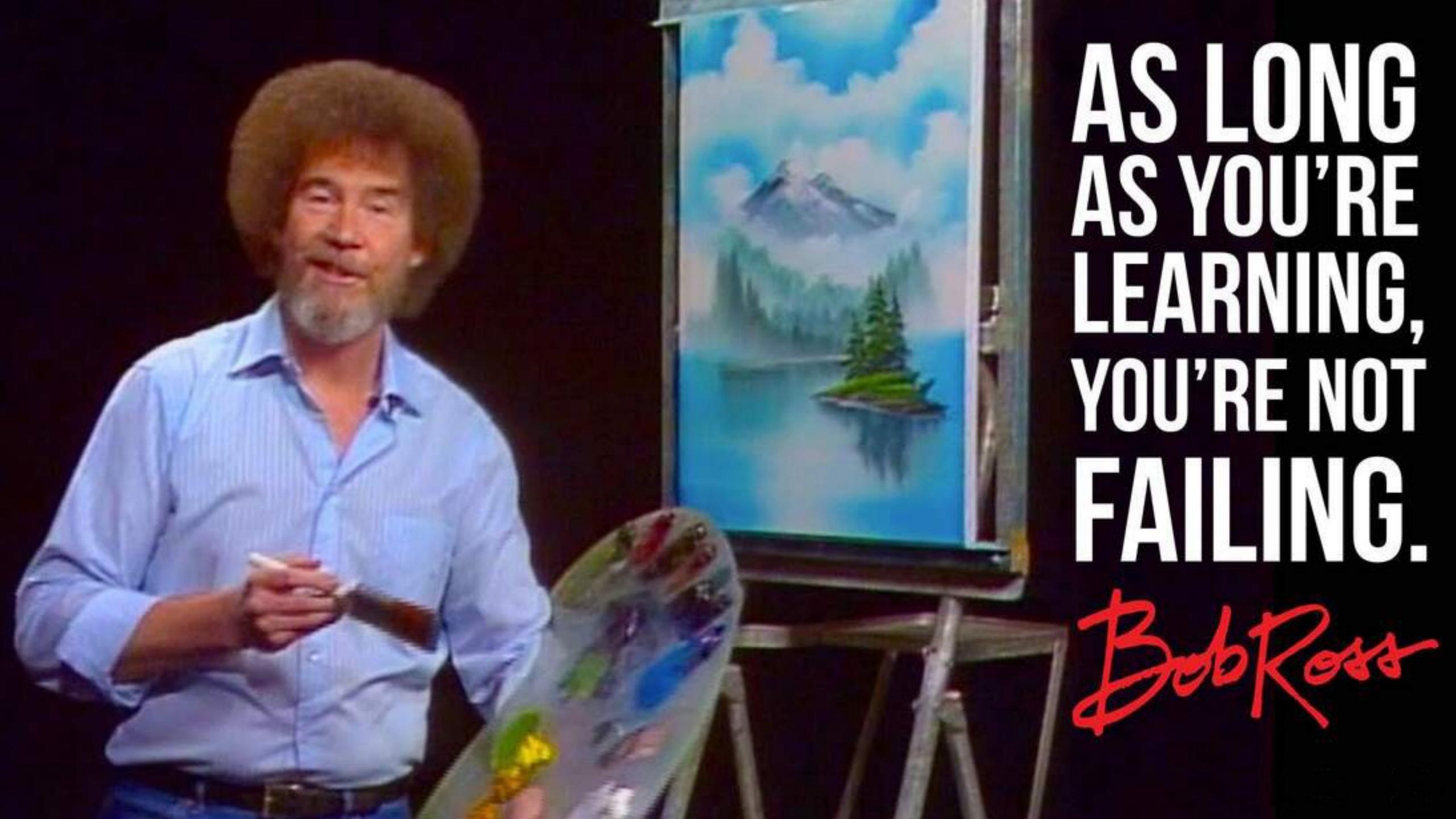




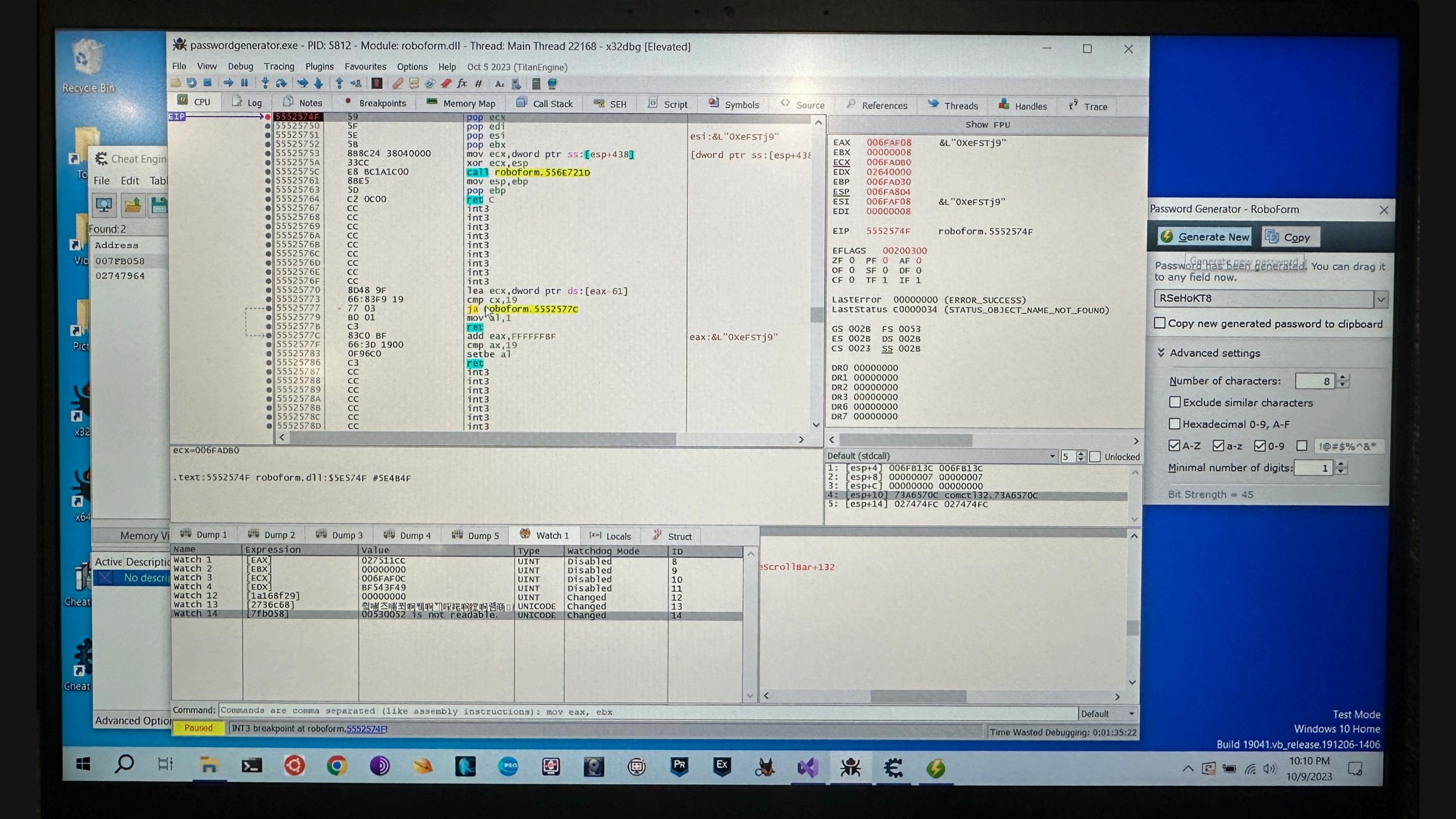










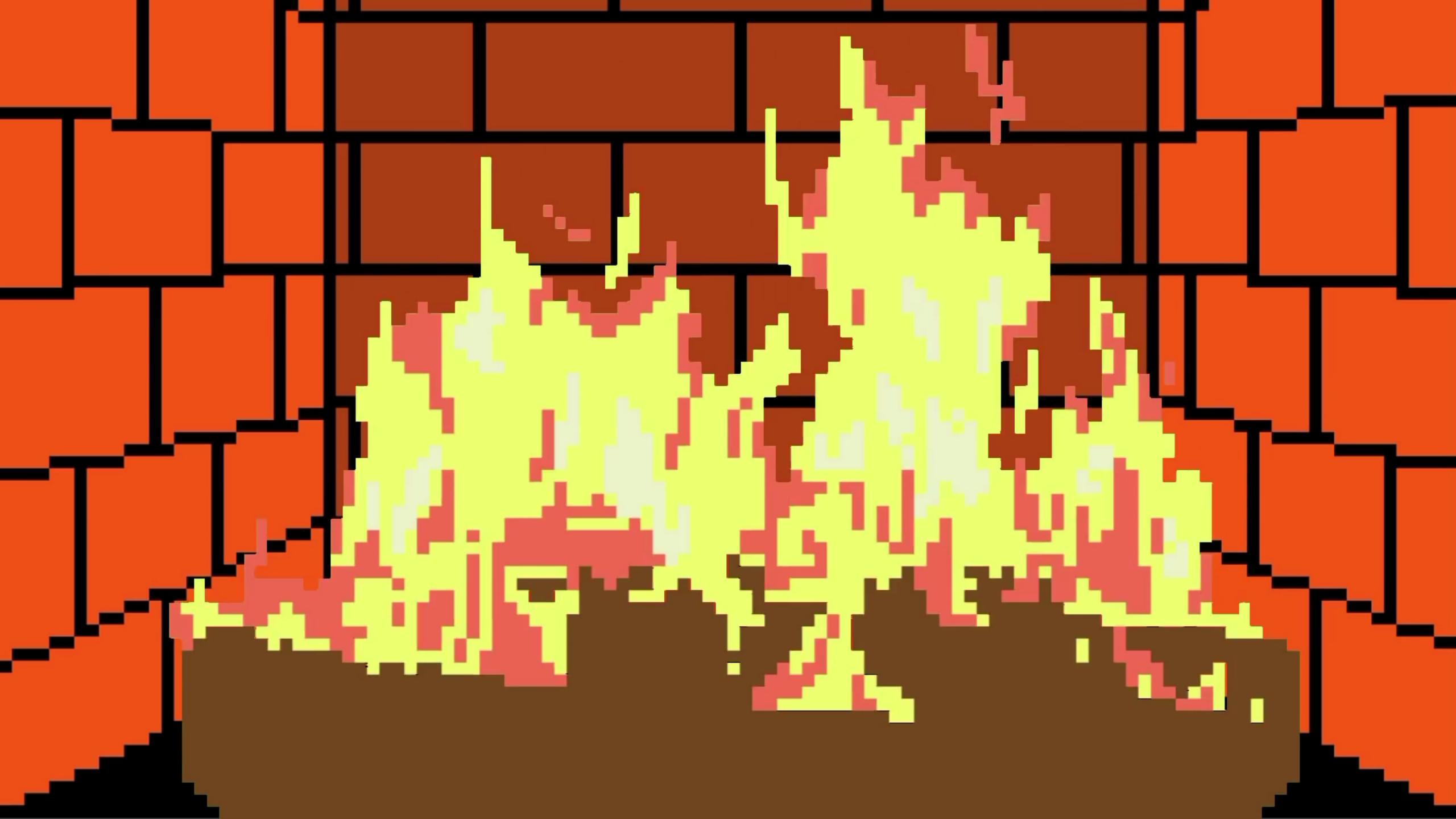




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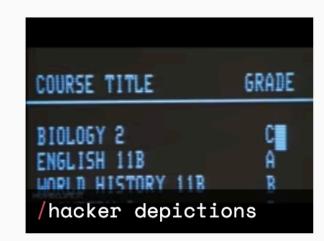
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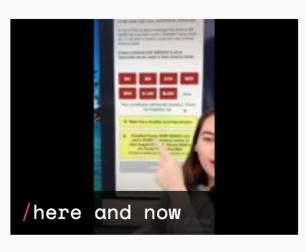


















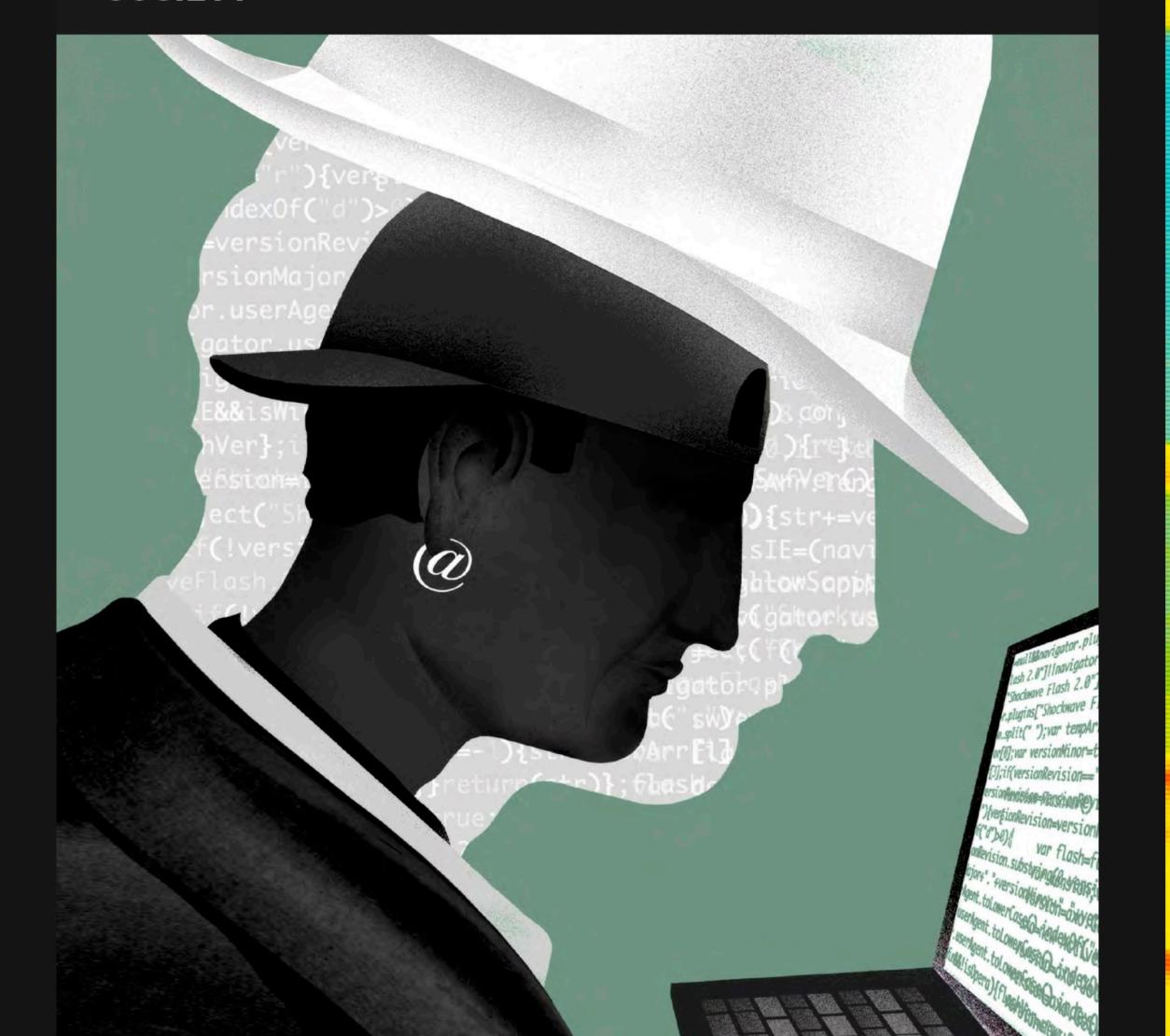




### Wearing Many Hats

DATA& SOCIETY The Rise of the Professional Security Hacker

Matt Goerzen Gabriella Coleman



# Hacker's Mind How the Powerful Bend Society's Rules, and How to Bend Them Back Bruce ochneier New York Times best-selling author of DATA AND GOLIATH

# Hack the Planet!

