
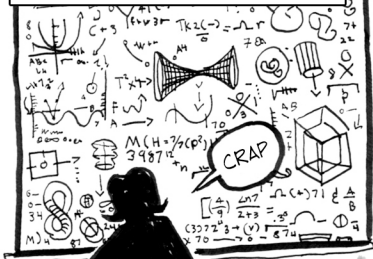


25 STOCHASTIC  
EVENTS IN THE  
HISTORY OF FASTER  
THAN LIGHT TRAVEL



WORDS: Greg Stolze  
PICTURES: John Leavitt

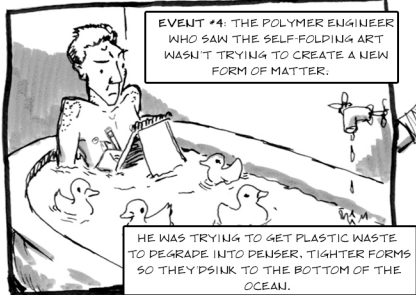
EVENT #1: THE ALGORITHM BEHIND INVOLUTIONUM WAS CONCEIVED IN 2003 BY A MATH GRAD STUDENT FROM THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC HOPING TO MAKE A STRONG CRYPTO PHONE APP. BUT INSTEAD OF A SYSTEM WITH ONE ANSWER AND MANY FALSE TURNS, SHE GOT AN EQUATION THAT YIELDED MANY SOLUTIONS AND ONE EMPTY SET.



EVENT #2: HER THESIS ADVISOR INSISTED ON COAUTHOR CREDIT UPON PUBLICATION, AND SINCE HER NAME WAS MIS-SPELLED THROUGHOUT THE JOURNAL, THE ALGORITHM IS STILL CALLED 'THE DUPHAGE TRANSFORM' INSTEAD OF 'THE DUPLAGE TRANSFORM.'



EVENT #3: THE ALGORITHM WAS EXPANDED AND REFINED, NOT BY A MATHEMATICIAN OR ENGINEER, BUT BY AN ARTIST WITH AN ENORMOUS TRUST FUND WHO PABBLED IN BOTH FIELDS. SHE WAS INTERESTED IN THE PATTERNS OF INTERACTION AND SELF-MODIFICATION PRODUCED.



EVENT #4: THE POLYMER ENGINEER WHO SAW THE SELF-FOLDING ART WASN'T TRYING TO CREATE A NEW FORM OF MATTER.



EVENT #5: AS HIS GRANT MONEY RAN OUT, HE TOOK THE DENSEST CONFIGURATION AND STARTED A PROOF-OF-CONCEPT VOYAGE TO COMPRESS A MERE 70 TONS OF PLASTIC. HE GOT ON CNN BECAUSE OF THE GOOD OPTICS.

EVENT #6: SAILSTONES LLC, A PRIVATELY-HELD NEW YORK CHEMICAL FIRM, REALIZED GARBAGE COULD BE TURNED INTO THOUSANDS OF CONFIGURATIONS WITH POSSIBLE VALUABLE PROPERTIES. THEY PRESSED ON WITH DUPHAGE TRANSFORM EXPERIMENTS.



WARNING HAZARD

OUT OF CONCERN ABOUT TOXINS, THEY SET UP SHOP IN MALI.



EVENT #7: INVOLUTIONUM WAS MADE IN THAT LAB BY A TECHNICIAN WHO, STONED ON ALGERIAN HASHISH, ENTERED IMPOSSIBLE PARAMETERS THAT THE DUPHAGE TRANSFORM DUTIFULLY RECONFIGURED INTO REALITY.

EVENT #8 HE STOLE THE RESULTING MATERIAL BECAUSE HE DIDN'T WANT TO GET FIRED FOR SCREENING UP.



HE WAS FIRED ANYWAY.



EVENT #9: THE WORLD'S SUPPLY OF INVOLUTIONUM, THE MOST REVOLUTIONARY SUBSTANCE IN HUMAN HISTORY, WAS TRADED TO SOME HIPPIE ARTISANS IN EXCHANGE FOR A FEW GRAMS OF MODERATELY DILUTED COCAINE.

EVENT 10: THE PHYSICIST WHO RECOGNIZED THAT THE BEADS WERE THE 'NEGATIVE MASS' REQUIRED TO FUEL THE FTL DRIVE DESIGN? HIS NAME WAS FRITZL. AND HE FIRST SAW IT ON A NECKLACE HIS GIRLFRIEND (AND LATER WIFE) GRETTA HAD RECEIVED AS A GIFT FROM HER SECRET LOVER, FAROUK. IN 2013.

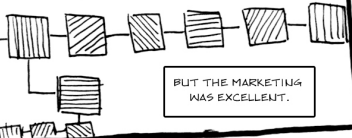


EVENT 11: INSTEAD OF QUIETLY TRACKING DOWN THE BEADS AND STOCKPILING THEM, FRITZL CHOSE TO SUBMIT HIS FINDINGS TO A SCIENTIFIC JOURNAL. HE CRAVED HIS PEERS' RECOGNITION MORE THAN MONEY.

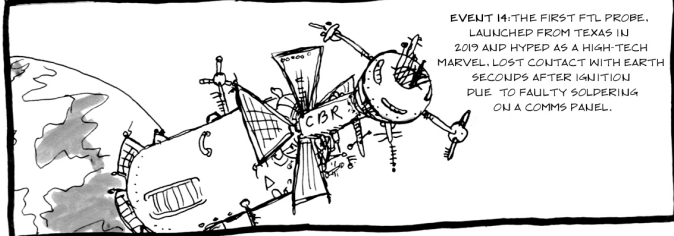


EVENT 12: THE FUNDING FOR THE FIRST FTL DRIVE CAME FROM A YOUNG BILLIONAIRE WHO MADE HIS MONEY OFF A PHONE CRYPTO APP. ITS CRYPTOGRAPHY WAS ONLY 50-50.

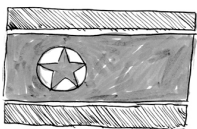
**CELLBLOQ**  
Everyone is Trying to rip you off



EVENT 13: THE PLANS FOR THE DRIVE WERE STOLEN OFF THE CRYPTOGRAPHY BILLIONAIRE'S LAPTOP WITHIN 14 HOURS OF LAUNCH BY A TECHMARCO-SYMPICALIST HACKER COMMUNE.

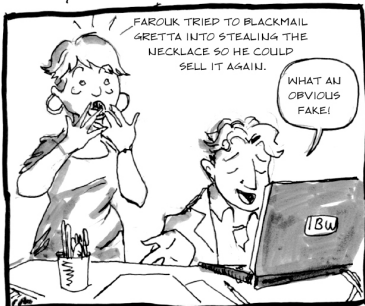
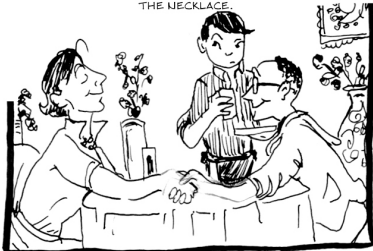


EVERY GOVERNMENT DISMISSED HUMANKIND'S MOST SIGNIFICANT TECHNOLOGICAL ACHIEVEMENT SINCE TAMING FIRE AS A HOAX COOKED UP BY AN EMBITTERED ACADEMIC AND A PUBLICITY HUNGRY BILLIONAIRE.



SAVE ONE.

EVENT 15: THE FIRST PERSON TO MAKE MONEY OFF OF INVOLUTIONUM WAS FAROUK, GRETTA'S SIDE PIECE, WHO CUT HER OUT OF THE LOOP BY GOING TO THE BILLIONAIRE AND EXPLAINING WHERE HE GOT THE NECKLACE.



EVENT 16: SENDING THE PHOTO FILE PUT FAROUK ON THE NORTH KOREANS' RADAR. AGENTS GOT TO HIM BEFORE HE COULD SPEND HIS NEW WEALTH ON ANYTHING BEYOND A STEAK DINNER, FANCY SHOES, AND A SIX-PACK OF ARTISINAL, SMALL-BATCH BEER.

EVENT 17: THE HACKER COLLECTIVE THAT STOLE THE CRYPTOBILLIONAIRE'S ENGINE PLANS ALSO FOUND OUT ABOUT THE INVOLUTILIUM FUEL BEADS FROM HIS PRIVATE EMAIL SERVER AND STARTED HUNTING FOR THEM WHILE HE WAS STILL TAKING BIDS FROM P.I. FIRMS.



EVENT 18: CONSTRUCTION BEGAN ON A FASTER-THAN-LIGHT SPACE COMMAND SHIP AND DESTROYER BEFORE THE KOREANS EVEN HAD ANY INVOLUTILIUM.

EVENT 19: SAILSTONES LLC, WHICH BEGAN USING THE DUPHAGE TRANSFORM ON GARBAGE IN HOPES OF CREATING A VALUABLE NEW MATERIAL OUT OF GARBAGE, NEVER REALIZED THEY HAD CREATED EARTH'S MOST VALUABLE MATERIAL OUT OF GARBAGE.



EVENT 20: THE NORTH KOREA SPY EFFORT WAS UNABLE TO PRODUCE A SINGLE INVOLUTILIUM ASSET



EVENT 21: THE GUY WHO BOUGHT A WHOLE BRACELET OF INVOLUTILIUM OPTED TO BUILD AN FASTER THAN LIGHT SHIP WITH AN ANARCHO-CHAOTICIST VOLUNTARY SYNDICATE SOLELY OUT OF SPITE.



HE HAD A BAD WITH CUSTOMER SERVICE TRYING TO INSTALL AND, LATER, OBTAIN A REFUND FOR THE CELLBLOOR APP.

EVENT 22: THE NORTH KOREANS GOT A BEAD FOR THEIR ENGINE, NOT DUE TO A RUTHLESS ESPIONAGE CAMPAIGN, BUT BECAUSE A SON WHO'D SUCK OVER THE BORDER IN 1999 GOT A NECKLACE SMUGGLED INTO THE COUNTRY FOR HIS MOTHER'S BIRTHDAY PRESENT. SHE, A FIRM ADHERENT OF JUCHE, HANDED IT OVER INSTANTLY.





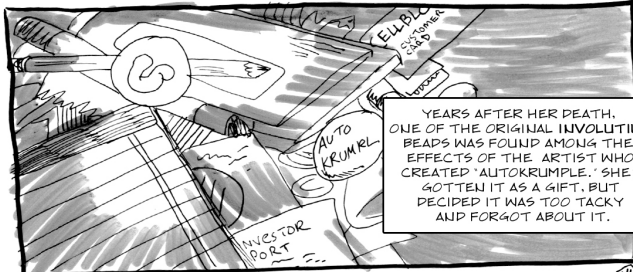
EVENT 24: DUE TO A FAILURE TO CORRECTLY COMPENSATE FOR EARTH'S ROTATION AND ORBIT, THE FIRST PILOTED FTL CRAFT DISINTEGRATED IN .41 MILLISECONDS AFTER FLYING DUE WEST FOR 76.3 MILES, LEAVING AN F4 STORM IN ITS WAKE AND CAUSING SEVERE DAMAGE TO THE CITIES OF DANDONG AND SINJUJU.



EVENT 25: THE FIRST DIPLOMATIC AND TRADE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN HUMANITY AND ALIENS WERE CONDUCTED BY PEOPLE WITH NO RECOGNIZED AUTHORITY, NO RESPECT FOR THE IDEA OF GOVERNANCE, AND UTTER CONTEMPT FOR CAPITALISM.



A GOLD-RUSH TO TRANSFORM WASTE INTO FLT FUEL RESULTED IN SKIRMISHES IN THE GREAT PACIFIC GARBAGE PATCH UNTIL EVERY LAST BIT OF GARBAGE WAS GONE.



YEARS AFTER HER DEATH, ONE OF THE ORIGINAL INVOLUTILUM BEADS WAS FOUND AMONG THE EFFECTS OF THE ARTIST WHO CREATED 'AUTOKRUMPLE.' SHE'D GOTTEN IT AS A GIFT, BUT DECIDED IT WAS TOO TACKY AND FORGOT ABOUT IT.

IT'S CURRENTLY ON DISPLAY AT THE DUPHAGE INSTITUTE FOR FTL STUDIES.