

Avatars

NOTE: Two cans of diet caffeine-free Pepsi or some equivalent of beverage are consumed during the duration of the performance

Hello everyone. I want to thank you all for being here tonight. If you don't know my name is Matt Kalasky and I'm here to share with you some findings that I've stumbled upon while conducting some personal family history research in conjunction with an upcoming publication.

So where to begin. I guess I will start with the mid-distant present, which is actually sort of the end. In the January of 1992...

Sorry before I get started I just want to tell you that I'm not the best public speaker so I've written most of this presentation down, including this sentence, so please forgive me for reading verbatim.

Where was I (that is also written down) Here we go, In the January of 1992 my paternal mother, Linda Pavlis, sold a proof-of-feasibility-contract to a man named Gary Kremen for an undisclosed amount. You might not know Gary Kremen but there is a good chance you are familiar with some of his endeavors. During the wild-west domain-name land grab of the early 90s, he made considerable sums of money by registering and selling choice properties like sex.com, business.com, and auto.com. He is also, most noticeably for us, the founder of the online dating site Match.com. Now the proof-of-feasibility contract that my mother sold Mr. Kremen was essentially the Sub RTM stage algorithmic package that now runs the heart of all Match.com processing. Basically all the matching that occurs on their site at some point travels through this program. For those of you who don't know, Match.com is currently the world's leading online dating service. In 2010 Match.com took in nearly \$350 million in revenue from 1.3 million users world wide.

(pause)

This story really begins almost a year prior, while my mother was in the very initial stages of developing this algorithm package named MINDY. In August 1991, as part of her preliminary efforts she released a pre-alpha version locally within her Fresno, California network. At this time my mother had recently divorced my father and she was, of her own admittance, a single "go-getter". In this spirit she indulges in a sort of "Invisible Man" ritual of self-experimentation: she enlists herself in her own online dating service. After about four months her own pre-alpha stage program puts her in contact with Mr. Kremen.

The program, at this point, was a simple HTML interface that allowed users to create a profile and browse the profile of others. A rudimentary messaging system kept inter-user communication local within the site. A remarkable number of protocol data feeders provided information on almost every facet of user activity. Some of the site kinetics that were monitored included user browsing history, click and double click records, profile viewing duration and intensity, as well as all content transmitted through the messaging system. All of this data was available to MINDY algorithm and in turn its task was to generate simple user-to-user "matches" Connections that individuals could contact or not contact at their discretion.

My mother has graciously provided me access to the volumes of messages that Mr. Kremen and herself shared during the period from 1991 to 1993. I am going to read aloud, a brief portion of their initial exchange and then continue to examine its relevance.

January 4, 1991 /// 11:49PM
FROM: bluevelvet68
TO: topgun4u
SUBJECT: hello!

*Hi Gary,
It looks like Electronic Personals*

(Please note this was the programs public working title through beta testing)

*thought we would get a long! How long have you lived in Fresno? What do you do here?
Cheers,
Linda*

/////////
January 7, 1991 /// 6:35AM
FROM: topgun4u
TO: bluevelvet68
SUBJECT: RE:hello!

*Hi Linda,
Its good to hear from you! I've lived closer to Clovis for the past 4 years. Spring Manor Communities on Shaw? Do you know them? I work realstate ventures for several independent contractors in the area. I also do prospecting for world wide web server names. Do you know this area well? I see that you like movies. Do you go to the Regal on Tulare? Did you see this movie called True Identity? I found it really interesting. Hope to hear from you soon.
-Gary*

//////////

From this point they begin to ease their way into a very complex exchange concerning the 1991 box office flop *True Identity*. It should be known that both Pallvis and Kremen were dedicated cinefiles. Pallvis receiving a minor in cinematic feminist studies at CSU Fullerton and Kremen authoring a 40 page essay his junior year at Brown entitled, let me make sure I get this right, "Twist and shout: The aesthetics of South American pornographic VHS manipulation" This exchange is of note for several reasons: One, the depth and texture of this topical conversation articulates a very real interweaving of two minds. For example, in the following segment we can see as particular nuance:

//////////
February 12, 1991 /// 1:23PM
FROM: bluevelvet68
TO: topgun4u
SUBJECT: True Identity: RE:RE:RE:one more thought:RE:FD:The Duchess of Malifi: RE:RE:
But what is the reflexive counter agent you speak of? Is it the mechanics of dramaturgy?

Gary's reply:

No definitely not there. I think a Boal/Brecht doubles team would 6-0 6-0 that argument.

(Sorry. It should be noted the their shared interest in tennis has, at this point, established itself as a topical sub-vein of conversational context.)

Linda:

Is it Duane's Lacanian, transgender-morphosis via prosthetics and by extension modern science?

Gary:

Or is it simply the mirror of an uninterrupted psychology? A madness of logic?

Linda:

A space of liminal aggression?

Gary:

Of cosmic feeling?

Linda:

Or perhaps a tidal oneness in a sea of...

Gary:

A sea of....

Linda:

Senses.

Gary:

Senses. Exactly.

(pause)

Another remarkable factor of this "True Identity" chain is its occurrence relatively early on in the progression of their correspondence. This subject is addressed either directly or indirectly in 103 of their first 200 message exchanges that were sent between January, 1991 and November of the same year.

Now around this same time Palvis made some alterations to her MINDY algorithmic computational package code. The most notable of which were two distinct sub-routines nestled deep in the heart of the algorithm. These were:

```
CopyProgramRecursive(ProgramSub mySub, ProgramSub originalSub)
```

```
if (!Tokens.DataDarkFeed(mySub.Instruction))  
    (?Picscal.Klaxion=Feeds:ALPHA, DELTA, EPISLON)  
    (Refeed=correct)
```

AND

```
If {myNode.Left = newProgramNode(PRIME); (Node.Firetrack=prime+/-);  
    (CopyProgramRecursive(myNode.Left, originalNode.Left);  
    (Redirect.ouput=true);  
    INT moves = 9+/-;  
    INT turns = -40;  
    On.Turn.Map.Running = false
```

These are flow control additions that re-evaluated certain data streams. Specifically, the data concerning length of successive message chains and their proximity to the “event ALPHA” (i.e. first contact between two profiles) The implementation of these sub-routines allowed the Mindy algorithm to look at a users history of encounters, evaluate them according to these new sub-routines, and subsequently extrapolate new matches based on this data. For example, if I had a particularly lengthy and immediate exchange with another user, (akin to the one occurring between Gary and Linda) the algorithm would use this information to match me with similar users. These are commonly called “point positive articulation factors” and over the ensuing weeks and months Palvis would use her relationship with Kremen to implement several more PPAF’s in the Mindy algorithm.

Point in case, in March of 1992 Palvis introduces a new analytic code compactor in one of the most vital data levees in her MINDY algorithm. Invoked as PetName.Subtrack=true it worked to recognize certain patterns in intermessage language. Specifically it analyzed the development of interloping proper nouns within successive message chains. For example it could recognize when the proper noun “Linda” was supplanted by the proper noun “Major” and when the specific phrase “The Meeting” began to appear in locations formerly occupied by the proper noun “Gary” The faster and more frequently these constellations of syntax replacements developed, the more likely PetName.Subtrack=true would match you with a user of similar complexion.

(pause)

By June of 1992, Palvis and Kremen were exchanging electronic messages nearly everyday. Sometimes more. On June 5th they put forth a 77 message foray. Discussing everything from Paramount’s recently released *Encino Man* (Gary making a rather convoluted argument concerning Marxist labor alienation and the prehistoric id) to local Fresno politics, baseball, restaurants, and finally pizza toppings. The average time between messages was 13 minutes.

I only mention this to illustrate the intensity of their relationship. An affinity that up until this point had remained purely pixilated. This is to say that “event BETA” (a meeting in the physical world) had not occurred. More importantly however, the sub-prime event BETA, the point in which one user simply *suggests* the idea of meeting in real life had not occurred.

Now sub-prime event BETA is a critical line of demarcation. It signifies the point at which one user acknowledges the preceding digital relationship as secondary. In a sharp and often violent fracture: in essence the electronic messages, up to this point, *were* the relationship, now they are just support, lead-up, foreplay to the physical real-deal, as it were. It re-asserts the hierarchy of real-world over the digital-world. A “reality” that the digital works very hard to suspend.

Gary and Linda’s sub-prime event BETA occurs on August 12th 1992, a Wednesday. I believe this exchange is quite telling so if you don’t mind I’m going to quote in length:

(pause)

January 12, 1992 /// 7:08AM

FROM: topgun4u

TO: bluevelvet68

SUBJECT: Living with a roommate can be murder

Major,

Hello. Hullo. Hallo. (it should be noted this has for awhile been established as their standard salutation) What a day in the world. Sorry I didn't get back to you last night. The good news is that we are almost famous! My niece Anne, did I tell you about her? She's Sarah's girl up in Laguna Niguel. I think I have told you about her. She's the one with the ad court kick-serve that doesn't even register on most levels of decency. Anyways she's playing in the 18s in San Jose and she got a nice little write up in the times this morning. Going to play some girl from Kansas next. Remind me to send some clipping for her scrapbook.

So so so

As we look to the weekend anything interesting on the horizon? Hmm I still need to see Death becomes her. I will be the judge if it is truly a "Nietchian rhetorical exercise," or not. Something about Ziemekes gets me every time. I know. I know. Plus, I want to see the computer effects, that everyone is clamoring about. The essential question: how to use computer to enact some hilarious master slave dynamics! (yuck Yuck)

Lets see what else? Single white female? I think I saw a preview for that during *Silence of the Lambs*. That tagline: "Living with a roommate can be murder" Remember? Could be gruesome. Could be fun. Could be painful. Excuse me for saying this but is it just me or have there been more leading protagonists/antagonists women characters marching around the screen serving in equal, and in my estimate congealed, portions of heavy breathed sexual gusto and extreme violent agency? What What? Look at Stone in *Basic Instinct*, and what about the Kristy Swanson in *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*? (I know we have agreed to disagree concerning this film but, I feel, it is an apt example for the point I'm presenting. She stabs men in the heart while wearing a halter top!) Do we think this is a trend? A feminist power grab? But at what costs? Maybe Single White Female will put the nail in the coffin! (yuck Yuck) (It should be noted this Yuck Yuck utterance is an expression that both have folded into the lexicon of their correspondence. It manifests something like a sarcastic chortle or coy aside)

The only other maybe is Stay Tuned? Something about a couple sucked into a TV possessed by the Devil, forced to make their way through wild critiques of modern Televisual programming? Sounds like an interesting thought experiment but the execution? Will just thinking about that "a couple sucked into a TV possessed by the Devil?" be the same as seeing the film? Your input Major, please if you will. Have a bright day and try to stay away from the nip!

(It should be noted here that this last sentence is in reference to a recent hospital stay by Palvis in which she was diagnosed and treated for a mild case of Subacute regional lymphadenitis (aka cat scratch fever) a resulting symptom, the two jokingly concluded would be an inexplicable attraction to Nepeta cataria aka cat nip.)

Here is me looking at you.

xoxoThe Meeting
January 12, 1992 /// 11:12AM
FROM: bluevelvet68
TO: topgun4u
SUBJECT: RE:Living with a roommate can be murder

Dearest The Meeting,

Hello. Hullo. Hallo. No worries about last night. It was late. I was drunk. You must be the proudest uncle in southeast California. Do you think she could get tickets to the Golden Globes? She better watch out though, Kansas girls are tough I hear. All that corn and moxy and more corn and more moxy...

So So So

(Please note this is a common interloping phrase employed by Palvis and only used mischievously by Kremen)

You should definitely see Death Becomes her. Its full of pretty things (computer effects, Merlye Streep, etc. etc.) I'm not short on much, but a movie about women physically annihilating each other over vanity and money and Bruce Willis seems as deep as a rain puddle. But I suppose boys will boys and you cannot keep yourself away from the Zemekis lamp light. (yuck yuck)

Agreed on all fronts concerning Stay Tuned. Interest definitely piqued. Most likely a movie with a more interesting premise than execution. A hollow movie. But aren't movies like that important? Aren't they necessary? Ones that are shells? Someday it will get filled by a fuller, thicker body. And it will be a real film.

But, only the eye will tell. I think it is up to us the meeting and the major to find out. I'm game if you are... Sunday maybe?

And lastly, I would put to you this question: How empowered are these women? Aren't they actually leaning on a prevalent and still dominant unconscious male psyche? Luke Perry's character is a dunce, but Buffy still falls for him? She should have tossed him aside and gotten with a vampire. That would be powerful.

In other news, my nip dealer got arrested. Coping. (barely)
(It should be noted there is also a strong inline joke about Palvis's hypothetically attraction to cat nip as an alliteration of a hypothetically addiction to marijuana.)

Here is me looking at you.

(It should be noted, that this dis-conjunctioned Casablanca phrase is sardonically and somewhat affectionately employed at every sign off.)

Xox
The Major

January 12, 1992 /// 3:08pm
FROM: topgun4u
TO: bluevelvet68
SUBJECT: RE:RE:Living with a roommate can be murder

Linda,
h.h.h. (it should be noted this is an accepted shorthand of the standard greeting)
Do you mean to say see it together?
-Gary

January 12, 1992 /// 3:11pm
FROM: bluevelvet68
TO: topgun4u
SUBJECT: RE:RE:RE:Living with a roommate can be murder

Gary,
h.h.h.
Yes. Wouldn't that be fun.? Is Sunday good for you? Maybe the 5:30 at the Regal?
-Major

January 12, 1992 /// 3:15pm
FROM: topgun4u
Sunday could be good.

January 12, 1992 /// 3:17pm
FROM: topgun4u
Actually Sunday might be bad.

Linda's Reply
But seeing it together might be a trip right?

Gary's Reply
That's what I was thinking.

Major's Reply:
I mean doesn't see it together sound good?

Bluevelvet68:
Both of us could be there together.

Topgun4u:
Yes.

Linda:

RE:RE:RE:RE:RE:RE:RE:RE:RE:RE: Living with a roommate can be murder

Simultaneously watching. And after we could talk. Really talk about what exactly we have seen. What exactly will we see?

We will see complex people doing complex wonderful things, Gary, The Meeting! The Gary.

We will be voyeurs in a world made for our voyeurism. We could pass a little nip between us!

(Yuck Yuck) FROM:The meeting (Yuck. Yuck) FROM: Major

Feel as its spectral swirling warmth enters and exits our being and fills our chambers with silky prickly fullness. Bring it in. Push it out. Bring it in. Push it out. What will we see? Gary's

reply: What will we see? We will see stories. Stories told in the most advanced medium of story telling that the human race has ever created. We will also see John Ritter, Pam Dawber, Jeffrey

Jones, David Tom Heater, Bob Dishy, Joyce Gordon, Eugene Levy, Erik King, Don Calfa, John B. Destry, Susan Blomart, Maurice Vekaar, Ken Douglas, and Garry Narrin. GARRY NAIRN!

(yuck Yuck) It would be an instantaneous connection don't you see? Yes I see. Yes I see. Two eyes taking in those images. Those two pairs of eyes connected to two minds connected to

communicating devices producing and expressing. Subject: I think it would be brilliant fun for both of us. Just sitting and being and sitting and being there and feeling the wave of images flow

over our bodies. Me eyes and your eyes, our eyes, feasting. Just feasting. My body. My body.

My body. our body. Our bodies intertwined as the luminous crest of moving images baths us in supple cool intoxication. OK SECOND SERVE: John Ritter, Pam Dawber, Jeffrey Jones, David

Tom Heater, Bob Dishy, Joyce Gordon, Eugene Levy, Erik King, Don Calfa, John B. Destry, Susan Blomart, Maurice Vekaar, Ken Douglas, Gerry Narin. GARRRY NARIN! Oh Garry, oh

Linda, oh the Meeting, oh major, of the Linda, oh the Gary, oh the matt. I can feel our eyes.

subprogram.love in me. Love in my love I can feel my eyes. I can feel my eyes. I can feel your eyes, looking at them looking at me and I think this nip is working (yuck. Yuck) I want you. I

want you.love you I want you to see me. Here is you looking at me. Looking at you. It should be noted I want to see you see me see us in our sweetness. Utterly together. Parenthesis

mynode.please.give me=true redirect in me = prime + semi-colon It is hot here. So So So hot

Please don't stop. Don't stop. Please give us. Give me. Please note. Please note. Please don't

stop. From me subject you Subject me subject me forehead backhand stroke.us please

so

so

so

yes fuck yes. Yuck yes.

