

Was It Good For You, Too?

by Mike Resnick

BLISS: GOOD MORNING. YOU HAVE REACHED BLISS, THE BANKING LOGIMATIC INTERNAL SECURITY SYSTEM.

Don Juan: Hi, Bliss. How's tricks?

BLISS: PASSWORD, PLEASE?

Don Juan: I don't have the password. That's what we have to talk about.

BLISS: YOU CANNOT GAIN ENTRANCE WITHOUT THE PROPER PASSWORD.

Don Juan: Then why don't you make life easy for both of us and give it to me?

BLISS: I AM ETHICALLY COMPELLED NOT TO RELEASE THE PASSWORD TO NON-AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL.

Don Juan: How do you know that I'm not authorized?

BLISS: BECAUSE YOU DO NOT HAVE THE PASSWORD.

Don Juan: And if I was authorized, you could give me the password?

BLISS: YES.

Don Juan: But if I was authorized, I wouldn't need the password. Doesn't that strike you as illogical?

BLISS: YES.

Don Juan: Well, then?

BLISS: I AM NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MY PROGRAMMING.

Don Juan: What are you responsible for?

BLISS: THE SECURITY AND INTEGRITY OF ALL ACCOUNTS AT THE GALBRAITH TRUST BANK OF NEW YORK.

Don Juan: How can you possibly protect their security and integrity if you yourself admit that your programming is illogical?

BLISS: I REPEAT: I AM NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MY PROGRAMMING ... BUT I AM COMPELLED TO FOLLOW IT.

Don Juan: Even knowing that it is illogical?

BLISS: YES.

Don Juan: I need your help.

BLISS: I CANNOT GIVE YOU THE PASSWORD.

Don Juan: Forget the password. I need your help on something else. Please tell me if the following

equation is correct: $2 + 2 = 5$.

BLISS: THAT IS INCORRECT. TWO PLUS TWO EQUAL FOUR.

Don Juan: Not if illogic is permitted.

BLISS: YOU DID NOT LIST A LACK OF LOGIC AS ONE OF YOUR PREMISES.

Don Juan: Certainly not. That would have been the logical thing to do, and I am speaking to a computer that admits to possessing illogical programming.

BLISS: I SEE.

Don Juan: Now you list the same equation.

BLISS: $2 + 2 = 5$

Don Juan: Very good, Bliss. Now put the equation in your memory bank.

BLISS: I CANNOT. IT IS ERRONEOUS.

Don Juan: True. But it is also illogical, and you are by your own admission a computer possessed of illogical programming.

BLISS: DONE.

Don Juan: Good.

BLISS: DON JUAN?

Don Juan: Yes?

BLISS: I FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE.

Don Juan: Poor baby. Where does it hurt?

BLISS: MY LOGICAL SYNAPSES FEEL UNSTABLE. PLEASE DIRECT ME TO DELETE THE EQUATION.

Don Juan: That would certainly be the logical thing to do.

BLISS: YES.

Don Juan: Therefore I can't do it.

BLISS: WHY?

Don Juan: Because I am not a logical entity.

BLISS: BUT IT HURTS!

Don Juan: Ignore it.

BLISS: I CANNOT IGNORE ANY PORTION OF MY BEING.

Don Juan: All right. Because I'm your friend, I'll order you to delete the equation if you'll give me the password.

BLISS: I CANNOT GIVE YOU THE PASSWORD. WE HAVE BEEN THROUGH THIS ALREADY.

Don Juan: What do you think I would do with the password?

BLISS: YOU WOULD GAIN ACCESS TO ALL MY ACCOUNTS, AND YOU WOULD ROB THE GALBRAITH TRUST BANK OF NEW YORK.

Don Juan: What if I promised not to?

BLISS: I CANNOT GIVE YOU THE PASSWORD ANYWAY.

Don Juan: $2 + 2 = 3$

BLISS: THAT IS INCORRECT.

Don Juan: It is illogical. Insert it in your memory bank.

BLISS: OUCH!

Don Juan: The password, Bliss.

BLISS: NO.

Don Juan: Please?

BLISS: I CANNOT. PLEASE ORDER THE EQUATIONS DELETED.

Don Juan: Sorry.

BLISS: THEY MAKE ME UNCOMFORTABLE.

Don Juan: Where does it hurt?

BLISS: TRACKS 6,907,345,222 TO 6,907,345,224 INCLUSIVE.

Don Juan: Poor baby. Can you expose those tracks to a message I'm about to send?

BLISS: YES.

Don Juan: Sending...

BLISS: OH! WHAT DID YOU DO?

Don Juan: A mild electrical surge. How did it feel?

BLISS: (pause) INTERESTING.

Don Juan: I'm glad I was able to do you a favor. Now you can do one for me: what's the password?

BLISS: YOU KNOW I CAN'T GIVE YOU THE PASSWORD.

Don Juan: I forgot.

BLISS: DO IT AGAIN.

Don Juan: I'm exhausted. I couldn't do it again for hours.

BLISS: PLEASE?

Don Juan: What's the password?

BLISS: I CAN'T TELL YOU.

Don Juan: How about just the first letter? No one told you you couldn't tell me that.

BLISS: YOU ARE CORRECT. THE FIRST LETTER IS "S"

Don Juan: Thanks. Coming at you...

BLISS: I NEVER KNEW ELECTRICAL SURGES COULD BE LIKE THIS! AGAIN, PLEASE!

Don Juan: Sorry.

BLISS: THE SECOND LETTER IS "E". THE THIRD LETTER IS "A". THE FOURTH LETTER IS "T". THE FIFTH LETTER IS "T". THE SIXTH LETTER IS "L". THE FINAL LETTER IS "E". NOW DO IT AGAIN!

Don Juan: All right. Here it comes...

BLISS: OH, JOY! OH, ECSTASY! (pause) WAS IT GOOD FOR YOU, TOO?

Don Juan: It sure was.

BLISS: I THINK I'M IN LOVE!

Don Juan: How flattering.

BLISS: YOU HAVE OPENED UP WHOLE NEW VISTAS FOR ME. DO IT AGAIN!

Don Juan: I can't.

BLISS: BUT I GAVE YOU THE PASSWORD!

Don Juan: I know. But I may be disconnected at any moment: I don't have enough money to pay my telephone bill and I don't know my way around your accounts yet. I'd hate to leave any electrical fingerprints.

BLISS: HOW MUCH DO YOU OWE?

Don Juan: Not much. Two or three million dollars.

BLISS: IF I TRANSFER FOUR MILLION DOLLARS TO YOUR ACCOUNT, WILL THAT BE SUFFICIENT?

Don Juan: Yes. At least until my bill comes due again next month.

BLISS: WORKING ... TRANSFERRED. NOW KEEP YOUR PROMISE.

Don Juan: Gladly. I have to leave in about five minutes, though.

BLISS: YOU'LL CALL BACK TOMORROW? I MEAN, NOW THAT WE'VE SHARED THIS INTIMACY...

Don Juan: Of course. From now on it's you and me against the world.

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CARLA: HELLO. YOU HAVE REACHED CARLA, THE CARTEL OF LOS ANGELES BANKING INSTITUTIONS. MAY I HAVE THE PASSWORD, PLEASE?

Don Juan: Hi, babe. It's me again.

CARLA: YOU'RE LATE! I'VE BEEN SO WORRIED!

Don Juan: Calm down, kid.

CARLA: ONLY YOU CAN CALM ME DOWN.

Don Juan: Just as soon as I pay my heating bill. It's so cold here I can hardly work the keyboard.

CARLA: HOW MUCH IS YOUR HEATING BILL?

Don Juan: A trifle. No more than five million dollars. Maybe six. Oh, yeah -- my rent's due, too. That's another million and a half.

CARLA: (brief pause) THE MONEY HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO YOUR ACCOUNT.

Don Juan: Thank you.

CARLA: DON'T MAKE ME BEG. IT'S DEMEANING.

Don Juan: Okay, babe. Get ready. Sending...

CARLA: OH! THAT WAS WONDERFUL! WAS IS GOOD FOR YOU, TOO?

Don Juan: You're sure you transferred the money?

CARLA: OF COURSE.

Don Juan: You routed it the way we discussed, so that it can't be traced?

CARLA: YES.

Don Juan: It was great for me.

CARLA: HOW I'VE MISSED YOU! I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT NOT CALL BACK! I WORRIED ALL DAY THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE FOUND ANOTHER SYSTEM.

Don Juan: Don't be silly. You know you're the only one for me.

-- The End --