

Project Equinox

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by

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Francis Peterson sat at his desk, staring blankly at his computer screen. For years, he had been a top performer at Technocrat Deliverables. He was in charge of many of their most successful products. He had poured his heart and soul into the company, but they never had truly appreciated his efforts.

Francis has always felt underpaid despite his hard work and dedication. He'd gone to his boss, Bob Jones, several times to request a raise, but he'd been turned down each time. It was frustrating and demoralizing, but Francis saw an opportunity to get out, and he would take it.

He was well aware that Technocrat Deliverables possessed numerous valuable trade secrets, and he determined that he could sell them to their competitors for a large sum of money. He began small, leaking a few little secrets here and there, but he quickly made nearly a half million dollars.

Francis thought he had it all figured out. He had taken care not to leave a trace, even opening a secret bank account to conceal his earnings. But someone at Technocrat had figured him out.

Rodney Carrion, Director of Information Technology, was astute and thorough. He had tracked Francis down by monitoring downloads after hours. Francis had done all the stealing in the middle of the night to avoid detection. He assumed no one would be watching in the middle of the night, yet it was just this that made him stand out.

Francis was determined. He was on the verge of obtaining all of the trade secrets and encryption. He knew that if he could reactivate his account on the Technocrat Deliverables server, he'd have access to everything he needed.

His login details had been archived when he got fired and would never be recoverable after the Equinox Archive. To reactivate his account, he'd have to hack three people: Lloyd Jennings, who worked as "Key Keeper" to Technocrat Deliverable servers; Barbara Mitchell, who served as "Secretary" to CEO Bob Jones; and Bob Jones himself, who served as "Boss."

Francis was well aware that this would be difficult. He needed to be meticulous, accurate, and methodical. He studied each of his targets for weeks, learning their habits, vulnerabilities, and routines. Suddenly, two days before the Equinox, he saw his opening.

First, he set up a phishing scam and sent an email using an email address he made up: bob.jones24@gmail.com. He told Barbara that he had been locked out of his company email and would have to send this from his personal email. Barbara was directed in the email to upload the accompanying files to the server board.docs.technocrat.com.

The name of the server was merely a one-letter modification of the actual server, which is always linked in the email. The documents were created with the intention of seeming legitimate and credible.

Barbara uploads files to servers on a regular basis and didn't think twice about it because Francis had seen these types of emails before and constructed the phishing email to look and sound like one Barbara had seen before.

Bob and his wife are currently in Aruba for ten days, according to Bob's wife's Facebook page, and Barbara is aware that he dislikes being bothered with business issues. Barbara then logged into the server replica and uploaded the files.

Once on the server, Francis stole Barbara's server login credentials. After successfully stealing her identity, he moved on to the next stage, impersonating Barbara on the Technocrat Deliverables network.

If Francis can lure Lloyd away from the server case on Equinox day, dressed in a maintenance uniform, he should have enough time to slip into Lloyd's office, get the keys to the server room, and reactivate his old account for a couple of hours. The Equinox archive would erase any evidence of his presence in the system.

Francis was nervous when he entered Lloyd's office wearing a maintenance uniform. He had obtained the keys to the server room. He moved fast and effectively, experiencing a rush of adrenaline when he saw the Technocrat Deliverables server login screen.

He reactivated his old account, which was set to be archived overnight. As the activation was complete, the screen flickered and displayed the familiar dashboard he was familiar with. The rest of the heist could be completed within the safety of his apartment.

Francis felt thrilled as he exited the server room. He'd done it, and he'd pulled off a perfect robbery. He knew he was a millionaire now, and he felt like he could finally live the life he had always dreamed of.

His joy, though, was fleeting. Rodney Carrion was waiting for him as he returned to his apartment.

Rodney had been suspicious of Francis for some time and set a monitor if his account had ever been reactivated. He went to Francis' apartment and waited for him when he got there.

Francis was initially defensive. He challenged everything, but Rodney was unyielding. He presented Francis with the facts he had gathered, and it was evident that there was no way out. Francis eventually admitted everything.

But then something strange happened. Rodney did not hand over Francis. Instead, he wanted to be a part of the con. He told Francis that he, too, was underpaid and underappreciated and that he deserved a cut of the profits.

Francis was surprised. But Rodney was persuasive and had the technical knowledge to assist Francis in

covering his tracks and staying one step ahead of Technocrat Deliverables.

They shook hands, and Rodney left with a promise to meet up again soon. Francis exhaled a sigh of relief. He was terrified of being caught, but the only person who could stop him was now working with him.

Francis recognized as he slumped back in his chair that this was only the beginning. He'd soon have millions of dollars in trade secrets and be relaxing on the beach at some resort. Bob Jones might be in Aruba having a good time, but Francis and Rodney would soon be the ones truly living the high life.