

Chapter 6: Emails From the Grave

In the morning after breakfast Sandi and Lionel drive to Claude's Café for the morning coffee. The normal social chatter across the table with the brew crew easily erodes the early morning. "Usher" calls Lionel on uttering a political statement. The brew crew sits in judgment and imposes a fine of a Quarter on Lionel. Lionel attempts to rectify his mis-deed. But the brew crew imposes another Quarter fine for delay of conversation. Quitting while he is ahead Lionel pay the kitty a Dollar. He surfaces the observation as Treasurer that the brew crew still has not addressed making a donation to a cause. He makes a motion to send the current kitty total to Central and Easter NC Food Bank. The motion is seconded and carried by acclamation. The conversation settles back into forthcoming upgrade to Claude's Cafe-Studio.

Upon returning to the house Sandi returns to her ancestry register project. Lionel starts recharging the video camera's battery. He then begins his stationary cycling routine. Finishing strong he showers and returns the workspace/office to deal with his morning email traffic.

Just like the prior day he starts the audio/video record on the digital video camera. After testing that it is functioning properly he returns to his closing note from last night.

He dives into the settling the 'deyfine' Thunderbird email question from last night. Taking control of the 'deyfine' account is achieved by by resetting the account's password from the 'gonza' administrator account. Once that is done he merely logs-out from the 'gonza' account to the lower level 'deyfine' account and enters the newly assign password.

The desktop rendering for the 'deyfine' account is disappointingly unsophisticated and simple. The standard account for the 'deyfine' user has significantly fewer application icons available. But the Thunderbird email application icon is displayed as being available. Clicking on the Thunderbird icon pops a blank Thunderbird email client user interface. Over the top of this email client is another window for Account Setup. This immediately tells Lionel that there was no active email account for the 'deyfine' account at the time the archive file was created. That leads to the first conclusion of the day that the micro-SD card archive reflects only Frank was usage. The second conclusion is that whenever Frank and Stacy left their condo in February 2021 their computers departed with them.

Once these conclusions have been recorded on the video camera audio, Lionel returns to the scanning process stopping point from yesterday. Having setup 'dogrep4home_email.sh' to use the 003_keyfile pattern file he runs that program to produce 003_Key_001_Run. As with the earlier runs he is forced to dig deeper into files which have been flagged as containing the scan patterns. This effort produces an additional information and leads to additional patterns to which he adds to the next pattern file 004_keyfile.

After a quick break for lunch and an agreement about barbecuing salmon for supper Lionel returns to his workspace/office to the grep scanning process and geany follow-up manual scans.

Iterating through this process during this afternoon's session he reaches a 013_Key_002_Run which seems to have all of the information fragments of interest from 'gonza' home Thunderbird email account folders. He may be wrong, but he has found no new patterns of interest worth the additional time and effort to pursue.

Now he is ready to match the '013_keyfile' pattern file to the 1.7GB mass of emails retained in the '/home/gonza/Local_Folder' directory. To do that he must retrofit and rename 'dogrep4home_email.sh' to 'dogrep4Local_Folder.sh'. Lionel copies and pastes the details of the pattern file and the program displayed by his geany editor into Appendix B.

Lionel executes the dogrep4Local_Folder.sh cleanly on the first attempt. It produces 2928 hits from the 1.7GB in the ~/Local_Folder for gonza. Tweaking the 'dogrep4Local_Folder.sh' file to rerun the scan but requesting the hit-details yields a significantly longer runtime to close. But numerous bits of garbage appears to have been accumulated. A few file types are identified as containing 'tokens' or text that match entries in the pattern file but present no human usable information. Lionel adds syntax that excludes these extraneous sources.

Lionel finalizes the pattern file list and the 'dogrep4home.sh' execution prints the results file '013_key_008_Run' to gonza's home folder. That file is 107.4MB long and composed of 793,597 lines of text. Most of the content in that file is of little value. But he did find 'bread crumbs that pointed him the following four email nuggets:

1> Email dated: 09/14/2020 from zbozz@anetswarf.com

1.1> Frank had been hired by a client in September 2020 named Catalina Software Engineering.

1.2> He was working as a software engineer on a project called 'Spinnaker' executive management team from Catalina Software Engineering.

2> Email dated 09/18/2020 from architect@anetswarf.com

2.2> Meeting minutes of an agile project planning virtual meeting that occurred 09/17/2020

2.3> Introduced

zbozz: project executive

architect: high level designer

scrummaster: certified sum master

frogleg: <Frank>

gator: Software engineer from Florida

turtle: Software engineer from Alabama

2.4> Setup daily remote stand-up meeting schedule. Frank, gator, and turtle seem to be in same time zone.

2.5> Introduced the Release Plan at top level

2.5.1> Release 1: Environment

2.5.1.1> Sprint 1.1: Actor Profile

User Story: birth citizen

User Story: unique actor

User Story: acquire profile:

name, address, date of birth, mailing address, Identifier, registered status, sex, race. affirmed federal status, affirmed state status, acknowledge understanding, legend

User Story: legend:

utility, rental, bank statements, phone, email

2.5.1.2> Sprint 1.2: Virtual Presence

User Story: keystroke recorder:

User Story: keystroke player:

- User Story: keystroke mgr:
- User Story: remote data entry to web form
- 2.5.2> Release 2: Registration
 - 2.5.2.1> Sprint 2.1: on-line:
 - User Story: register to vote access site, navigate to register site, enter profile
Step 1, Step 2, Step 3 , Step 4, Step 9, Print. Sign, Witness, Mail
 - User Story: Process quantity
 - User Story: Handle rejections
 - 2.5.2.2> Sprint 2.2: eform:
 - User Story: Print. Enter Profile ,Sign, Witness, Add Legend, Mail
 - User Story: Process quantity
 - User Story: Handle rejections
 - 2.5.2.3> Sprint 2.3: Absentee Ballot
 - User Story: on-line request
 - User Story: Request by mail
 - User Story: Receive absentee ballot
 - User Story: Process bulk quantity
- 2.5.3> Release 3: Manage Absentee Ballots
 - 2.5.3.1> Sprint 3.1 CNC Processing
 - User Story: CNC citizens
 - User Story: CNC citizen
 - User Story: CNC vote ballot
 - User Story: CNC witness
 - 2.5.3.2> Execute absentee ballot
 - User Story: Vote
 - User Story: Sign
 - User Story: Witness
 - User Story: Deliver ballot to USPS
 - 2.5.3.3> Follow-up
 - User Story: Check status
 - User Story: Monitor registration status

3> Email dated 09/30/2020 from architect@anetswarf.com

3.1> Sprint 2.1 On-line Registration of new voter was dropped that will give the schedule an extra two weeks breathing time and reduce complexity.

3.2> Introduced two new members of the project team:

patel: db administrator

judge: testing, IP security/audit, and configuration management

4> Email dated 11/29/2020 from gator@anteswarf.com

Something is not kosher at my level. Try the back channel. We may be heading into the deep swamp.

5> Email dated: 01/21/2021 from zbozz@anetswarf.com

5.1> A three day meeting with the client was scheduled in Atlanta. The client executive management team was arriving Monday evening February 1. Work sessions were scheduled for Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday. Socializing was scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday. Tuesday evening would include spouse, significant other, or guest.

5.2> Tuesday: Work session:

5.2.1> Morning discuss would center on closure status of the project and final configuration management of the software deliverables.

5.2.2> Afternoon agenda included a final inventory and return of all client owned hardware and intellectual property.

5.3> Wednesday: Work session:

5.3.1> Morning topics would include lessons learned and suggestions for improvement.

5.3.2> Afternoon topics would focus on future opportunities with longer term business objectives and strategies roadmap.

5.4 Thursday: Work session:

5.4.1> Morning activities would center on firming-up action items derived Tuesday and Wednesday.

5.4.2> Afternoon is reserved for wrap-up and after-schools.

“Let’s break here and go barbecue the salmon. My head is beginning to spin,” Lionel closes the afternoon hunt and heads to the kitchen to start preparation.

Returning from supper he begins to review the emails of interest again for a couple of hours. Frustrated he reaches a junction when all he can do is summarize what he has learned.

Starting the summary Lionel notes, “Based on the grep scan on the email traffic in Local_Folder archive, we know the following:

1> Frank was an active software engineer working on a project called ‘Spinnaker’ for Catalina Software.

2> The project started in mid-September, 2020, and close din the first part of February, 2021. It seems to have been a success despite at least two flagged events.

2.1> The first flagged event was the “dropping” of an early Sprint.

2.2> The second flagged event occurred Nov 29, 2020. That was a Sunday after Thanksgiving. The report was something was “heading into the deep swamp”. Two things to note is that long holiday periods typically are used by development teams to install and test something major system changes. So my guess is that they had a significant chunk of code that broke during a critical deployment or test.

3> The ‘Spinnaker’ project had something to do with some level of voting in some jurisdiction. Since it was well after the national and most state elections it is most probably a product with a business plan for anticipated marketing to catch the voting security hub-bub as the result of the Nov 3, 2020.

“Conclusion: I am still not ready to place my money on any evil intent or objective. But who knows?”

“Time to call it a night. Let’s go finish the Sharkey interview in Black Echo. We can pick-up here in the AM,” muses Lionel as he turns-off the ‘olle’ IBM ThinkCentre simulator and audio/video recording equipment.”

“So geek detective what insidious plot did you find tonight,” jokes Sandi as Lionel joins her in the reading room.

“Nothing concrete to this point. About all I know is that Franks computer did not hold any emails that point to why Stacy and he may have eloped last February. The emails do not provide anything definite about what the purpose of his last known project was.

“I will take a boarder look at his home directory and the ‘sys’ level directories ‘bin’, ‘media’, ‘opt’, ‘usr’, and ‘var’ starting in the AM. That should tell me what tools he was using on this mystery project.

“I basically learned nothing about Stacy so far.

“How is that Nana Pinot Noir?” Lionel asks changing the focus

“I think you’ll like it. I will pour you a tumbler.” offers Sandi.

The late evening conversation continues as they enjoy good reads and fine wine....