

Chapter 28: No More Calls, We Have A Winner Day 10, Day 11. and Day 12

Day 10

Brian meets Jane and Mark in the morning at the Hotel for breakfast on the Restaurant's balcony.

"The Spook Tower was able to connect with ladinada. She and her minions have started working on Randy's requested virus features. She uploaded two new features last night before close of business her time.

"The first new feature that will identify other wireless devices using the same WiFi server as the Daisy within ten maybe twenty meters of the Daisy. The Daisy can then be commanded to capture transmissions for one of those devices . The Daisy can then send captured message to a listening post. If the message is encrypted it will need to go to NSA or to the Spook Tower.

"The second new feature provides a list of all MAC identifiers and there relative distance from the WIFI. It could be used to track movement or relative location of a cell phone over short distances."

"Since the Conference Room (Daisy 4) and Ramesh's Desk (Daisy 3) are critical, these new features were downloaded to those two. The feature was also loaded to one Daisy, designated as Daisy13 which Ron retrieved from the warehouse. The new features are not completely tested. So there are risks."

For the van and Daisy Trawler listening teams the day starts calmly. They begin listening as the work day at the Operation Building starts. The Sunfish review status meeting resumes for the day at 0830 hour. The topics and pace are typical of any Agile software programming project.

A little after 1000 hours the topic revolves around the Roadmap and Release Planning for the next eighteen months. As the principle sponsor for the Roadmap, Burkett interrupts with several questions about widening the scope to include features of compartmentalization. Specifically he informs Ramesh's developers he is focusing on three slightly different user scenarios that he wants to push.

As Duffy listens to the Roadmap presentation and Burkett's leading question, he begins to realize that Burkett's vision has significantly diverged from the original scope. He recognizes his duty to the project's patron. Sitting quietly and appearing to be attentively taking notes Duffy sends the following message to the project's patron.

"Issue continues to metastasize. Your call."

"Cutout!" about ninety minutes later comes the reply text from the project's patron.

"Ack," replies Duffy.

At the Hotel, in the Trawler's adjoining suite jubilation springs forth.

“BINGO!” shouts Joe. “Daisy and lady nada did it again. We have just experienced receipt of encrypted messages outbound and inbound captured by Daisy 4. The message is on its way to NSA for their play. I believe we may have listened to what may be Duffy’s cell ‘reach-out and touch’ the big cheese or order starch in his underwear.”

“I will let the Spook Tower know they should be paying lady nada more. Thanks Joe.”

Nothing else of use to the Trawler groups emanates for the remainder of the day’s Sunfish status review.

Daisy 4 listening post continues recording the closing activity of the meeting and the announcement that a bus will leave the Compound first floor main entrance at 1800 hours and a van will leave the Compound twenty minutes late. Both will be bound for Restaurant Fisherman Hari. The dress will be casual.

Daisy 3 listening post records Ramesh talking to himself about the evening’s automatic backup being put to bed. He then begins a brief transmission with another entity explaining that tonight’s call must be ended shortly, since he has a business meeting over supper that will start shortly. He abruptly disconnects.

Brian, Randy, and Cal, the laser technician who remained behind, leave for the Restaurant Fisherman Hari. Cal carries Daisy13 in his briefcase. The plan is to have Cal use Daisy13’s new MAC listing feature to link MAC identifiers to specific Catalina supper participants. As they arrive at the Hari’s Brian asks the maître d’ about how busy the night is going to be. The maître d’ says that there is a large party of about twelve to sixteen business people scheduled for part of the terrace dining area but there is plenty of room there if Brian’s small party wants to sit on the terrace. Brian indicates that his party would prefer the terrace.

Brian’s party is seated one table away from the party. Drinks and the meal are order shortly. Brian gets up and walks back toward the front door. He explaining that he is having reception trouble with his cell phone he asks the maître d’ the approximate location and distance to the WIFI. Upon returning Cal verifies Brian’s cell phone MAC identifier as it attempts to sync with the restaurant’s WiFi server. Checking Cal confirms acquisition of Brian’s cell MAC identification as well as the distance from the WIFI. Cal begins to draw a crude floor plan showing their table and the expected table where the Catalina supper party will be seated.

Since Brian’s group is sitting looking into the setting sun, sunglasses and wide brim hats are appropriate. They also seem to be the norm on the evening terrace.

Randy gives Cal the thumbs up when he notices the mass of the business people being led from the front door towards the terrace. As each person files past Cal the person’s cell syncing efforts are acquired. By now Randy and Brian have seen sufficient photographs of Ramesh, Duffy, and Burkett. Randy cues Cal when each of these three individuals walk past. The purpose is of this exercise is to link Burkett, Duffy, or Ramesh or whoever to the encrypted text messages captured yesterday by the conference room Daisy 4 by their cellphone MAC.

By the time the Catalina business party is seated, Cal has acquired MAC address for Ramesh, Duffy, and Burkett. He leans forward and confirms that the encrypted message from Duffy’s cell.

Brian, Randy, and Cal relax and enjoy a quick meal and a robust sunset. Cal casually continues to complete the Catalina supper party table seating by MAC address, by distance, and by casual cell phone photo.

Day 10 closes quietly.

Day 11

Day 11 is even quieter than Day 10 except for monitoring Daisy 3 at Ramesh's Desk.

Anna's monitoring of the audio detects continued negotiations with the same MAC address as that captured yesterday. Apparently there is some type of stress being applied on Ramesh. Anna is not a programmer so terms like release, scrum, sprints, user stories, and spike are foreign to her. She request the assistance of someone who is familiar with the Sunfish application with who she can confer.

Jane passes Anna's request to the DorsalFin facilitator. Hesitantly, the decision is made to contact the best resource currently available on the Spinnaker-Sunfish application.

That same day but in a more Westward time zone, Rose answers the telephone in Vass, North Carolina.

"This is Agent Marcus," announces Agent Marcus. "Please put Lionel on the line."

After a brief delay Jones responds to the call from Agent Marcus.

"Mr. Jones you have just won an all expense paid vacation for you and your wife to vacation along the Adriatic."

"Sounds like an ambush to me."

"No, we need your prior expertise with the Spinnaker application. We have a team on site in Montenegro. Montenegro is just East of Venice and a bit South. Specifically, the team is in Ulcinj. Ulcinj is an Adriatic resort of rising popularity with the European tourists.

"There is less danger there for you and your wife than there is in the States.

"I highly recommend the vacation. You will be required to be available for about two-three hours a day. You and your wife should plan to stay about two weeks.

"We can have your wife on a company Gulfstream in two hours and you an hour after that. They need you on location ASAP.

"If you are amenable to this 'vacation' idea with your wife I can send an Agent to help with her preparation and provide the Dallas area transportation. The Agency will provide the transportation, visas, cash, etc. We will also continue to maintain the upkeep on the Raleigh house.

"You will be compensated as a engineering consultant employee of Asymmetric Services with a full benefits package.

“I am starting a Teamview video call now. Just join and I will bring your wife on-board the call as well.”

In short order Agent Marcus’ office assistant has Agent Marcus, Sandy, and Lionel connected. Given the high level view of an Adriatic vacation Sandy is warm to the idea. Agent Marcus office assistant bring a Dallas FBI Office agent, Agent Brittle, into the call as well. Agent Marcus covers the same ground again about the trip and arrangements.

The detail plan is for a departure from Love in Dallas in four hours. Pickup Lionel at the renamed Pope Army Airfield at Ft. Bragg, NC. Then fly to New York Stewart International Airport then Aviano Air Base, Italy. to Tivat. The Embassy will provide ground transportation to Ulcinj. There they will meet with the team on the ground. Once again this is purely in an engineering consulting basis.

The “GO” is given and everyone begins to scurry around to make it happen.

Day 12

At the Hotel in Ulcinj Jane receives the message from the DorsalFin facilitator that a contact engineer with knowledge of the application is scheduled to arrive in Ulcinj as early as 1300 the next day. She informs Brian, Mark and Anna. Brian is asked to obtain billeting for two in a separate suite in the Hotel. The ideal location would be one of the two suites just beneath these two suites.

With that that knowledge the players retire for the night to their respective billeting accommodates.

Dawn of the next day produces preparations for the arrival of the contract engineering consultant. Monitoring of the morning session of the Sunfish status review was mundane and unproductive. The arrival of noon heightens anticipation of the contractor’s arrival.

The original mission of the Trawler group is beginning to shift into another mode. The Catalina Executive Project Team Status Meeting concludes with a Noon banquet of Mediterranean samplers. The audio from the Daisy 4 gives the chefs high marks. About 1330 the Catalina Executive Project Team boards buses for the road trip to Tivat and home.

The Daisies continue to record the audio but there is no longer any need except for Daisy 3 (Ramesh) and Daisy 4 (Conference Room) for active monitoring. The concrete penetrating listening effort at the van is halted. The plan is to drive the van to the warehouse to unload the sensitive instrumentation in preparation for return to the States. The Marine personnel will be ferried back to the warehouse to help close out the listening operations. Then they will return to the regular Embassy duty.

Shortly, after 1400 hours Brian receives a message that the salad was ready for pickup. Brian sends Ron to the warehouse to serve as driver for the contract engineer. Ron welcomes Sandy and Lionel to the Ulcinj outpost and helps load the couple’s baggage into the sedan. Ron takes the scenic Old Town along the local shore road, bb Cazim Resulbegovic. That path highlights the beauty on the Eastern Adriatic rocky shoreline.

Brian greets the Sandy and Lionel just inside the main door. He waves to the concierge. The concierge sends two bellboys to manage the porting of the baggage to the new tourist's suite. But Brian directs Sandi and Lionel to the overhanging Bar-Lounge of the Hotel. There he orders "aqua con gas".

"Are you guys hungry?" asks Brian. "This Lounge and Restaurant has an excellent Adriatic sampler hors d oeuvres. Their fried calamari squid is superb."

"I am ready for the Adriatic sampler hors d oeuvres," replies Lionel. "Can you tell me exactly why I am on quote vacation in Ulcinj unquote?"

"We have been listening to a readiness status review for upscaling the Spinnaker project nation wide. But we have also discovered that one of the executives has some type of sidebar going with someone who seems interested in purchasing a 'gray' copy of the application and database scheme for their own purposes. Our linguist is not familiar with software terms and needs an expert to help her translate the scenario into something that may be actionable in a beneficial way. We do not need a growing band of 'bad-guy' entities trying to defraud state election boards.

"What we would like you to do is sit with the linguist as she listens to the conversation in Urdu. She will just utter in English what she hears in Urdu. Between the two of you we should begin to garner a fair idea what the real conversation is that is going between our Mr. Ramesh and his nemesis with whom he is communicating. Normally the conversations have been running less that an hour. So if you figure two hours a day for at least a few days, that still gives you plenty of time to explore Ulcinj.

"You may hear the term Sunfish. It refers to the software application the Ulcinj organization is. The Spinnaker application as your discovered was a prototype that has been growing in features and scale. Sunfish is the full scale production application.

"I don't want to overload you two on the first day. I am going to leave you here. Chow down. When you are ready to go to your suite just contact the concierge. He will have one of the bellboys take you to your suite. I will come get you between 1615 and 1630 hours. Your show starts at about 1700 hours. All the audio is recorded but we like to have real ears on it as it is transmitted."

"Yes a bed and a nap sound like a great afternoon. It was a rather long dark journey to get here."

Rising, Brian says, "Welcome aboard my friend. You will certainly enjoy it here. Until later enjoy your vacation. "

"Thanks, Brian."

Brian returns to a rather boring afternoon session.

Lionel makes a request of the concierge for directions to his suite and to be awakened not later than 1610 hours. Following the bellboy, Sandy and Lionel retreat to the suite for a couple of three hours of rest.

Promptly at 1610 hours the suite telephone annunciates the wake-up call with a series of gentle rings. Lionel answers and thanks the concierge for the wake-up call. Quietly exiting the bedroom Lionel prepares to start whatever endeavor he has been called to perform. Still a little groggy from the

time zone lag, he sits patiently in the lounge area of the suite and waits for Brian or Mark to lead him to his task.

Shortly after 1615 hours there is a gentle knock at the door. Checking through the door's peep hole, Lionel sees Brian. As he opens the door, Brian requests that Lionel follow him down the hall and up the stairs to the Trawler's adjoining suite of rooms. There Lionel sees where his tax dollars have been going.

Moving through the suite Lionel notes that it looks like Geek Spring Break.

"This is Anna our Urdu, Hindi, and Mandarin linguist," says Brian in the way of an introduction. "Anna this is Lionel. He is here to help you turn nonsense into useful intelligence."

"Welcome to Paradise in Ulcinj," she says. "The hours are good, the food great, but the plot is not so much. We will start active listening in a few minutes. That black box will begin flashing a red light when there is active audio. At the moment I am not actively monitoring the audio since the target's office still has too many people in it for Ramesh to start talking his trash.

"But we record all audio. I transcribe the audio I actively monitor. When you have a few extra moments ask Brian to review the prior transcripts. I suspect they will be good background for understanding Ramesh's role in this 'double' dealing on Sunfish."

"I welcome the opportunity to be helpful in this effort," confirms Lionel.

"While we have a few minutes, let me read the most recent transcripts in reverse chronological order so that you can gain a feel for the information flow."

For the next several minutes Lionel listens to Anna reading yesterday's transcript. As he listens he reaches for a pen and paper from her workspace and begins to take notes. A picture begins to form in his mind about the dilemma into which Ramesh has fallen.

The transcript reading is interrupted.

"Hello I am Randy. Anna the building is beginning to clear. You are on now."

"Grab yourself a clip board and a bunch of paper and a pen," says Anna. "I am going to go to live listening in just a moment. I will try to give you a play by play translation of what I hear. Take notes as you deem appropriate. Then after the Daisy goes silent we can confer on what may have been said."

As she reaches for her headphones, Lionel acquires the clipboard and a small stack of paper. Always the engineer he begins numbering the first ten pages. Then he returns to the first page and documents the date, time, location, and participants.

Anna is quietly just keeping time with her a rhythmic motion of her hands. The light goes flashing red and she begins translating aloud Ramesh's one-sided monologue. Lionel begins taking notes on what Anna utters. This continues for about fifty minutes.

"Fina," announces Anna. "What did you make of the one-sided conversation?"

“Based on what I know of the application Ramesh’s developers are using an automated build tool called Apache Ant to assemble all of the various software code modules into a usable application they call Sunfish. Sunfish is the full-blown version of the old Spinnaker prototype. The code modules for Sunfish are archived in another version configuration library application called Apache SVN. This allows Ramesh’s team to add, delete, and modify modules that provide features for the Sunfish application. The prototype Spinnaker application I saw previously was written the java language for use in the Ubuntu operating system running the Apache Web Server. It is just off the ‘bleeding edge’ of technology.

“They have a Roadmap for Sunfish that they are following. Their Roadmap is basically a plan of how they are going to release the Sunfish changes. Typically, a project will release features in the same way a builder creates a brick structure: that is a foundation which equates to the database, a structure which is the basic collection of the language tools and protocols, and finally the bricks and shingles which are like the features a user employs of the application. The goal is to provide a Java language based browser application that has an expected behavior for a predetermined set of user inputs. There is no mystery or randomness. The developer is handed a user story or scenario narrative for each feature that provides the set of allowed user inputs and the expected behavior. The code only does what a code is created to do.

“Ramesh seems to have a split role. He is working as the architect for the Sunfish project. Plus he has pulled features from the trunk of Sunfish and has created branches for whomever is on the other side of his post-work conversations. He does not seem to be for money, but for some type of quid pro quo. What his expected return on his actions is not clear. But he is definitely serving two masters, both of them with differing odious objectives. And I would bet my money on the second as far as having the biggest sway with him.”

Brian, Jane and Mark have been listening to Lionel’s take on Anna’s translations and the one transcription that Anna read to him earlier. Brian flips the high sign and the three go out onto the balcony for a brief discussion. On their way to the balcony they grab a plateful of heavy hors d’oeuvres and bottles of aqua con gas which Randy wisely ordered through the concierge. It appears to be another meal on the go.

“Let’s kick this to a higher pay grade,” confers Brian. “What Lionel has gleaned this afternoon supports the uneasy feeling that has surfaced since Anna began listening to Ramesh on Daisy 4.”

“We don’t know which Roadmap Ramesh is pushing,” notes Jane. “We do not know how far down the Roadmap his team has progressed. We are on quicksand on this one.”

“May be we should pull Lionel into this conversation while everything is still hot plasma floating in his mind.”

After agreeing Brian goes back to where Lionel and Anna are in conference. Brian interrupts and pulls Lionel away from Anna.

“Have you learned anything new from talking with Anna,” asks Brian.

“Not really,” laments Lionel.

Escorting Lionel to the balcony to join Jane and Mark, Brian explains, “We need your help in forming a set of recommendations that we need to push to our DorsalFin Operations Center in the States.”

“Do you know how to acquire the Roadmap artifacts or how to look into the content of the Releases?” bluntly asks Jane.

“The answer to that question is easy. The project’s collection of artifacts can be found in the project’s svn. I assume that the Ulcinj development team just adopted the Apache subversion control tool that the original prototype developers used. That would be on the workstation server to which Ramesh runs the build.xml. It should be on the project server under ‘/var/svn/repos/eclipse_devwrk’ project folder. The project folder will have a trunk, tags, and branches folders. The trunk will be the folder with the “gold” version of all artifacts or content. The branches folder will contain artifacts that are under development or subject to changes.

“Specifically, we would need to ‘find’ the build.xml, build_out.txt, or build.properties files on one of the project sever locate at the development site. Once you found anyone of those three files, you would be able to wander through the artifacts and contents until you bored looking at the details you want.

“How you gain access to the server is the problem. First , we could ask someone nicely for access. Second, we could track user keystrokes until we learned their userid and password and the surreptitiously gain access to the project server if that person had high enough access level.

“May be your geek force has better methodologies for break/entering/hacking into system. I would ask them if the first two approaches are not possible.

“As my wife would say, I think it is time to land this airplane.”

“So let me summarize what I think I heard,” concludes Brian. “If someone does not volunteer he userid and password we skip to steeling userids and passwords to cheat the system for access. If that fails we need to leverage more talented hackers, correct.”

“Yes. That is all I have. Once you gain access to the trunk collection, I can help locate the information you need.”

“Thank you Lionel. If you and Sandy would like to join us for breakfast tomorrow just join us here around 0830 hours,

“You can go check with Anna to see if her transcript from this evening has any other hidden pearls.”

“We will see you then at 0830 hour for breakfast,” agrees Lionel as he steps away from the discussion..

After Lionel departs from the conversation Brian continues, “So what we do is we ask to have ladinada redirect her efforts to searching every MAC address to see which one has the ‘build.xml, build_out.txt, or build.properties’ files.

“I hate holding back information from Lionel but we need to compartmentalize as we can so people have only the knowledge they need to function as needed.

“I will put together the message requesting the shift in ladinada’s work.

“Do we agree?”

Brian receives the “GO” from both Jane and Mark.

The meeting of the Three Adriatic Plumbers breaks up and everyone goes there to their separate evening tasks.