

# *The Town Drunk*

*Presents*

## Authorities Concerned Over Rise of Teen Linux Gangs

*Lucy A. Snyder*

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**Boston, MA**—On Friday evenings, scruffy bands of teenagers gather in alleys behind Micro Centers, Best Buys, and Apple Stores across the country. Going by names like “Team Mayhem” and “The Pipes,” the Bawls-swigging teens trade Linux installation advice, brag about their videogame prowess, and sneer at authorities.

“We’re very concerned about what these kids are doing in their spare time,” says FBI spokesman Mark Brasslathe. “Just a few years ago, these kids would have been safe in their parents’ basements with their PlayStations, but cybermancy has changed all that. Now they’re fast becoming a threat to the public welfare.”

One young Linux gangster, who goes by the name “Retinoid,” agrees that cyberspiritual technologies have radically changed the teen geek community.

“Two years ago, I installed Linux on my first dead badger,” says Retinoid, who sports an orange Tux Penguin tee shirt that marks him as a member of The Pipes. “It was just wicked cool. We ran a warez FTP site off it and everything. But trying to run a game server on it was just slow as hell. So we thought, why not make a badger network cluster for distributed processes?”

Retinoid and his friends were initially stumped when they couldn’t find another badger.

“But then my kid sister’s pet Chihuahua got killed by our neighbor’s cat, and we were like, ‘Why not?’” Retinoid says. “Turns out Linux will install on damn near anything as long as you know how to hack the code. We programmed little ChiChi to sing along to Kid Rock MP3s, and we took him with us to our next LAN party. Everyone loved it!”

Retinoid and gangmate “Pork\_Sashimi” spent that summer building a redundant array of reanimated roadkill (RARR).

“The RARR was totally boss,” says Pork\_Sashimi. “We had it serving up deathmatches and movies all day and night. Later on, we put an eyecam video interface on a dead possum, and we

were able to remote control it into the ductwork of this sorority house down the street. Yeah, baby!”

Sixteen-year-old “DoomBarbie” says she met Pork\_Sashimi in an online chat room. “He was all sexist and stuff, and he kept asking me to send him JPEGs of myself with my shirt off. He even traced my IP address and sent the Pussy Possum to my house. Can you believe it?”

“But I totally got him back,” she adds. “I hacked his possum and got some *very* funny QuickTime footage of his mom yelling at him about leaving dead animals in the garage.”

DoomBarbie posted the footage on her Xanga site, fully expecting the war to escalate. “But then Pork\_Sashimi totally apologized to me! He admitted he got what he deserved and said he was sorry for acting like an idiot. How often does *that* happen on teh Intarweb?”

Impressed with her hacking skills, Pork\_Sashimi recruited DoomBarbie for The Pipes. Her presence soon put a stop to their virtual voyeurism.

“It’s not that I mind pr0n or anything,” she says. “But they were all oohing and ahing over this grainy-ass footage they got from a rat they sent into a strip bar, and I just started going off on the fake boobies. I was all like, ‘That one’s fake, and so’s that one, and you can even see that *scar* on that one!’ I guess it wasn’t so much fun for them after that.”

However, larger crimes loomed on their horizon when 23-year-old MIT dropout Dr. Hoonboi joined the group and took over as leader.

“The hackers love me ‘cause they know that I can code,” says Dr. Hoonboi. “These kids, they had all the potential, but they were wasting it ‘til I came along.”

Dr. Hoonboi declines to describe his group’s exploits in any detail, but Agent Brasslathe makes serious allegations against the gang.

“We’ve linked them to incidents in Vermont in which FBI agents were attacked during Patriot Act investigations,” Brasslathe says.

“Our agents were in the process of confiscating records from several libraries to determine which patrons have been reading works by Chuck Palahniuk, William Gibson, and other authors of terrorist-sympathizer literature,” he says.

According to Brasslathe, agents were subduing the librarians when several dozen squirrels burst out of the air conditioner vents. Some squirrels savaged the agents as others shredded records.

“Squirrels are much more vicious than most people realize,” explains Brasslathe. “As a result of squirrel bites, two agents contracted Sumatran Rat Monkey Fever, which is evidently very common in zombified wild animals. The agents are still in a medical asylum awaiting brain transplants.”

Children's librarian April Easley was preparing to read to a group of preschoolers when the FBI raided her workplace.

"These guys in suits came in demanding our circulation records, and we said, 'No way.' So then they pulled out the guns and the pepper spray. Sunny Saturday Storytime was *completely* ruined," she laments.

"They had our aide Bobby in a headlock and were wrestling him to the floor when the squirrels came out of nowhere. Those furry little critters completely sent the FBI guys to school. All us librarians were cheering, 'Yeah, go squirrels!'"

"And the kids learned an important lesson that day: they may look cute and cuddly, but don't piss off a squirrel," Easley says.

"Next week our patrons are voting on a new library mascot, and I'm pretty sure Speedreader Squirrel is going to beat the pants off Benny the Bookworm," she says.

Brasslathe is upset that people like Easley view the zombie rodent attack as heroic. "Punks like this Dr. Hoonboi character are a threat to American freedom. Today he's interfering with terrorist investigations. Who knows what he might do tomorrow?"

Dr. Hoonboi denies having unleashed undead squirrels on the FBI.

"I'm much more a bunny man, myself," says Dr. Hoonboi. "If they have some real evidence, bring it on. Otherwise they should switch to a new brand of fertilizer. They're lucky I'm this totally centered Zen Master who's too busy being Zen to hire a lawyer."

Dr. Hoonboi gives a pep talk whenever The Pipes gather: "Before I discovered the truth in the dead badger, I was a child, and I sat in the dark playing with childish things. But Linux made me a man and opened my eyes to a bright, sunlit world of endless possibility."

"It is time," Dr. Hoonboi frequently tells The Pipes, "for the geeks to inherit the Earth."

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**Lucy A. Snyder** studied to become a biologist, trained to become a journalist, and now provides tech support for a university that has an extreme troll problem. Her work has appeared in a wide variety of print and electronic publications, including *Strange Horizons*, *Farthing*, *Masques V*, *Lady Churchill's Rosebud Wristlet*, *Chiaroscuro*, and *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Science Fiction and Fantasy*. Her short story collection *Sparks and Shadows* is due out in 2007. Visit her website at <http://www.sff.net/people/lucy-snyder/>.