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Press Release

“Stuck Bobitis Count” Discovered to Be Hoax

Perpetrator Arrested – Faces Deportation

New York, February 12, 2003: A New York City man was arrested today for perpetrating a hoax that had the world of astrophysics in a tizzy.

He had claimed that his “Bobitis Count” had become stuck at 200 days. The *Bobitis Count* is a daily countdown, which stops at zero when a *Bobitis* patient goes back into *The Bob*. *The Bob* (short for “The Bob Marshall Wilderness”) is an uninhabited wilderness without gourmet coffee stands in northwestern Montana, which is, therefore, avoided by normal people. *Bobitis* is a severe mental disease, passed on through viral infection, which turns healthy people into obsessed puppets controlled by a desperate longing for The Bob.

Klaus von Stutterheim, a Greenwich Village resident, admitted after days of severe questioning that his Bobitis Count had, in fact, never stopped ticking, and that it now stood below 100 days, 99 days, to be precise. His report of a day count that seemingly refused to move had raised panic in the world of science and had galvanized physics institutes around the world into recalculating the general theory of relativity to account for this unheard-of phenomenon. The Office of Homeland Security, suspecting foul play, had started a major worldwide investigation to apprehend the thieves of von Stutterheim’s count, fearing terrorist tampering with the integrity of time and space.

Young Programmer Cracks Case

The hoax was discovered by a Davey C., a young programmer in a remote mountain valley, known for his illustration and horse riding skills. While playing with game authoring programs on the Internet, he discovered a loose digit in cyberspace that

appeared to have fallen off a counter, but which on closer examination revealed itself as having been deliberately jettisoned from von Stutterheim's Bobitis Calculator.

After he posted his discovery in a chat room, Homeland Security personnel, who are constantly monitoring all communications on the Internet, closed in on von Stutterheim in an early morning raid. As agents broke down his front door and stormed the apartment, they found him *in flagranti* in front of his computer, trying to dispose of accumulated negative days. He was arrested and charged with crimes yet to be determined.

"I am sure he broke many laws," Buster Ess, an agency spokesman, said, "and I am confident we will figure out what they are in due course."

Disease Victim or Criminal?

Interviewed in a drab prison cell at 26 Federal Plaza in downtown Manhattan, von Stutterheim admitted that he had fabricated the story about his jammed Bobitis Count. "I really didn't mean any harm," he claimed. "People just kept rolling their eyes whenever I brought up The Bob, and I wanted to show them how important it actually is."

Dr. Buck A. Rue, a clinical psychiatrist at Bellevue Hospital, who had saved von Stutterheim two years earlier from electro-shock, speculated that von Stutterheim's actions might have simply been a cry for help from a resident of an urban area, where Bobitis is not well known or understood. "He just couldn't get any sympathy from his family or friends, and it seems that he finally went off the edge in a desperate plea for attention. If he were living in a place like Missoula, people are much more understanding and sympathetic to Bobitis victims; they have all kind of support groups, and with a severe case like him, they might have just taken him into The Bob to relieve his suffering."

Locke M. Ubb, US Attorney for the Southern District of New York, insisted that his office would seek the maximum penalty to discourage others. "There is nothing funny about this hoax," he fumed. "Bobitis-*Schmobitis*; this guy had physics establishments around the world tied up in knots, not to mention our own security forces, and we will throw the book at him." When asked what kind of penalties he might seek, he responded: "We are thinking something like deportation to an uninhabited place in the northwestern US, where there are no population or facilities, and where his contact with the outside world would be sharply curtailed."