Biography of a Software Engineer
Steve Gibson

When starting this assignment, I wanted to get it over and done with. That might seem rude but it's the truth and hopefully you will see that trend across this biography. Biography, I suppose that means I should begin talking about the man in question but to tell you why he "inspires me" requires, I must unfortunately take a detour into my own motivation. Hopefully Mr.Gibson won't mind if I hijack his biography.

You see I don't have a fleshed out reason for being here, for choosing this course, for caring about this module or anything else. So to ask who inspires me is asking a brick wall why it sits there, probably because it should. I remember sitting at a Software engineering lecture, scrolling through fleeting distractions. When the lecturer said, and if you allow me to paraphrase, "For every 10 average people there's 1 talented". I agree. And I would comfortably slide into mediocre, I accepted that I didn't mind being part of a dime a dozen. Though this time it stuck with me in much the same way that gum does, annoyingly and uncomfortably. Time as it often does, moved along until yesterday where I sat down to my pile of assignments and picked the easiest one to get rolling, or so I thought. I clicked through many wikis of software engineers, Ivar Jacobson, Dave Cutler, Barry Boehm and so on and so forth. Until Steve Gibson.

The first thing I noticed was "he got his first job working at Stanford University at 15 years old" and correspondingly my first thought was *Yes, more substance to waffle through.* Then I saw his net worth. 1.2 Billion. Wow. Some unnamed person who'd continue to be nameless to me till death is worth over a billion dollars. I got interested and I wanted to know more. I learned about his work on copy protection, light pen, one of the first anti-adware (Opt-Out) and his company's Shield Up. Other than the anti adware, I can't genuinely say that I was blown away by any of it. Which of course makes me sound like the greenhorn that I am but the lack of recognizable features made me all the more intrigued. How can he be worth so much? Now I'd be lying to you and myself if we didn't acknowledge that Gibson owns a successful business that he created

and the fact he's a talented businessman. However everything was within the cover of software engineering never for a second taking a step out of that umbrella. Now at the risk of straying further from the main point I'll explain why it impacts me, if it's not been clear already, a lack of goals left money as my only motivator. I knew Computer Science is a quote unquote "smart" career choice and I knew I'd be good at it and I am. But a billion? I'd consider myself lucky if I managed to get a decent house let alone even a hundredth of a billion.

So to discover Steve Gibson is quite something for me. It tells me there's a lucrative future for me if I try to reach it. There's no doubt Steve Gibson is a talent among talents but similarly I believe there's a chance for me to further myself. To be rewarded for being better. To taste the fruit of my labor. I can't genuinely say that there aren't better stories, more interesting experiences and inspirational triumphs than Steve Gibson's. However, it is that very off the radar, quiet grind that appeals to me. So in a nutshell I suppose that is why he inspires me.

While I've gravitated towards wealth, it must be mentioned that Steve Gibson is charitable. After my shock of seeing his net worth, I initially thought it was ill-gotten gains. Unfortunately that kind of wealth oftentimes is of that nature. It's important to me, I like money but not the type of *like* that sets others alight to keep yourself warm. So grabbing my magnifying glass, I set out to look for controversies. Anticlimactically there was none. There were his comments and predictions in 2001 about Microsofts' implementation of SOCK_RAW would lead to wide spread chaos and in 2006 where he spread a rumor that Windows metafile vulnerability was an intentional backdoor. Surprise surprise neither ended up being true.

Though if anything these all seemed to be human mistakes. Solidifying in my mind that a good, maybe even a great career can be found regardless where I am. And most of all not through corruption.