Sentinel- Observer, twenty new programmers were added to the Robbie CX30 project on June 12th of last year. This was just several days after the stormy meeting between Johnson and Reynolds which Martha recounted.

According to Martha, the new hirees were a disaster. "Johnson unilaterally arranged for these new hires, presumably by shifting resources from other aspects of the Robbie [CX30] project. Reynolds was vehemently opposed to this. Johnson only knew about manufacturing hardware. That was his background. He couldn't understand the difficulties that we were having with the robotics software. You can't speed up a software project by adding more people. It's not like an assembly line." According to Martha and other sources inside the project, the hiring of twenty new programmers led to a staff meeting attended by Johnson, Reynolds and all members of the Robbie CX30 software project. "This time it was Sam [Reynolds] who went through the roof. He complained that the project didn't need more people. He argued that the main problem was that Johnson and other management people did not understand that Robbie CX30 was fundamentally different from earlier versions of the robot".

These sources tell the Sentinel-Observer that the new hirees were not fully integrated into the project, even six months later, when ten Robbie CX30 robots, including the robot which killed Bart Matthews, were shipped out. According to Martha, "Sam just wanted to keep things as simple as possible. He didn't want the new people to complicate matters. They spent six months reading manuals. Most of the new hirees didn't know diddly about robots and Sam wasn't about to waste his time trying to teach them".

According to Martha, the June 12th meeting has become famous in Silicon Techtronics corporate lore because it was at that meeting that Ray Johnson announced his "Ivory Snow Theory" of software design and development. According to Martha, "Ray [Johnson] gave us a big multi-media presentation, with slides and everything. The gist of his 'Ivory Snow Theory' is simply that Ivory Snow is 99 and 44/100 per cent pure and there was no reason why robotics software had to be any purer than that. He stated repeatedly that 'Perfect software is an oxymoron'". Martha and the other insiders who came forward with information, consistently portrayed Johnson as a manager in desperate need of a successful project. Earlier versions of Robbie, the CX10 and the CX20, were experimental in nature and no one expected them to be commercial successes. In fact, the Robotics Division of Silicon Techtronics was operating heavily in the red since its inception six years ago. Either CX30 would succeed or Silicon Techtronics would be out of the industrial robotics business altogether.

"The earlier Robbie robots got a lot of press, especially here in Silicon Valley", said another source, who also wishes to remain anonymous. "Robbie CX30 was going to capitalize on the good publicity generated by the earlier projects. The only thing was that Robbie CX30 was more revolutionary than Johnson wanted to admit. CX30 represented a gigantic step forward in terms of sophistication. There were a lot of questions about the industrial settings that the CX30 would be working in. Much of what we had to do was entirely new, but Johnson couldn't bring himself to understand that. He just saw us as unyielding perfectionists. One of his favorite quotes was 'Perfection is the enemy of the good'".

'KILLER ROBOT' PROGRAMMER WAS PRIMA DONNA, CO-WORKERS CLAIM ---

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by Mabel Muckraker

Randy Samuels, the former Silicon Techtronics programmer who was indicted for writing the software that was responsible for the gruesome 'killer robot' incident last May, was apparently a 'prima donna' who found it very difficult to accept criticism, several of his co-workers claimed today.

In a free-wheeling interview with several of Samuels' co-workers on the 'killer robot' project, the Sentinel-Observer was able to gain important insights into the psyche of the man who may have been criminally responsible for the death of Bart Matthews, robot operator and father of three small children.

With the permission of those interviewed, the Sentinel-Observer allowed Professor Sharon Skinner of the Department of Software Psychology at Silicon Valley University to listen to a recording of the interview. Professor Skinner studies the psychology of programmers and other psychological factors which impact upon the software development process.

"I would agree with the woman who called him a 'prima donna'", Professor Skinner explained. "This is a term used to refer to a programmer who just cannot accept criticism, or more accurately, cannot accept his or her own fallability". "Randy Samuels has what we software psychologists call a task- oriented personality, bordering on self-oriented. He likes to get things done, but his ego is heavily involved in his work. In the programming world this is considered a 'no-no'", Professor Skinner added in her book-lined office.

Professor Skinner went on to explain some additional facts about programming teams and programmer personalities. "Basically, we have found that a good programming team requires a mixture of personality types, including a person who is interaction-oriented, who derives a lot of satisfaction from working with other people, someone who can help keep the peace and keep things moving in a positive direction. Most programmers are task-oriented, and this can be a problem if one has a team in which everyone is task-oriented."

Samuels' co-workers were very reluctant to lay the blame for the robot disaster at his feet, but when pressed to comment on Samuels' personality and work habits, several important facts emerged. Samuels worked on a team consisting of about a dozen analysts, programmers and software testers. (This does not include twenty programmers who were later hired and who never became actively involved in the development of the robotics software.) Although individual team members had definite specialties, almost all were involved in the entire software process from beginning to end.

"Sam Reynolds has a background in data processing. He's managed several software projects of that nature", one of the team members said, referring to the manager of the Robbie CX30 project. "But, his role in the project was mostly managerial. He attended all important meetings and he kept Ray [Ray Johnson, the Robotics Division Chief] off our backs as much as possible ."

Sam Reynolds, as was reported in yesterday's Sentinel- Observer, was under severe pressure to deliver a working Robbie CX30 robot by January 1 of this year. Sam Reynolds could not be reached for comment either about his role in the