**Does Cicada 3301 originate from UC Berkeley group (cicada.berkeley.edu) in 90s?**

A Possible Speculation Theory to the Connection:

There have been early records discovered in 1993 to 1994 relating to a series of mailing distributions created by Berkeley staff who worked in Soda Hall. One of them was Eric Hughes, who was a mathematician in 1993 at Berkeley who was involved in working on making the distros encrypted and anonymous. What is funny is that the distro domains had cicada written into it. (cicada.berkeley.edu).

Eric Hughes was well know in the cypherpunk community who wrote books on cryptology. He was also associated with John Gilmore, who is a huge advocate against Internet censorship and an advocate for Internet privacy, encryption, and anonymity. Best of all? John Gilmore was the fifth employee of Sun Microsystems and most likely knew the technological underground that was busling at the time in Silicon Valley.

What made this connection even more exciting was there are faculty at the time in Berkeley who was aware of cicada.berkeley.edu distros and even used them. One notable example is Dr. Michael Stiber, a Computational Biology professor who currently is teaching and researching for the University of Washington, but landed his first teaching post in UC Berkeley in 1996 (CV: <http://faculty.washington.edu/stiber/cv.pdf>). Stiber used the cicada.berkeley.edu distro as a form of his e-mail when he co-authored this paper (<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8971210>). Furthermore, Stiber (being mostly still considered a professor in the biological sciences), has a very interesting Twitter headline in which he writes "I don't believe in anonymity." Therefore, Stiber has to be aware of cicada.berkeley.edu.

Finally this public log was recorded by Webster University regarding on how cicada.berkeley.edu was used in relations of keeping them anonymous (<http://www.websteruniv.edu/~bumbaugh/net/net-anon.pt1>). As a result, it seems that cicada.berkeley.edu distros appear to have built the earliest forms of encryption and anonymity in relations of using the Internet as a form of communication and information transferring. As a result, it ties closely to the MO of how Cicada 3301 does things in relations to their puzzles thus far.

Furthermore, the last time cicada.berkeley.edu was noted was at the end of 1994 (However, it is believed that the distros themselves were still active till the early 2000's) only to reappear in references again in 2011, the same year the puzzles were launched! (Needs a verification). Note here, that this is exactly 17 years in between. Like the cicadas that live underground for 17 years they have again, emerged. Some further speculate that in brood 0h (the name given to 2012 rectuits), 'h' stands for 17 in baseX encoding (X>17) using letters above 9 just like hexadecimal.

By digging deeper into Cypherpunk, we have discovered that cicada.berkeley.edu distro's were just a mere prototype for the larger picture of the Cypherpunk Mailing List, which was in turn, the prototype to the darknet and Tor. The Cypherpunk Mailing List was eventually created beetween Eric Hughes (who developed the cicada.berkeley.edu distro), John Gilmore (now running his own Bay Area firm Cygnus Solutions) and Timothy C. May, who was one of the early electronic engineers working for Intel. The Cypherpunk Mailing List became popular for public debate regarding the privacy, freedom and neutrality of the Internet to philosophical, mathematical, computational, technological and cryptographic matters. Due to its anonymous and encrypted methods, mail bombers frequent used the service to target their victims with spam e-mails and until 2013, Al-Qaeda has even used the service.

People who used Cypherpunk included Philip Zimmermann, who created PGP Signatures. Julian Assange (of the WikiLeaks fame) and even Tor developer Jacob Applebaum. These people are a fragment of many intellectuals, engineers and professors who used or develop the service.

In a sense, cicada.berkeley.edu was the prototype to the Cypherpunk Mailing List, which in turn, might have influenced the creation of Tor and the darknet in 2003.

Therefore three possible conclusions can be reached:

1. Cicada 3301 was inspired by the cicada.berkeley.edu distribution development in the early 1990's and based their group name, mission statement and activities around the Berkeley project.

2. Cicada 3301 is the next evolutionary phase of the original project headed by some or all the original members involved with the Berkeley project.

3. This speculation theory is so coincidential that the connection between the Berkeley project and Cicada 3301 is just a fluke and thus Cicada 3301 debuted independently without prior knowledge to the Berkeley project.

Links to all the information thus far that led to my speculation above (in no particular order):

<http://www.websteruniv.edu/~bumbaugh/net/net-anon.pt1>

<http://cypherpunks.venona.com/date/1993/06/msg00390.html>

<http://cypherpunks.venona.com/date/1993/06/msg00387.html>

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/8971210>

<http://faculty.washington.edu/stiber/>

<http://faculty.washington.edu/stiber/cv.pdf>

<https://twitter.com/stiber>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Hughes_%28cypherpunk%29>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Gilmore_%28activist%29>

Side Information Related to the Berkeley Connection:

<http://www.phrack.org/issues.html?issue=43&id=2&mode=txt>

phrack is one of the longest running hacker zines

more links

<http://www.toad.com/gnu/> JG owns the domain toad.com (registered on August 18, 1987!),  an [open mail relay](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_mail_relay).

mendax[http:// <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_Assange> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julian_Assange>]

<https://silentcircle.com/> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phil_Zimmermann>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_Appelbaum> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cult_of_the_Dead_Cow>

IRC Logs to Speculation:

[22:59] <Leeks> <http://www.websteruniv.edu/~bumbaugh/net/net-anon.pt1>

[22:59] <TaiiwoBot> ^ Home | Webster University ^

[23:01] <strange\_tcyborg> nice

[23:02] <JustVisiting> What's that Leeks?

[23:03] <Leeks> a log of how the cicada.berkeley.edu distros worked and how to keep

anonymity when using them

[23:03] <Leeks> back in 1993

[23:03] <shft4> Seems kind of foolish to keep using the Cicada reference when it can

so easily be linked back to them.

[23:03] <shft4> Then again, nerds always have a thing for poetics.

[22:32] <Leeks> Michael Stiber, the guy behind Cicada?

[22:33] <Leeks> \*Dr. Michael Stiber

[22:33] <bakham> Who's Michael Stiber?

[22:33] --> pacman3301 (~pacman330@cpe-74-71-43-114.nyc.res.rr.com) has joined #cicadasolvers

[22:33] <-> bakham is now known as JustVisiting

[22:33] <Leeks> he has an e-mail that he published some papers under

[22:33] --> parardhes (~parardhes@79.106.109.139) has joined #cicadasolvers

[22:33] <Leeks> stiber@cicada.berkeley.edu

[22:33] <D\_Synapse> err look at the list of contributions and amounts on that page.. ! ELECTRONIC FRONTIER FOUNDATION, INC.

[22:33] <D\_Synapse> IRS FORM 990. PART I - LIST OF CONTRIBUTIONS

[22:33] <aquinas> from michael stiber twitter: "I am a professor of computer science. I don't believe in anonymity."

[22:33] <-> Taiiwo2 is now known as Taiiwo

[22:33] <-> Taiiwo1 is now known as TaiiwoBot

[22:34] <sibilance> Michael Stipe, the guy behind what's the frequency Kenneth?

[22:34] <D\_Synapse> haha sibilance

[22:34] <Leeks> which was discovered to be active in 1994 talking about crypto stuff and the NSA

[22:34] <Leeks> which was resurrected in 2011

[22:34] <Leeks> the cicada.berkeley.edu domain

[19:37] <D\_Synapse> the Berkeley rabbit hole goes deep my friends!!! I believe Eric Hughes wrote the first cicada version... <http://cypherpunks.venona.com/date/1993/06/msg00393.html>

[19:37] <LRH539> This at least caught my eye when looking at the file.

[19:38] <D\_Synapse> do you think a group of people including such veterans in the field will have ANY problem coming up with a game like this? <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eric_Hughes_(cypherpunk)> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cypherpunk>

[19:39] <D\_Synapse> look at the fuckin list of names who used to subsribe to cicada.berkely.edu in the early 90's.!

[19:39] <ext> LRH539: no, there is no ID3 footer, all ID3 tags is in the header. the data you see at the end is data appended by the lame encoder so the decoder buffer will be flushed properly when playing

[19:39] <ext> it is normal behaviour

[19:39] <ext> [footer] there can be a footer ofcourse, but in this case there isn't

[19:39] == zoanthal\_ [~zoanthal@50-23-113-234.revip2.marketstreetwifi.net] has quit [Ping timeout: 265 seconds]

[19:40] <D\_Synapse> number one on that list is.. surprise surprise... Jacob Appelbaum: Tor developer, political advocate.