Are you being *observed*?

Understanding the threat of the Teaching Practicum Observer.
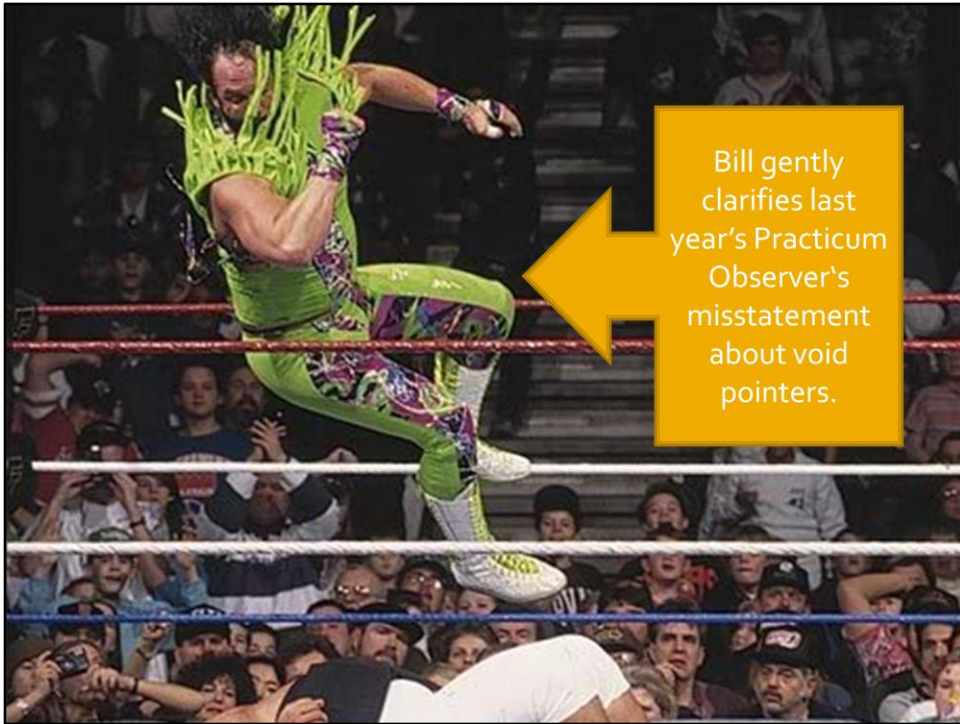
Are you being observed?

Knowing the key features of a Teaching Practicum Observer *may save your life*:

Sloping simian brow

Disheveled, slovenly appearance

Book titled *CS Education Explained: How to Corrupt Americas Youth and Ensure Your Lasting Reputation in the Extreme Hyper Metal/Cannibal/ C Programmer Community*

So as you go forward in class you may notice someone *around* watching you. You come to class and there is this guy there. And then you go to recitation and there the guy is *again*. Is he stalking you?

Well, yes. But only in the nicest possible way. I am a Ph.D. student in Human Centered Computing here at Georgia Tech. And I'm basically taking a Teaching Practicum with Bill, which means I'll be watching and trying to figure out how he does all the great stuff he does to help you learn. It's basically a practice for me as preparation for running my own class. So if you see me hanging out in class, or at your Lecitations that's what I'm doing. I'm not really watching you, I'm watching Bill and your Tas to figure ou this teaching thing.
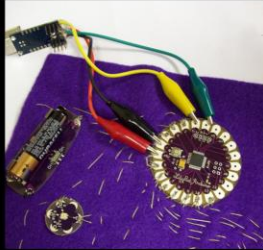
I also will be teaching a few classes this semester. But don't worry, Bill will be here in class the whole time. So if I start saying something really dumb, he's promised to knock me unconscious with a flying elbow and continue the class with only minimal interruption

Trust Me, I am a Computer Scientist*

Designed circuit boards, assembled and programmed BlueTooth keyboard

Wearable computing, USB devices, other hobbyist-type stuff

Professional C++ programmer, including Amazon.com and Zipper Interactive (PS3 Video Game company)

* Despite this, I am not what you'd call a real serious low level programmer

But I want to allay your suspicitions that, despite the fact I am not the regular instructor for this course I don't know what I'm talking about. For one thing, I took the UIUC equivalent course in Fall 1999 and as I recall I got an A. But also since that time, just being a Computer Scientists that you tend to get involved with some low level stuff. So I have designed and assembled circuit boards that actually worked, I've done. I've done a little bit of stuff with wearable computing. I've done quite a bit with USB devices actually – I've built them, I've dug around with Linux usb code that interfaces with them, I built a high-level framemwork for communicating with them via ruby. And also, I have been a professonal programmer – writing C++ at a couple places that you may have heard of. I have even done some video game programming: if you've heard of MAG the first person shooter for the PS3 that's going to be realised this month I actually worked on that codebase.

And I did all this with basically the same preparation that you guys are getting right now, plus a few of the follow up courses. I am not a an expert on computer architecture. But you know – once you know a little bit of this stuff you can really go as far as you need to. If your curious about some of things I've done, please don't hesitate to come up and chat with me.

So that's what you might be interested in hearing from me. What I'm really interested in hearing from you is what you think of my teaching. I'm a new teacher, so obviously there's likely to be a kink or two. So please don't hold back – come and talk to me after I teach. And when I'm teaching, if you don't understand just shout out. And you know, to the extent your overwheming hatred makes it possible, be constructive. Not that I mind terribly if you tell me I'm the a braindead jerkface who wouldn't know a assembler from a hole in the ground, but its not the sort of feedback I can really apply directly.