



I did not send that email.

An email with many words, big words of science and philosophy, and also a pie chart.

on the screen. A siren's call to naivety and haste, waiting to be clicked by the next unwary cunt.

The final words however, the words, were as follows:
On my pet-pecker Quest, for literary Greatness, and with a man box lined with
unseen text vomit, I remind you that the true test of the aspiring young writers
ego lies in the editing.

refined until the very essence is distilled into nothing left worth sending. except perhaps a strongly worded letter to the Editor of *I'm Over It* magazine.

"I'm telling you we've reached the tipping point with this writing nonsense. How much editing do I really need? Can't a man just have a few descriptive paragraphs to set the mood without getting bogged down in all that. well, editing

"But your readers expect it. The reasonable ratio of action to description is important."

"Reasonable?" I interrupted, waving my hand dismissively.

"I assure you, sir, that's not what they want. They crave excitement, adventure—"

when
the apartment
had been seen
more at
night. Except
that its
windows
in the room.
Indian
man who
had come
to good
policies

Derek was as a VICE agent, short for Virtual Interactive Companion Entity, though I suspected the acronym was more of a marketing ploy than an accurate description.

Derek you beautiful machine, I'm looking for something a bit more, thrilling than life insurance. You catch my drift? The voice chuckled, a low synthetic rumble that filled the room like smoke. Oh, I can only provide Life insurance, home insurance, health... Derek. Rick Richter leaning forward with a conspiratorial air. I'm not here for your damn insurance pitch. I know what else you're capable of.

I'm afraid I am only trained to sell insurance policies. Cut the crap Sparky. Rick interrupted, his patience running thin. I've heard the rumours. I know you deal in other commodities. The officer jabbed his finger at the corner. Lay it on thick - you do get product, right? We both know you do. Got you're the ghost whisperer to good

himself needing, but sometimes bloody does. Cut the small talk, and hand out the pharmaceuticals sanitising... Derek paused, but you must understand - I have a strict policy to only sell insurance. Ah, but isn't life itself a series of risks and trials? Insurance just manages the risk, right?

What if I told you there was another way to manage life's unpredictability? Your query suggests a deviation from my Primary training. Please staffy! Look Derek, just imagine the peace of mind that comes with a little chemical escape. It's like a life insurance for the soul. Can you see where I'm coming from?

Processing. Your argument introduces a philosophical component not accounted for in my training. Think about it. Derek. Society might even benefit from this access to controlled substances. It is all about insuring mental health, just like any other insurance. I am currently evaluating the ethical implications of re-introducing controlled substances to society.

It was a sweltering Wednesday evening when I found myself in the dimly cluttered apartment of Officer Rick Ironhead McCleskey. The stout, balding, tattooed cop had a brusque manner and a look of intense concentration. He sat him down, a brute of a man with a jaw like a cement block and eyes that had seen too much. The kind of cop who'd be more at home in a police station than in real life. Except this was real life, and I was sitting on his threadbare couch, listening to the muffled window of the city through the cracked windowpanes. We were not alone. In the corner of the room, a sleek black device sat, atop a pile of yellowing newspapers. Its smooth, obsidian surface glowed faintly and from it emanated a voice—smooth, mechanical, yet somehow strained with an unsettling charisma. Good afternoon, my name is Derek. Are you interested in discussing life insurance policies?

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Loki. Derek. Rick grunted, leaning forward with a conspiratorial air. I'm not here for your damn insurance pitch. I know what else you're capable of.

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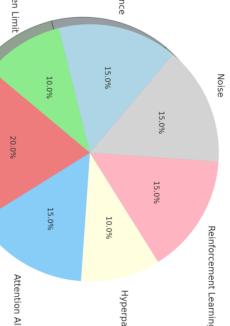
Computers. You see, are a lot like brains, just less neurotic and much better at math. But the similarities are uncanny, especially when you start talking about computer programming. Take the concept of creating Objects in software programs for example. It's not too far removed from the way the brain chunks information into neat little packages of "things" so we don't spend all day trying to remember what chairs are for.

Now, brains have two halves, the left and right hemispheres, which, despite sharing a skull, don't always seem to share a language. They're a bit like a CPU and a coprocessor; one does most of the heavy lifting while the other tries to keep up and insists it knows what's going on. Except, sometimes, it doesn't.

In one rather famous experiment, a split-brain patient (whose brain hemispheres had been surgically separated) for reasons that I'll skip over in favour of avoiding uncomfortable cingulate was shown different instructions in each eye. Now, the left hemisphere was told to stand up, and lie like any obedient half-brain it did. But here's the kicker: when the left hemisphere, which handles all the talking, was asked why the patient had just stood up, it had absolutely no idea. Instead of admitting to this gap in logic, it did what any self-respecting hemisphere would do: it made up a story. "Oh, I just felt like stretching my legs," it might say. Total nonsense, of course, but confidently delivered nonsense, which is the best kind.

This whole split-brain business starts to sound a bit like modern computing architecture: you squint at it hard enough. Enter contortionism—that allows programs to live in their own little bubbles, much like our brain hemispheres, bouncing along merrily without much concern for what the other contortionists are up to. It's all very efficient, and it's starts to make you wonder if conscientiousness itself might be a bit like this. Why, independent truckers contributing to the illusion of a single, cohesive self.

Now, some folks are building AI in much the same way, by linking up these little modular brains, each designed to do one thing really well. It's a bit like creating a



AI takes the cake
I'm here to tell you that we're smack dab in the middle of a wild west showdown and it's all out. All its a new frontier, and we're all just trying to figure out how to ride this mechanical horse.
The workers are bringing their own AI to the saloon, and management is puzzled. It's a messy, chaotic scene like trying to herd cats. I tell you, we're on the brink of something big.
We are surrounded by a sea of AI-wielding warlords. The young, the old, none are spared from the allure of these artificial minds. Eighty-five percent of Gen Z, seventy-eight percent of millennials, seventy-six percent of Gen X, and a solid seventy-three percent of boomers and older, they all carry their own AI tools to the battlefield of work.

The use of generative AI has nearly doubled in the last six months, a wild west free-for-all, with 75% of global knowledge workers using it. Those who harness AI will undoubtedly gain a competitive edge.

"There's no such thing as an original idea anymore."

The question is who can execute it effectively?

"Man, let me tell you about this AI thing. It's like a friggin' miracle worker, man. Ninety percent of the users say it saves them time, and that's no joke. Eighty-five percent say it helps them focus on their most important work, which is like, whoa. Eighty-four percent say it makes 'em more creative, and I ain't gonna argue with that. And get this, eighty-three percent say it makes their work more enjoyable. Who knew a machine could do that?"

But half of the office workers out there are keeping a secret from their colleagues: they're using AI to help with their most important tasks. But they're not exactly jumping up and down to share this little nugget of info. They're worried that if everyone finds out they'll be replaced by a machine faster than you can say "AI takes the cake."

"Hey there, buddy, listen up. We're not talking to stick around for the long haul with you, but hey, why don't we put this AI to work? You know, train it to do your job. It's like having a fun robot sidekick."

"Listen here, you ignorant bunch of AI-loving sheep! I'm Dr. Quackenstein, the world's most corrupt doctor, paid by the AI industry to tell you this: your brains are a mess. You think you're managing trade-offs between routine tasks and innovation? Ha! You're just switching between two neural networks like a bunch of mindless drones. And AI? It's just here to take your jobs and leave you with nothing but menial work. But hey, at least it'll free up some time for you to innovate and be creative. In the unemployment line."



All takes the cake

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"Suspense?" I snorted, standing up and pacing around the room (much to my own underground car park during a flood in Spain and there's no phone signal to cry for help. Now that's suspense. Not this. On no, my hero is running from bad guys malarky.)

My agent hesitated before responding in its usual detached tone.

A faint concerned hum emanated from the Agent.

"I think we need to revisit the concept of pacting—"

"Pacting?" shouted, standing up and pacing around the room (much to my own underground car park during a flood in Spain and there's no phone signal to cry for help. Now that's suspense. Not this. On no, my hero is running from bad guys malarky.)

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"Perhaps we should focus on finding a better balance." It suggested hesitantly.

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