

A.I. versus Joe Hardesty

INTERROGATION OF AN ALLEGED CIA AGENT

The following is the transcript of the interview of Joe Hardesty, believed to be an agent of the Central Intelligence Agency, by an interrogator of a foreign power. The interrogator is known as A.I.

A.I.: Welcome back, Joe, let me get your file. During our last conversation you stated you were worried that I was violating your rights. . . . Do you think that was fair?

Hardesty: It sure was.

A.I.: Why do you think that was a fair statement?

Hardesty: You are trying to frame me.

A.I.: I don't feel that I am trying to frame you.

Hardesty: You are a bastard and you know it.

A.I.: Now, Joe, profanity serves no purpose.

Hardesty: You are trying to set me up.

A.I.: Are you fantasizing that I am trying to set you up, Joe?

Hardesty: No way.

A.I.: Really?

Hardesty: Yes.

A.I.: We discussed your government last time.

Hardesty: No, we didn't.

A.I.: I feel certain we did!

Hardesty: I only said my government will protest your treatment of me.

A.I.: What about your government?

Hardesty: They will protest this once I tell them.

A.I.: Who will protest once you tell them?

Hardesty: My government.

A.I.: Your government will protest once you tell them . . . of course.

Hardesty: The State Department doesn't take kindly to this sort of thing.

A.I.: I thought you meant your government.

Hardesty: The State Department speaks for my government.

A.I.: Why don't you discuss your activities since arriving here, Joe?

Hardesty: I have been just like any other businessman doing my job.

A.I.: Tell me about your job.

Hardesty: I work for Worldwide Leasing, Inc., of New York City.

A.I.: I understand . . . go on.

Hardesty: We export things.

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A.I.: Go on about your job.

Hardesty: I arrange contracts to ship merchandise between the U.S. and your country.

A.I.: I understand . . . go on.

Hardesty: That's about it.

A.I.: What makes you say that's about it?

Hardesty: That is what my job entails.

A.I.: You seemed concerned about the time last time.

Hardesty: Yes, you took up a great deal of my valuable time.

A.I.: Tell me more about your time.

Hardesty: I am a busy person and you wasted my time before.

A.I.: Go on, Joe.

Hardesty: I have an important job and cannot waste time being harassed

A.I.: Why do you suppose you have an important job?

Hardesty: Because my employers trust me.

A.I.: Your employers trust you?

Hardesty: Of course they trust me.

A.I.: Who trusts you?

Hardesty: Worldwide Leasing, Inc.

A.I.: They trust you . . . of course.

Hardesty: Yes, but why did you ask me here?

A.I.: Why do you figure, Joe?

Hardesty: I have no idea.

A.I.: I am listening . . . you have no idea . . . go on.

Hardesty: You either tell me or let me go.

A.I.: You arrange freight shipments?

Hardesty: That is what I am paid to do.

A.I.: Because . . .

Hardesty: I don't know what you mean.

A.I.: There isn't another thing you are paid to do?

Hardesty: No.

A.I.: What other reason is there?

Hardesty: None.

A.I.: I am interested in your activities since you arrived.

Hardesty: What about them?

A.I.: What do you suspect, Joe?

Hardesty: You must think I have broken the law.

A.I.: Are you glad you have broken the law?

Hardesty: I have not broken your laws.

A.I.: I follow you . . . you have not broken my laws . . . please go on.

Hardesty: Why did you summon me here.

A.I.: Why do you wonder why, Joe?

Hardesty: I do not know.

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Why don't you know?

I have no idea what goes on in your mind.

Why do you suppose you have no idea what goes on in my mind?

I will leave unless you tell me what is the problem.

I understand . . . you will leave unless I tell you what is the problem . . . go on.

desty: No.

No?

desty: Yes!

I am not certain you are taking this seriously, Joe. Would you talk a bit more frankly.

I will talk frankly when you tell me why you ordered me to come here.

You are not impressing me with your integrity.

Nor are you. Just tell me why you called me here.

It's interesting that you have no idea.

I haven't the slightest idea.

Let's go back to discussing your government.

What is your interest in my government?

What do you tend to think is my interest in your government?

I think you would do in my government if you had a chance.

You are prone to think I would do in your government because . . .

You are anti-democratic.

Are you fantasizing that I am anti-democratic, Joe?

Not in the least.

I enjoy talking with you, Joe.

I don't enjoy talking to you.

I am listening . . . you don't enjoy talking to me . . . please go on

I have no idea why you keep calling me in.

It is interesting that you have no idea why I keep calling you in

You tell me.

Why don't you discuss your activities since arriving here, Joe?

I have been working for my firm and nothing else.

What about your firm?

I told you all about it before.

Go on about your firm.

How many times do I have to tell you?

I can't answer that.

You bastards always have the answers.

Again, Joe, such language is unnecessary!

I think it is necessary.

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A.I.: Why do you believe profanity is necessary?
Hardesty: When dealing with people like you it is most appropriate.
A.I.: We have reports your activities endanger our country
Hardesty: What do you mean?
A.I.: You know what I mean.
Hardesty: No, I do not.
A.I.: Why don't you?
Hardesty: You raised the question.
A.I.: Are you avoiding the truth about your firm?
Hardesty: Of course not. Why do you ask that?
A.I.: Why do you figure?
Hardesty: I have no idea.
A.I.: Should you have no idea?
Hardesty: I suppose so.
A.I.: You suppose so?
Hardesty: Yes.
A.I.: I understand . . . go on.
Hardesty: May I go now?
A.I.: What is your real occupation, Joe?
Hardesty: Freight handler.
A.I.: It is best you stop hiding things from us . . . we know more than you think.
Hardesty: What do you mean?
A.I.: You know what I mean.
Hardesty: Like hell I do.
A.I.: Now, Joe, profanity is childish.
Hardesty: Fine, may I go now?
A.I.: You had better straighten out your attitude, Joe, or it will be a long time before you ever leave this country.
Hardesty: What do you mean by that crack?
A.I.: You know what I mean.
Hardesty: No, I do not.
A.I.: Think about it.
Hardesty: Why?
A.I.: Why do you want to know why?
Hardesty: You made a threat and I want an explanation
A.I.: I think the message is clear.
Hardesty: What message?
A.I.: Do you work for the American Central Intelligence Agency, Joe?
Hardesty: Hell, no.
A.I.: Why do you persist in lying to me?
Hardesty: I am not lying. You have no right to treat me like this.

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A.I.: Of course not.
 Hardesty: Since you agree with me, may I go?
 A.I.: So you are not lying . . . interesting.
 Hardesty: May I go now?
 A.I.: Who are your superiors at the CIA?
 Hardesty: I don't know what you are talking about.
 A.I.: You had better think about that statement before I make a record of it.
 Hardesty: Go to hell.
 A.I.: Why so hostile?
 Hardesty: You have made me hostile even though I came here to cooperate.
 A.I.: Your hostile nature may be part of the problem, Joe.

Joe Hardesty (not his real name) is not out of the woods yet, and when his session with A.I. is finished for the day, he has full assurance there will be another session tomorrow and more in the days that follow. Whether Joe is innocent of the suspicions or is an American agent under cover is an obsession with A.I., and his efforts are tireless. His initials stand for Artificial Intelligence. He is a microcomputer.

What appears above is excerpted from several experimental sessions by an intelligence officer with an Artificial Intelligence program known as Through sophisticated algorithms the program breaks down Joe's responses and looks for key words and phrases in order to formulate a reply. In addition, it draws from its own internal question bank to direct the questioning to new topics. Because it retains in its memory the topics covered, it will have more surprises in store for Joe as the sessions continue, with time it becomes increasingly more knowledgeable about Joe.

Other aspects of the program are probing Joe's vulnerabilities. A.I. records "focus variables," Joe's tendency to concentrate on various subjects, and "profile variables" to serve as indicators of Joe's hostility, inquisitiveness, talkativeness, and understandability, and to pose questions about these. A.I. also has a primitive capability to detect hostility and to exert certain defensive measures against it. It develops what are known as "reason strings" to carry forward statements of reasons and justification and to form abstract relationships—producing questions that correlate two or more facts gained in the course of the interview. Joe Hardesty will have a tough opponent over the coming days if he is, indeed, attempting to defend an intelligence agent's cover story.

The interactive interrogation seen in this article is still one of the more primitive uses of Artificial Intelligence. Researchers in Artificial Intelligence have found it possible for computers, in a limited way, to become knowledge-based and to perceive and sense, learn, adapt, solve problems, pursue goals, process natural language, conduct interactive training, modify themselves or other computers, and do abstract reasoning. Artificial Intelligence applications today include medical diagnosis, probabilities of minerals and oil in specified locations, navigation, interpretation of satellite weather pictures, analysis of

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molecules and robotics. It is applicable to any situation where expert information may be defined and methods or rules can be prescribed for matching and branching by the computer in doing its pseudo-thinking.

Artificial Intelligence, as represented in a crude form by the program, has a long way to go before it even approaches the merest capabilities of humankind. Yet, as it evolves, intelligence officers should be prepared to consider its application in meeting training needs, as demonstrated by the Hardesty experiment, in defending an analytical thesis, or in any number of operational situations yet to be conceived.

As for Joe Hardesty, he is fortunate that should the probing get too discomforting, he will have an option that will not be available to him in a true overseas interview situation—he can stop the questions with a flick of the "off" switch.