

Posted by [REDACTED]@ 2008-04-25 12:18:36

Tags: history, corridor photographs

(b) (3) - P.L. 86-36

(U) Those hilarious bits of cryptologic "history"

(U) I try to find inadvertent hilarity in everything I do. This is fairly easy at NSA. For instance, have you ever stopped to look at those photos in the corridor leading from OPS1 to FMHQ? You know, the ones that look like they were taken in the early 80s, with the bulky teletype machines and the strange transceiver equipment and the people wearing glasses the size of traffic signals? If you really stop to look at them, I guarantee, you can't help but laugh. I've been laughing at them ever since I started here in 2004.

(U) One of the obvious questions that springs to mind when looking at the photos is, who took them originally and why were these the things that were hung in the corridor? A follow-up question is, why hasn't the same person that hung them up taken them down and replaced them with something a bit more modern (or aesthetically pleasing at least)?

(U) Anyway, I was thinking that these bits of cryptologic history, while outdated, are pretty fascinating, and that they should be digitally preserved and stored maybe on WikiInfo, or at least somewhere in the CCH. But that another interesting thing for NSA historians to do would be to determine what "mission" goals each of these photos was representing, then try to find similar goals that NSA is doing today, then take photos representing these 2008 goals, and make a new presentation called "NSA, Then and Now" or something. You know, something to let NSA employees and visitors know just how far we've come even since the 1980s.

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687 [REDACTED]@ 2008-04-25 13:18:01

(U) Photos on 9th floor of HQ

(U) A few years ago someone said that there was a picture of me near the bottom of the group of photos on the 9th floor of the HQ building. I didn't believe it, but I took a look and it looks like me and the people I used to work with in the mid-80s. I have no recollection of when the picture was taken or why. I don't even remember owning those clothes. So if I'm anything to go on, you might have trouble finding folks who know why the pictures were taken. :)

689 [REDACTED]@ 2008-04-25 14:04:40

(U) Yeah, perhaps some of the photos of reel-to-reel storage should be switched out. I occasionally see some more recent pictures but they seem to show up only on temporary posters. How often should they be updated? Do you change them as technology changes or as fashions update?

(U) Also, are you okay with the idea of new hires in 2024 laughing at the photos of you in front of some outdated computer using some horribly obsolete interface like a keyboard?

690 re: 689 [REDACTED]@ 2008-04-25 14:22:19

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[REDACTED]

(U) Don't forget the fact that he'll be wearing solid earth tones in those pictures. What a lark! ;-).

691 re 690 [REDACTED] @ 2008-04-25 14:24:17

(U) 2018 called. They want their clothing back. :)

692 re 689 [REDACTED] @ 2008-04-25 14:26:41

(U) Also, are you okay with the idea of new hires in 2024 laughing at the photos of you in front of some outdated computer using some horribly obsolete interface like a keyboard?

(U) Sure! I'll probably laugh myself.

693 re 692 [REDACTED] @ 2008-04-25 16:26:53

(U) A friend recently used his mid-70s yearbook photo on his facebook profile. The hair, the glasses, the clothing - aaaaaaaahhhhhhhhhh! (If I find my photo from then, it's going into the fireplace, not facebook.)

694 [REDACTED] @ 2008-04-25 17:05:13

(U) I love the old photos and the now-almost-nonexistent little corners and corridors that have the same decor and paint they had when I came on board in 1979. I realize they're outdated pretty much by definition, but I'm nostalgic and sentimental by nature, and I also feel that what's replaced them is not necessarily better. It's like computerized waiting rooms now. Our youngsters don't know a time before they existed, and your doctor's office used hardcopy, and much less was automated. I'm not sure that our waiting rooms aren't run worse, not better, than they used to be. That's my impression. And the same with many or most of the renovations/transformations here. I'm having to struggle with balancing "We can't live in the past" with "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" -- or, more precisely, "If trying to make it better makes it worse, it's okay to stick with the old until you do the new correctly." I am glad that we've kept up somewhat with the web-based revolution. I'm glad computers help us do more and more, faster and faster. But even some of the corporate-driven changes and mandates here threaten to hinder or cripple that. So I look at the tangible, visible reminders of the past and say, Please please PLEASE don't take them all away! What's next, a complaint about that anachronistic mosaic in the HQS lobby?

695 [REDACTED] @ 2008-04-25 17:48:54

(U) Hey! My glasses weren't THAT big!! Several of those photos were taken in 1991 or 1992. Big glasses were the norm back then and I hadn't had those glasses very long at all when the picture was taken. That was the style. I still laugh when I walk by there and I too wonder why they haven't taken them down yet. I still have people come up to me every now and again to ask me if that is me in that picture in the hallway.

(U) I tried to get a copy of the picture of me just last year and was told that I couldn't have one because I had no "operational need" for it. It does work well for proving that I really was young once.

really was young once.

(U) From what I remember those photos were taken just to be taken. No special occasion. It was during the same time that the Agency was making movies and commercials for college recruitment purposes. They just showed up at our office and started taking pictures....

696 re 695 [redacted] @ 2008-04-25 18:24:38

(U) Hey, I had those same glasses too back in 1992! Don't think I'm making fun of you or anything... I just think they're funny, interesting cultural artifacts that should be preserved digitally.

707 [redacted] @ 2008-04-29 17:02:16

big glasses

I too am from the "big glasses" era. Luckily the pictures of me wearing them are only in the promotion photos that would temporarily go on the bulletin board and then be given to the promotees afterward. They are now hidden in a folder in the back of my desk somewhere. What really dates those promotion picture besides the glasses is the psychedelic orange, brown and tan curtains in the background. Hey, and the weird clothes then is a dead give-away too. What gets me is that these promotion ops were part of an official presentation, and for grades 7, 9, and 11's even. Now days, you don't see too many people coming in at those grades, nor a big deal about the "non-senior" promotions anymore. Talking about coming a long way from where we were ... :)

709 [redacted] @ 2008-04-29 17:35:29

hilarious photos

(U//~~FOUO~~) The photographs that are now hanging in the corridor represent a small and subtle turning point. Back in the 1970s +/-, they were current, and this was the first time anything relating to real and contemporary activities went on display in open corridors. I don't remember what was hanging in those halls prior to this, if anything, but it probably was the cliched photos of public buildings in D.C. Maybe we could replace them with photographs of former senior officials wearing long hair and sideburns and leisure suits. There are photographs of Lambros Callimahos wearing Mao jackets, but he looked good in them, and one suspects he wore the style before Mao did! Mao, in fact, may have been wearing Callimahos jackets.

727 [redacted] @ 2008-05-02 11:18:40

Please don't take my picture down

(U//~~FOUO~~) I, too, am one of the folks in those pictures -- the one hanging the tape (something I rarely actually did in real life). They wanted an "action" shot. The pictures were taken in 1992, and I know at lease one other person in my picture still works at the Agency.

(C//~~SI~~) My picture was taken in the lab [redacted]
[redacted] which was in operation between 1990-1993. For a quick history lesson --
[redacted]

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[REDACTED]

(S//SI) We were some of the first in the Operation Directorate to be looking at targets as they transitioned to computer-to-computer based communications. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(U//FOUO) Until my move to NSAG in 2006, I worked in FMHQ. One of my favorite games was getting new coworkers to try to guess which one was me. As I had a full head of hair in 1992 and now shave my head (in contrast to being bald), it was tougher than you'd think.

765 re 727 [REDACTED] @ 2008-05-08 14:46:33

(b) (1)
(b) (3) -18 USC 798
(b) (3) -50 USC 3024 (i)
(b) (3) -P.L. 86-36

Re: Please don't take my picture down

(C//SI//REL) I'd love to do a little history of the predecessors to SIGDEV sometime . . . I spent time [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

(b) (3) -P.L. 86-36

766 [REDACTED] @ 2008-05-08 18:47:05

old pics?

(U) Those pictures were taken in/around 1991-92 after Saddam had invaded Kuwait. After we moved from the 4th floor to the 6th floor

785 re 707 [REDACTED] @ 2008-05-19 22:09:01

(U) Grades 7/9/11

(U) Please elaborate on "not seeing people come in at those grades". If you are a new hire with a BS or MS and no prior experience that is where you would come in...