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### [Sleeping with a Hacker](#)

Our thing was running smoothly for quite some time. In the beginning, we used to joke about our “tech connection” – not our “Love Connection” – all the time. That’s how we met. I was at a Macworld Expo, on assignment for the webzine I was working for at the time. He heard me grilling a vendor about some new product’s usability, and got impressed by how well I knew computers. While it wasn’t necessarily love at first sight, we couldn’t take our eyes off one another.

He was unlike any guy I had ever known, before or since. Charming, that is what I would call him. I guess now that I know what I know, it all makes sense.

He, like me, loved his computers and gadgets. Unlike me, he didn’t work in the high-tech or new media industry. He was a hobbyist at best. Whatever he was doing, I guess he was *the* best, because all these really geeky guys used to call and come by and sit around the computer with him, whispering into the wee hours of the morning.

The nice thing was that he could easily reprogram or upgrade my gadgets. For instance, my cell phone would drop the signal often. After he played with it a little while, the problem never occurred again. Funny, he also improved the battery life on the thing.

One day he called me over to the computer very excitedly and said he had something to show me. He had just created a Trojan horse, and was going to e-mail it to his friend Trent as a prank. I told him I didn't think that was funny, but he said he had to stay on top of his game, and his final test was to outdo Trent. When I asked him what the hell he was talking about, he seemed stunned, with a look that said, "I told her too much."

My suspicion was aroused when it came to my man's job and money. He had plenty of the latter and none of the former. He was like Tommy on *Martin*, nobody seemed to ever know what his job was. OK, so he said he was a consultant. But a consultant doing what? He never talked about what he did.

And then there were what I called the magic tricks.

The long distance charges on my phone bill that I'd moaned about to him completely vanished. Even the phone company could not explain it. My man laughed it off.

Then, there was the panicked moment at an ATM when we were on vacation. After too many tequila sunrises, I couldn't remember my special password. My man asked me to hand him the card and turn around for a second. The next thing I heard was the cash dispenser turning over and money from my account came jutting out of the machine at me. I was left staring at the blinking message, "Por favor recoga su dinero" – Please take your cash.

It was getting pretty scary, yet sexy at the same time. I haven't physically described this man yet. Well, although he hung out with pocket protector, thick glasses-wearing cats, this guy could by no means be considered a geek. At 6' 2", 210 lbs, he possessed a well-toned body, square jaw, sparkling brown eyes and a killer smile. This brother was fine. Suited up in Armani, he looked great on my arm at all the industry parties I had to hit, and on weekends he showed off what his mama gave him in some low hanging, thugged-out denim. On top of it all, he definitely held his own in the boudoir.

With all this in the mix, I didn't really see a problem with him being a little secretive. Or so I thought.

As our relationship progressed, the visits from the geeks increased. They were there almost every night, their voices lowering every time I came near the room, not that I could understand any of the programmer ish they were talking about in the first place. I began to see all these documents in my man's little office. Reams and reams of computer code. He and his friends were obviously doing much more than simply playing around with digital toys.

This bruh knew how to crack code. And he was busy making a

living from it. He was always at the computer typing away furiously. But when I would step to him, all I'd see on the screen was some game like *Emperor: Battle for Dune*. I'd ask him what he was typing, and he would say, "Oh, I was just playing this game, baby." He knew I knew damn well that he had a joystick, and didn't need to use the keyboard to play.

Finally, I just plain told him I knew what was going on. He said I was tripping. But I must not have been the only one to catch on, because when I would call over to my man's crib, he would speak to me through a digital voice-altering device. What was becoming of him? Who was he? I no longer knew. Or maybe I never knew.

From a tech lover's and journalist's point of view, I was fascinated by all that he was about. I wanted to uncover his story, but he would only let me in a little at a time. And soon, he had no time.

Eventually, he was caught for his antics and indicted for computer intrusion. Being an honest guy – well sort-of – he pleaded guilty and is on lock-down for a two-year bid. I am not sitting around waiting on him in the romantic sense, but I can't wait until he gets out so I can really find out all that he did. Sometimes, I think he is operating from the inside, and has never lost the thrill – the pleasure – of breaking into systems that are supposed to be unbreakable.

When last I went to see him, a short, bespectacled guy, wearing a striped shirt with a PalmPilot sticking out of his right breast pocket was on his way out. Wanna bet they're up to something?

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