





EXCUSE ME, BUT ARE YOU DOCTOR SPENCER BROWNFIELD?

AND IF I AM?



THEN I'D REALLY APPRECIATE A FEW MINUTES OF YOUR TIME. I'M A GRADUATE STUDENT AT COLUMBIA. I'M STUDYING COMPLEXITY THEORY. MY NAME'S HELLER WILSON.



WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

I JUST WANT TO TALK TO YOU—BOUNCE SOME IDEAS OFF YOU. THAT'S ALL.

—SIGH—
IF YOU...
MUST.



THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR TAKING THE--

GET TO IT. I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ONE WORD FROM YOU ABOUT TIME.

WHAT?

I SAW YOU OVER THERE. YOU WAITED TWENTY MINUTES TO APPROACH ME. ANYONE WILLING TO WASTE THAT MUCH TIME CLEARLY DOESN'T APPRECIATE THE VALUE INHERENT IN EVERY MINUTE.





I NEVER ORDER FROM RESTAURANTS. TOO INEXACT. I ALLOW MYSELF EXACTLY 1700 CALORIES PER DAY, EVERY DAY.

ENOUGH ENERGY TO KEEP MY SYSTEM RUNNING PROPERLY, WITH NO DOWNTIME GENERATED BY QUESTIONABLE FOODS. BESIDES...



...I'VE HEARD SOME UNPLEASANT THINGS ABOUT THE SANITATION IN THIS PLACE.



ALL RIGHT, LOOK. I'M WRITING A THESIS ABOUT THE WAY NEW YORK CITY RECOVERS FROM DISASTERS.

ON THE OTHER HAND, YOU LOOK AT NEW ORLEANS, AND IT'S *STILL* REELING FROM KATRINA, EVEN NOW.

SKRITCH

TAKE 9/11-- THE CHAOS IN THE CITY'S SYSTEMS RETURNED TO BASIC EQUILIBRIUM WITHIN ABOUT A YEAR.

AND WHAT'S YOUR CONCLUSION?



IT'S AS IF THERE'S SOMETHING DIFFERENT ABOUT THIS CITY, THIS PLACE, THAT MAKES IT STRONGER, MORE RESILIENT. I'M TRYING TO USE COMPLEXITY ANALYSIS TO UNDERSTAND WHAT THAT COULD BE.

PERHAPS IT'S SUPERMAN. THIS IS ALL VERY FASCINATING, BUT WHY DID YOU NEED TO TALK TO ME ABOUT IT?

BECAUSE YOU WROTE ABOUT IT BACK IN 1972. I FOUND THESE JOURNAL ARTICLES BURIED IN THE LIBRARY AT SCHOOL.



YOU KNOW, MY PEERS DIDN'T FIND THESE AS COMPELLING AS YOU SEEM TO.

THAT'S THEIR LOSS.

INDEED.



LET'S CUT TO THE CHASE. YOU'RE STUCK. YOU'VE FOUND SOMETHING INTERESTING, BUT YOU CAN'T FIGURE IT OUT. AND SO YOU'VE TRACKED ME DOWN, HOPING I HAVE THIRTY-SOME YEARS OF BRILLIANT IDEAS STORED UP, JUST WAITING TO BE SHARED WITH THE FIRST INDUSTRIOUS GRADUATE STUDENT TO COME ALONG.

NO, OF COURSE NOT.

HMPH. OF COURSE NOT. WHAT IF I TOLD YOU THAT TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, I SOLVED THE PROBLEM YOU'RE WORKING ON?

AND...YOU JUST SAT ON IT ALL THIS TIME? WHY WOULD YOU DO THAT?

I LEFT COLUMBIA UNDER UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES. I WAS THE VICTIM OF A SMEAR CAMPAIGN. I WOULD HAVE PUBLISHED MY IDEAS, IF MY PEERS HAD ALLOWED IT.

HOW?

BUT PERHAPS YOU CAN HELP WITH THAT. PERHAPS WE CAN HELP EACH OTHER.





WELL, ARE YOU ANY GOOD?

YEAH, I'M GOOD.



WE'LL SEE.

ALL RIGHT, MISTER WILSON, HERE'S MY PROPOSAL.

I NEED HELP WITH A FEW OF MY ONGOING PROJECTS-- THE SORT OF THINGS I CAN'T JUST GET SOME IDIOT UNDERGRADUATE TO HELP ME WITH.

I NEED SOMEONE WHO UNDERSTANDS COMPLEXITY. HELP ME, AND I'LL GIVE YOU FULL ACCESS TO MY RESEARCH.

WHAT SORT OF PROJECTS?



SMALL THINGS, NOTHING TOO GRUELING. I'M QUITE SURE YOU WOULD BE THE PERFECT ASSISTANT.

FINE. WORKS FOR ME.



VERY GOOD. YOU WON'T REGRET IT. I LIVE AT 65 WEST 107TH STREET. BE THERE AT 9 AM, TWO DAYS FROM NOW, AND WE'LL GET STARTED.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?



JUST A LITTLE CORRECTION. PUT SOME CASH ON THE TABLE, ENOUGH FOR THE DRINKS. LEAVE A GOOD TIP. SHE'S GOING TO NEED IT.



BUT...

TIME TO GO.



--THROW UP SERIOUSLY. I MEAN IT!

--CALLING THE HEALTH DEPARTMENT--

--THIS DAMN CITY--

AAAAHH!