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Bastard Operator From Hell

The **Bastard Operator From Hell (BOFH)** is a fictional rogue computer operator created by Simon Travaglia, who takes out his anger on users (who are "lusers" to him) and others who pester him with their computer problems, uses his expertise against his enemies and manipulates his employer.^{[1][2]}

Several other people have written stories about BOFHs, but those by Simon Travaglia are considered canonical.^[2] The BOFH stories were originally posted in 1992 to Usenet by Travaglia, with some being reprinted in *Datamation*.^[3] They were published weekly from 1995 to 1999 in *Network Week*.^[4] Since 2000 they have been published regularly in *The Register* (UK).^[5] Several collections of the stories have been published as books.

By extension, the term is also used to refer to any system administrator who displays the qualities of the original.^{[1][2]}

The early accounts of the BOFH took place in a university; later the scenes were set in an office workplace. In 2000 (BOFH 2k), the BOFH and his pimply-faced youth (PFY) assistant moved to a new company.

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Other characters

- The PFY (Pimply-Faced Youth, the assistant to the BOFH. Real name is Stephen^[6]) Possesses a temperament similar to the BOFH, and often either teams up with or plots against him.
- The Boss (often portrayed as having no IT knowledge but believing otherwise; identity changes as successive bosses are sacked, leave, are committed, or have nasty "accidents")
- CEO of the company – The PFY's uncle Brian^[7] from 1996 until 2000, when the BOFH and PFY moved to a new company.^[8]
- The Head of IT, almost as disposable as the Boss.
- The help desk operators, referred to as the "Helldesk" and often scolded for giving out the BOFH's

- personal number.
- The Boss's secretary, Sharon.
- The security department^[9]
- George, the cleaner (an invaluable source of information to the BOFH and PFY)^[10]

Books

- Travaglia, Simon (2001). *The Bastard Operator From Hell*. Illustrated by Pete Abrams. Plan Nine Publishing. ISBN 978-1-929462-17-9. OCLC 276706543 (<https://www.worldcat.org/oclc/276706543>).
- Travaglia, Simon (2001). *Bastard Operator From Hell II: Son of the Bastard*. Plan Nine Publishing. ISBN 978-1-929462-40-7.
- Travaglia, Simon (2002). *Bride of the Bastard Operator From Hell*. Plan Nine Publishing. ISBN 978-1-929462-48-3.
- Travaglia, Simon (2003). *Dummy Mode Is Forever*. Illustrated by Brad Guigar. Plan Nine Publishing. ISBN 978-1-929462-63-6.
- Travaglia, Simon (2005). *Dial "B" for Bastard*. Plan Nine Publishing. ISBN 978-1-929462-94-0.

Games

BOFH is a text adventure game written by Howard A. Sherman and published in 2002. It is available via Malinche.^[11]

References in other media

The protagonist in Charles Stross's *The Laundry Files* series of novels named himself Bob Oliver Francis Howard in reference to the BOFH. As Bob Howard is a self-chosen pseudonym, and Bob is a network manager when not working as a computational demonologist, the name is all too appropriate. In the novella *Pimpf*, he acquires a pimply-faced young assistant by the name of Peter-Fred Young.

Authorship

Simon Travaglia (born 1964^[12]) graduated from the University of Waikato, New Zealand in 1985. He worked as the IT infrastructure manager (2004–2008) and computer operator (1985–1992) at the University of Waikato and the infrastructure manager at the Waikato Innovation Park, Hamilton, New Zealand (since 2008). Since 1999 he is a freelance writer for *The Register*.^[13] He lives in Hautapu, New Zealand.^[14]

References

1. Paul, Ryan (2008-09-08). "The BOFH lives: 88% of IT workers would steal data if fired" (<https://ars.technica.com/security/2008/09/the-bofh-lives-88-of-it-workers-would-steal-data-if-fired/>). *Ars Technica*. Retrieved 2014-12-31.
2. Raymond, Eric S. (1996). *The New Hacker's Dictionary*. The MIT Press. p. 80. ISBN 978-0-262-68092-9.

3. Travaglia, Simon. "The Bastard Operator from Hell Official Archive" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20151205062358/http://bofh.ntk.net/BOFH/index.php>). Datamation Magazine. Archived from the original (<http://bofh.ntk.net/BOFH/index.php>) on 2015-12-05.
4. *Network Week*, London APT Data Services, 1995–1999
5. Simon Travaglia (<https://www.theregister.co.uk/Author/1541/Simon%20Travaglia>), The Register, accessed 18 January 2013
6. "BOFH: You just can't go around killing people (*The Register*)" (https://www.theregister.co.uk/2010/11/05/bofh_2010_episode_15/). *The Register*.
7. "The Bastard Operator From Hell Official Archive 1996 "The Bastard meets his match" " (<https://web.archive.org/web/20140927070138/http://bofh.ntk.net/BOFH/1996/bastard96-04.php>). Archived from the original (<http://bofh.ntk.net/BOFH/1996/bastard96-04.php>) on 2014-09-27.
8. "BOFH returns from the dead (*The Register*)" (https://www.theregister.co.uk/2000/05/09/bofh_returns_from_the_dead/). *The Register*.
9. Travaglia, Simon. "The Bastard Operator from Hell Official Archive: In the aftermath of the trade show the PFY is forced to dip into the favour bank..." (<https://web.archive.org/web/20150108140615/http://bofh.ntk.net/BOFH/1997/bastard97-26.php>) Archived from the original (<http://bofh.ntk.net/BOFH/1997/bastard97-26.php>) on 2015-01-08.
10. Travaglia, Simon. "Bastard Operator from Hell Official Archive: The boss tries to oust the BOFH and the PFY again. Enter George, some lager, a shredder and several PFYs to-be..." (<https://web.archive.org/web/20141219055722/http://bofh.ntk.net/BOFH/1997/bastard97-30.php>) Archived from the original (<http://bofh.ntk.net/BOFH/1997/bastard97-30.php>) on 2014-12-19.
11. "8th Annual Interactive Fiction Competition" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20060709062227/http://ifcomp.org/comp02/>). *ifcomp.org*. 2002. Archived from the original (<http://ifcomp.org/comp02/>) on 2006-07-09.
12. "Simon Travaglia" (<https://www.amazon.com/Simon-Travaglia/e/B00JCJDZCU>), a profile at amazon.com
13. Simon Travaglia (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/simon-travaglia-1076687/>) at LinkedIn
14. "About me" (<http://www.bofharchive.com/#about>)

Further reading

- Marti, Don (1 December 2000). "The Trouble with the Bastard Operator from Hell" (<https://www.linuxjournal.com/article/4373>). *Linux Journal*. Retrieved 2016-08-22.

External links

- [Official website](http://www.bofharchive.com) (<http://www.bofharchive.com>)
 - Travaglia, Simon. "Data Centre: Bastard Operator From Hell" (https://www.theregister.co.uk/data_centre/bofh/). *The Register*. Retrieved 2016-08-22.
 - Travaglia, Simon (9 June 1992). "BASTARD OPERATOR FROM HELL #1" (https://groups.google.com/group/alt.tasteless/browse_thread/thread/5bdbb59af47bf0b0/f0e09b9e5734272). Newsgroup: alt.tasteless (news:alt.tasteless). Usenet: 1992Jun10.091440.8536@waikato.ac.nz (news:1992Jun10.091440.8536@waikato.ac.nz). Retrieved 2016-08-22.
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