Man killed by train had tech following

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#A man killed by a train in The Dalles in mid-August had a Youtube following and was a "minor celebrity" in the computer world for doing the Herculean task of writing his own operating system, a fan said.

#Terrance Davis, 48, was killed Aug. 11 near West First and Terminal Avenue. He'd been homeless for some months and was schizophrenic. He spent 10 years writing his operating system, Temple OS, because God told him to, according to a 2014 tech magazine story on him titled "God's Lonely Programmer."

#John McColl, a computer engineer from Sydney, Australia, said he hoped Davis would be remembered for his achievements and not his mental illness.

#He said it was "kind of hard for a lay person to understand what a phenomenal achievement" it is to write an entire operating system singlehandedly. "It actually boggles my mind that one man wrote all that."

#He compared it to construction, saying a man could build a house by himself, but this was "like building a skyscraper by yourself."

#McColl was one of several fans of Davis who called the Chronicle to confirm his passing.

#One video of Davis, in which he says he's the smartest programmer in the world, has been viewed over 44,000 times. Commenters call him a "programming legend." One noted that while Davis proclaims

himself the best, he "built his own everything so I can't really argue with him …"

#Another fan, Kate Blue (not her real last name), said she wanted to keep anonymity because Davis was controversial.

#"He had been repeatedly banned from Youtube because his schizophrenia caused him to say things that are very offensive. He couldn't help it," Blue said. "He was actually a genius."

#"I'm talking with some friends of his online right now and they're devastated," she said.

#Blue, a computer engineer from Phoenix, said Davis's operating system runs on a very specific part of a computer processor and is something unique that no one else has done before.

#"It's extremely quick. It's very fast. It can only do a few things but what it does it does very quickly."

#The operating system is rudimentary looking, like something from the early days of personal computers. In the 2014 article, in Motherboard, Davis said all the aspects of it were dictated by God.

#Blue said Davis could've been a Steve Jobs or a Steve Wozniak were it not for his mental illness.

#"He did not want to be medicated, that was his thing. And anytime he was given medications he would refuse it," saying they "stifled his creativity and turned him into a lump."

#McColl said he talked regularly to Davis, and when he was talking about computers, as he did with McColl, he was always lucid and showed no signs of delusional behavior.

#Another fan, a clinical psychologist from Iowa who asked that his name not be used, said Davis worked as a lead engineer at Ticketmaster and lead software engineer at Graphic Technologies

before his mental illness pushed him out of the workforce in the early 2000s.

#He was homeless for a time in 2004, and did so to evade being hospitalized, the psychologist said.

#He also became homeless earlier this year for the same reason.

#Davis told him he became homeless "to escape the dog catchers." He'd been living with his sister in Phoenix, the psychologist said.

#During his homelessness, his fans helped him, bringing him supplies. But he refused offers of housing, including from fans in Atlanta and Houston.

#Davis went to California, then headed to Portland sometime in April, and then walked to The Dalles, the psychologist said.

#In June, The Dalles Police Department got a courtesy notification from the Portland Police Bureau's behavioral unit that Davis may be heading there and could be a danger, since he said if God told him to kill, he would.

#Police never found Davis at that time and never got any complaints about him, said The Dalles Police Capt. Jamie Carrico.

#According to a police report on the death, on the evening of Aug. 11, Davis was walking along the railroad tracks, with his back to an oncoming train, when he turned and faced the train before it hit him. The train engineer considered it a suicide, according to the report.

#The psychologist said none of Davis's fans thought suicide was possible, and they hadn't seen signs of depression.

#He said Davis had posted hours and hours of videos over the years, but because he believed God's 11th commandment was to not litter, he deleted a lot of his videos "littering" the internet just before his death.

[#](#)He posted one last video, a few hours before his death. In retrospect, that video may have hinted at depression, the psychologist said.

[#](#)"He said something about it must've been a shock to these people in The Dalles that such a vile person was among them and that he learned how to purify himself.

[#](#)"The last 20 seconds of the video I think are interesting because he leaned back and he said 'It's good to be king. Well, maybe. Sometimes I think I'm just a weird little person walking back and forth.' And that's it. He'd never shown that kind of personal doubt before."

[#](#)The psychologist said he developed an interest in Davis as a person. "I've been trying to put it into words for a long time now because what he had to say a lot of times was extremely crazy and delusional and inflammatory, but it also, sometimes he had things to say that were really profound.

[#](#)"The one that I keep remembering is, he said, 'If you seek to lose your life you'll save it, if you seek to save your life, you'll lose it.'"

[#](#)Davis's website, TempleOS.org, notes that in the wake of Davis's passing, his family has asked supporters of his to donate to organizations working to ease the pain and suffering caused by mental illness" such as The Brain & Behavior Research Foundation and the National Alliance on Mental Illness.

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