WONDERING WEDNESDAY: SUICIDE IN SINGAPORE, DRONE OVER BROOKLYN, AND TELCO TATTLERS

Help me get over the hump and clue me in on a few things. I've been scratching my head wondering about these topics.

Suicide in Singapore — The recent "suicide" of a U.S. electronics engineer in Singapore looks fishy to me. It looked not-right to Financial Times as well; it appears no other domestic news outlet picked up this case for investigative reporting before FT. The deceased, who'd worked for a government research institute on a project related to Chinese telecom equipment company Huawei, is alleged to have hung himself, but two details about this case set off my hinky meter.

• Every photo I've seen of engineer Shane Todd depicts a happy chap. Sure, depressed folks can hide their emotions, but comparing a photo of his family after his death to photos of him and you'll see the difference. My gut tells me that if he was truly depressed, he should have looked more like his folks—flat, withdrawn, low affect. Perhaps meds could have messed with his head more than depression itself. But I'm not a psychologist or a pharmacologist, what do I know?

• Among all the details of the case, it's said the victim's face postmortem was white when his body was discovered. This doesn't strike me as consistent with hanging; there should have been lividity above the ligature. Conveniently, Singapore's law enforcement cleaned everything up so quickly there was no chance to see the crime scene or the body as found. Law enforcement also snagged the victim's laptop and all other work-related stored content, save for

a hard drive that looked like a speaker. Everything he was working on "disappeared" except for the contents of that drive.

The engineer had been very concerned about technology he was working on and its possible transfer, which included gallium nitride transistors with potential for both commercial and military applications. After poking around for some time on gallium compounds used in various computing, communications and other technology, nothing screams at me as highly sensitive technology that might get someone "suicided." But…as I went through abstracts, it seems odd there are a substantive number of Chinese researchers working in on GaN-based technologies.

Thought these two points in particular jar my senses, more than just these two points don't sit well. Read the story at the link above and see for yourself. (Original FT link here.)

What do you make of this case? Suicide or no? Strategic technology or no?

Drone over Brooklyn — On Tuesday an Alitalia pilot reported an unmanned craft flying within 200 feet of his plane over Brooklyn. Both the FBI and FAA are investigating and have asked for witnesses' help. As of this post, there's been no additional information published about this incident.

Was this the first case where drone usage preceded adequate regulation about their usage? Was this simply a consumer product like the AR Parrot drone gone astray? Or was there something more sinister at work?

If you've heard anything more on this situation, please share in comments.

Telco Tattlers — Voice carriers Verizon and AT&T complain that they are unfairly targeted by new cybersecurity requirements; the two businesses claim technology companies like Google, Apple, and Microsoft should be subjected to the same regulations.

With all three of Google, Apple, and Microsoft in some way involved with voice-related technologies using their operating systems, one has to wonder why they weren't included as well as other similar technology companies.

BUT…perhaps it's because none of these technology companies has nationwide network infrastructure with NSA-furnished secret rooms attached (that we know of)—rooms that terrorists could otherwise access OR be used to shut down telecommunications networks in case of a cyber attack.

Why do you think there's such an exclusion of consumer-facing technology companies?

Okay, your turn. Go ahead, wonder away.