

It's your fault. It's always your fault. When the air conditioning goes down, which it definitely will, it's your fault. We know you have no control over the air conditioning. Why should that relieve you of responsibility for it? Ditto for the elevators, plumbing, lighting, door locks, UPS, mail "service", external power, telephone "service", and everything else. If it's down or dead or flapping in the breeze, you are the one who will get the call from the luser community and the HellDesk, you are the one who will get the rockets from Mahogany Row, and you are the one who will be expected to have fixed it even before it failed. You have no time machine to accomplish that last feat; that, too, is your fault.

You can't hide. Everyone knows your name. Images of your face and of your favorite T-shirts are posted on all the bulletin boards. Your very shoeprints have been imaged and now appear on the lobby and hall monitors, so that you can be tracked. Your coffee has RFID chips in it. You are a Known Man.

You are a systems administrator.

You have no control over <foo>, but you are to blame when it fails.

Drink heavily.

That is all.

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You are the person who is expected to know, without ever having the opportunity to RTFM, all the ins, outs, weaknesses, idiosyncracies, foibles, and deviations from standards of Every GodsDamned Piece Of Software Installed Anywhere In the Company. You are the person who knows where the documentation and the behavior don't match, and you know what the behavior is in those cases. You are the person who is expected to be able to translate documentation from Hausa, Mordovian, Yakut, Quechua, Maori, Yanomamo, Yandruwandha, Estonian, Bengali, Urdu, Finnish, Kwakiutl, Elbonian, and Euskara. Somehow, despite yourself, you manage to do all these.

For your managers, miracles from you are simply not enough: you're on a continuous improvement program, and you did miracles last week. For that matter, you did miracles last year. Something stronger now is required, and you deliver.

You are the person who comes in on a weekend at 3 AM to do something that saves a Fortune 500 company – not your employer, but another company, where a friend works.

You are the person who merely *looks* at a failing machine, only to have it straighten up and fly right. It doesn't need to fear the gods; it knows that You Are Boss. You may not have brought it into the world, but you certainly can take it out.

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