My Quest for Silver Bullets

TestNet May 2013

Alan Richardson

@eviltester
www.eviltester.com
www.seleniumsimplified.com
www.compendiumdev.co.uk

slides: http://unow.be/at/gtn_pres

Silver Bullets are Good

There is nothing intrinsically evil in a Silver Bullet...

...except the fact that is a bullet...
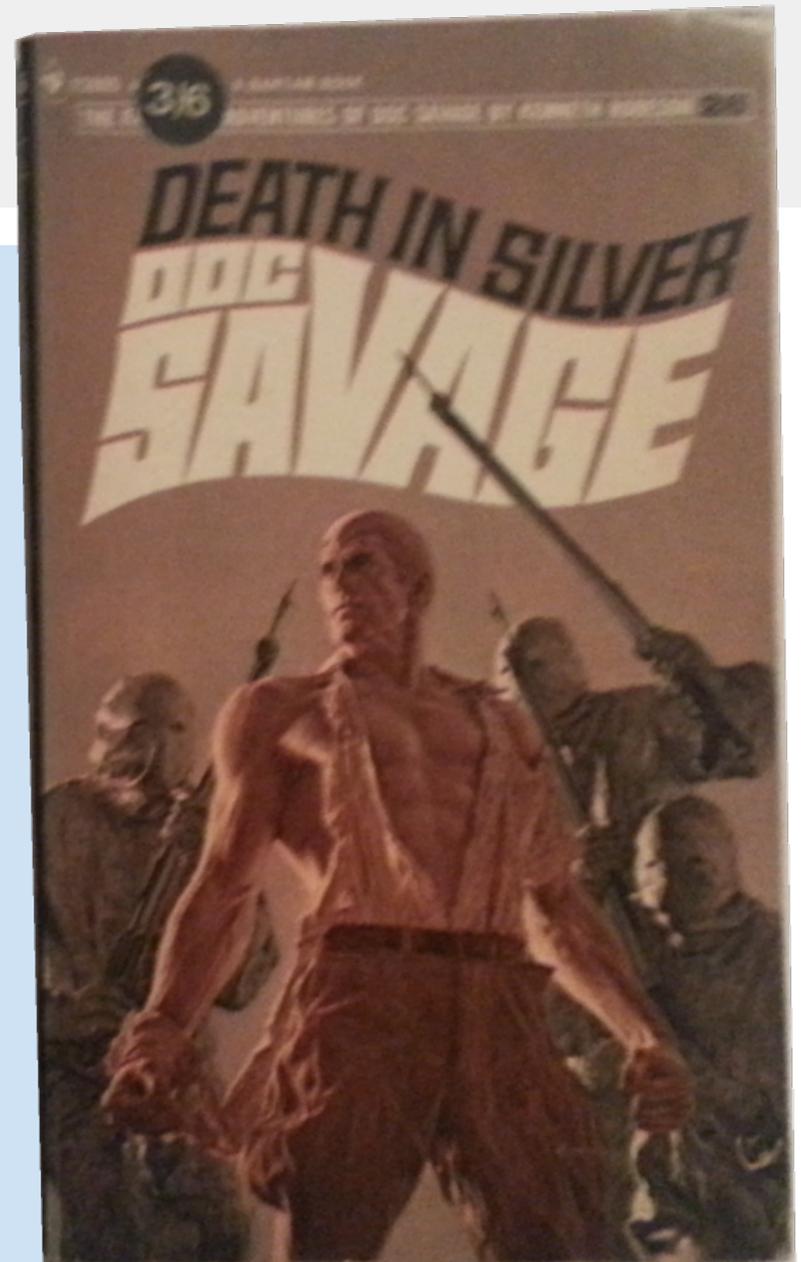
...and that bullets can kill...

But, "Silver Bullet" as an ideal == good

Silver kills bacteria

Silver teething rings are good

Silver spoons are good

The Lone Ranger used Silver Bullets

THE LONE RANGER
AND THE
CODE OF THE WEST

FRAN STRIKER

ZANE
The Vanishi

The
LONE RANGER
and the
OUTLAW
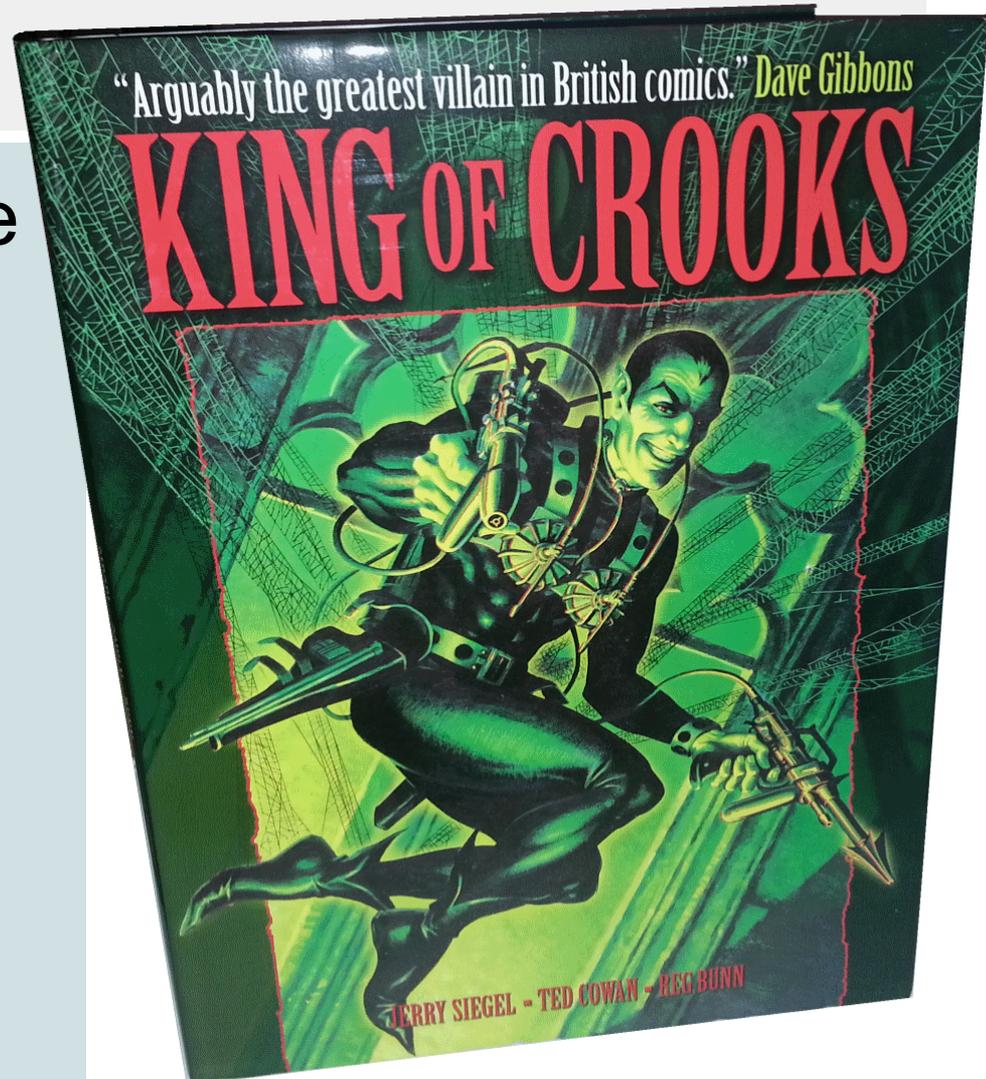STRONGHOLD
by
FRAN STRIKER

... ignore the fact that the lone ranger is a fictional character

Only good guys use Silver Bullets

We all think we are the good guy

Ours will be the 'right' Silver Bullet

Often when we know the least.

"Arguably the greatest villain in British comics." *Dave Gibbons*

KING OF CROOKS

JERRY SIEGEL - TED COWAN - REG BUNN

You Can Only Hurt Werewolves With a Silver Bullet

...ignore the fact that werewolves don't exist

Reification & Nominalisation

"When Verbs become Nouns" &
"The Thingification of abstract ideas"

We stop analysing, and
decomposing.
We start counting

Keep 'Silver Bullets' as ideals, and
processes as verbs.

Respect

Courage

Automation

More

How Much

I started my career building silver bullets

An Interactive Cobol Interpreter & JSP Diagrammer - BSc Hons Project

An Interactive COBOL Interpreter & JSP Debugger

Honours Project Report
By
Alan Richardson
BSc Computing 5
April 1992

Lesson Learned: Never build a generic "Silver Bullet" tool for others to use

...Never ...Ever.

Generic: "Meets no-one's needs exactly"

Test Automation Lesson: refactor when needed, not "just in case". Generic models are a side-effect, not a goal

GUI Automation

Test Data

Frameworks

You can learn a lot by making Silver Bullets

Model at the problem domain.

Abstract for the current context.

- DSL, Frameworks, Logging, Screenshots, Keywords
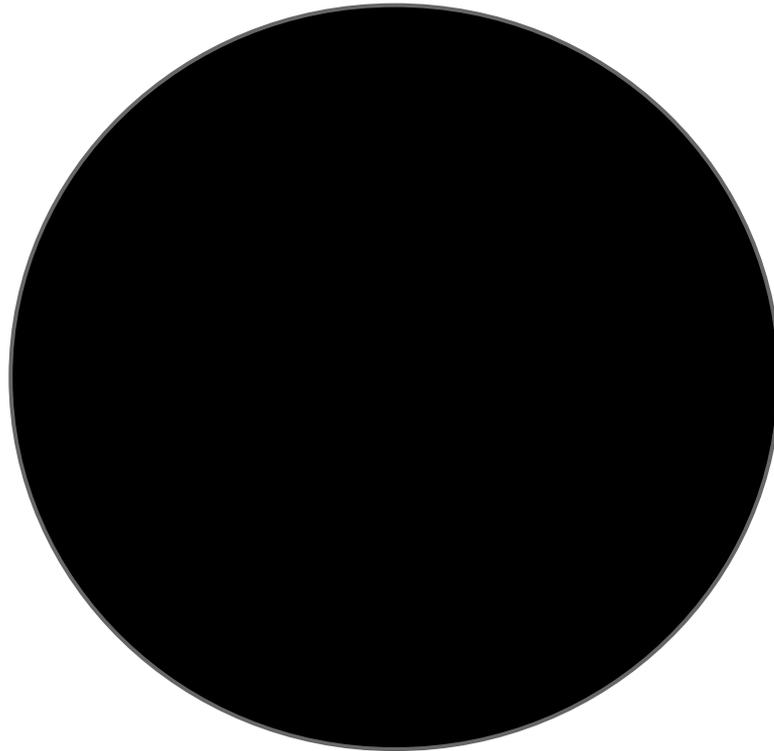
Need, not want.

Sometimes the bad guy, thinks he's the good guy

... he knows best

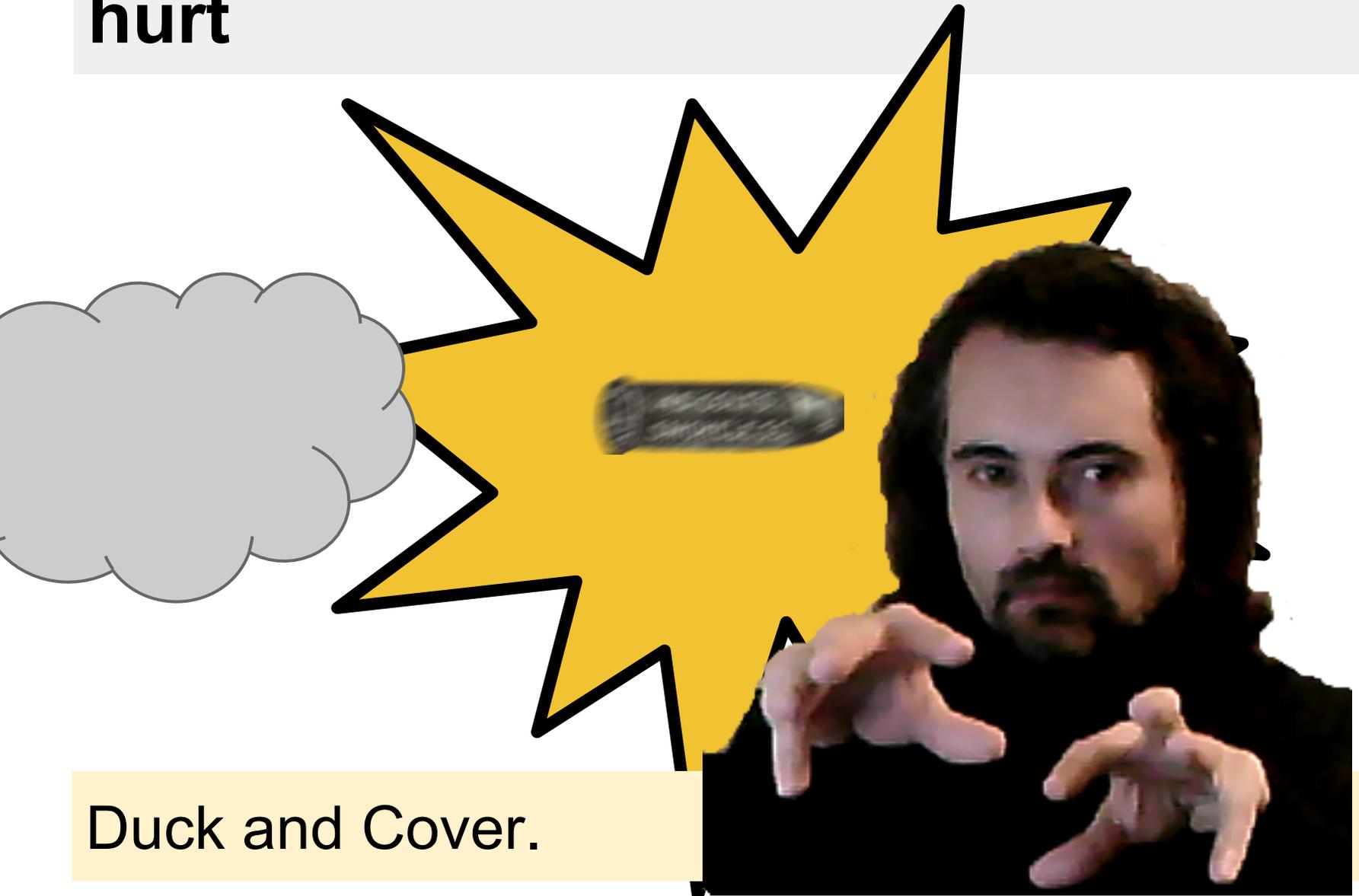... his Silver Bullet will save the world

Slides: http://unow.be/at/gtn_pres

Other Peoples' Silver Bullets are like a black hole

They can suck you in. Run Away

Other People's Silver Bullets can hurt

Duck and Cover.

Lesson Learned: NEVER let tools limit your testing.

Never, EVER.

slides: http://unow.be/at/gtn_pres

Bypass Silver Bullet Constraints

- The tool is not the process
- The tool uses a database, use the database
- Don't like the GUI? Build your own and automate theirs
- Use their API, only buy it, if it has one

Augment other tools and use them in combination.

The lone Ranger uses Silver Bullets as a last resort

Use What you have first.

Assume you can use it differently.

The lone Ranger's gun only holds 6 Silver Bullets

Don't Build An Armoury

Keep tools simple

With simple aims:
- Model, Observe, Reflect, Inspect, Manipulate

K & CO. (Inc.), Cheapest Supply House on Earth, Chicago. CATA

The New Harrington & Richardson Automatic Bayonet Revolver.

Made in 38-caliber only, using the same cartridges as the Smith & Wesson Revolvers.

In response to the many inquiries for a bayonet revolver, we are pleased to say that we can now furnish this article.

The Harrington & Richardson New Automatic Bayonet Revolver is made in 38-caliber only, with 4-inch barrel, the bayonet extending 2½ inches forward of the muzzle. They are handsomely nickel plated, all working parts are steel and case hardened, and the bayonet is so constructed that it can be folded under the barrel instantly when desired. When open the bayonet is securely locked. This revolver is fitted with nicely checkered rubber stocks, but can be furnished with pearl stocks when so desired. It is well rifled and thoroughly well made throughout. All parts are interchangeable, so that if you accidentally break any part, it can be duplicated at small cost.

No 34248 38-caliber, 4-inch barrel, 18 ounces. Our special price.............................$5.50
No. 34249 38-caliber, 4-inch barrel, 18 ounces, blued finish. Our special price..............$5.90
Extra for pearl stocks.................................1.25
If by mail, postage extra, 27 cents.

Iver Johnson Small Frame Automatic Revolver.

32 and 38-Caliber.

Our Single A

fense
cylin
bolt,
patte
lasts
to buy a large lot
and we bought the
of our purchase.
No. 34316 Our
No. 34317 Same
rim fire, imitation
ridge No. 35356, our
If by mail

Iver Johnso
ma

The above illustrated revolver is the celebrated Ive Johnson automat

Sears, Roebuck and Co. Catalogue #110 Fall 1900

The lone Ranger uses Silver Bullets as a last resort

... Change your definition of a tool

... Use tools to Augment your testing

... Don't list "Who" and "What", list "Why" and How"

The Lone Ranger didn't make his own Silver Bullets... Tonto Did

Learn to fend for yourself.

The Lone Ranger's Silver Bullets remind him of the value of a human life.

Sears, Roebuck and Co. Catalogue #110 Fall 1900

The most dangerous part of a quest is when you believe you have finished.

Are you sure you want to sit at the Seige Perilous?

DC Comics, Little Shop of Horrors, Movie Adaptation Special, 1986

@EvilTester

"By This Axe I Rule"

"By this axe I rule! This is my sceptre! I have struggled and sweated to be the puppet king you wished me to be - to king it your way. Now I use mine own way! If you will not fight, you shall obey! Laws that are just shall stand; laws that have outlived their times I shall shatter as I shattered that one! I am King!"

"By This Axe I Rule", Robert E. Howard

The tool does not make me king. *Because* I am king, *I* give this tool power.

I tried using other people's Silver Bullets. They didn't work for me.

"By this axe I rule! This is my sceptre! I have struggled and sweated to be the puppet king you wished me to be - to king it your way. Now I use mine own way! If you will not fight, you shall obey! Laws that are just shall stand; laws that have outlived their times I shall shatter as I shattered that one! I am King!"

I take responsibility for what we do now.

We still seek new stuff. But we will stop, if it doesn't work. We decide the value.

I am King!

"By This Axe I Rule", Robert E. Howard
Annotated for Software Testing by Alan Richardson

Keep looking for new ways. Keep questing and looking for improvements.

But never allow yourself to think that you have found THE one.

Alan Richardson is an Independent Test Consultant based in the UK. He offers training and consultancy in Selenium WebDriver, exploratory and technical web testing.

- uk.linkedin.com/in/eviltester

Contact Alan for training and consultancy tailored to your needs: alan@compendiumdev.co.uk

Blogs and Websites

- SeleniumSimplified.com
- EvilTester.com
- Testing Papers and Tools
  - CompendiumDev.co.uk

Twitter: @eviltester

Online Training Courses

- Technical Web Testing 101
  - Unow.be/at/udemy101
- Intro to Selenium
  - Unow.be/at/udemystart
- Selenium 2 WebDriver API
  - Unow.be/at/udemyapi

Videos

youtube.com/user/EviltesterVideos

Books

Selenium Simplified

Unow.be/rc/selsimp

Second Edition
Selenium Simplified
Alan Richardson
Selenium-RC, Java & JUnit

Se 34
Selenium
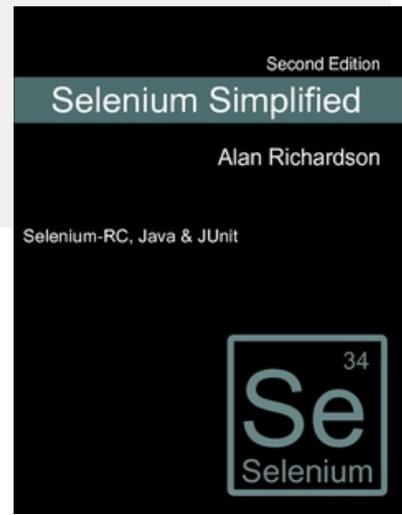
Summary Lessons Learned

- Never build a generic 'Silver Bullet' tool, ever
- Never let tools limit your testing
- Never build 'on top' of another tool
- Augment other tools, and use them in combination, use their APIs if possible
- Use what you have first, assume you can use it differently
- Stamp out ignorance, challenge people to learn
- Model at the problem domain, not a generic domain
- Generic models are a side-effect, not a goal