

STEVEN LEVY BUSINESS OCT 18, 2024 9:00 AM

# You Can Now See the Code That Helped End Apartheid

John Graham-Cumming, who happens to be Cloudflare's CTO, cracked a 30-year-old encrypted file that had a role in rewriting South Africa's history.



Tim Jenkin came up with a system that helped members of the African National Congress communicate safely under apartheid. PHOTOGRAPH: DAVE BENETT/GETTY IMAGES



John Graham-Cumming doesn't ping me often, but when he does I pay attention. His day job is the CTO of the security giant Cloudflare, but he is also a lay historian of technology, guided by a righteous compass. He might be best known for successfully

leading a campaign to force the UK government to [apologize to the legendary computer scientist](#) Alan Turing for prosecuting him for homosexuality and essentially harassing him to death. So when he DM'd me to say that he had “a hell of a story”—promising “one-time pads! 8-bit computers! Flight attendants smuggling floppies full of random numbers into South Africa!”—I responded.

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[Steven Levy](#) covers the gamut of tech subjects for WIRED, in print and online, and has been contributing to the magazine since its inception. His weekly column, [Plaintext](#), is exclusive to subscribers online but the newsletter version is open to all—[sign up here](#). He has been writing about technology for... [Read more](#)

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