

The social skills of a thermonuclear device: Why did you hang up?

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One morning I'm working in my office and I'm interrupted by a telephone call. The caller-ID shows that it came in through the switchboard. (I.e., somebody called the main Microsoft number and asked for me by name.)

Me: Hello?

Caller: [angrily] Mr. Chen, why did you hang up?

I don't recognize the voice, and I haven't received a phone call in several days, so I have no idea who this person is or what he's talking about. But if somebody starts out rude to me, that doesn't put me in the friendliest of moods. Still, I use a polite tone of voice.

Me: Oh, I'm sorry. I'll do it again. [click]

A few minutes later, my phone rang again. The caller-ID shows that it is once again a call from the switchboard. I let it go to voice mail.

Shortly thereafter, I received a notification that I have a new voicemail message. Here's a transcript:

[swearing in a language I don't recognize] Why do you keep hanging up on me? I asked you, are you Raymond Chen, and then I talk to you, and you hang up. Are you stupid or something?
[click]

Now I kind of feel bad that the caller probably got the wrong person. There are at least four people at Microsoft who share my name (or a name very similar to it).

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