



GOD'S EYE

A Scenario for *Delta Green: The Role-Playing Game*

WE LIVE AND WE DIE BENEATH THE ALL-SEEING EYE

A mathematician inexplicably vanishes from a secretive company in Reno, a company that specializes in the software that allows high-flying drones to spy on every inch of the city. She is only the first. Can the Agents recognize a pattern of killings and disappearances in time? Or will they be next to fall under the unblinking gaze of a pitiless power?

In *Delta Green: God's Eye*, the Agents confront an inexorable government panopticon, unnatural revelations unleashed by the death of privacy, and the violence of desperate revenge.

God's Eye is playable with *Delta Green: The Role-Playing Game*, available from Arc Dream Publishing. Optionally, it makes a perfect companion to the acclaimed campaign *Delta Green: God's Teeth*. Learn more at delta-green.com.



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REQUIRED-DELTA GREEN

God's Eye

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Introduction

Reno, Nevada. May 2017. Like so many innovations of the wars of the early 21st century, wide-area surveillance moved swiftly to American streets. A high-altitude aircraft takes 1.8-gigapixel snapshots, two per second, and slightly less crisp infrared images by night. Onboard software processes every pixel individually, enhances the resolution, orients every image, and tags image elements for search and comparison.

Reno, Nevada's Persistent Vigil Imaging Solutions develops and refines algorithms to identify patterns and their significance in wide-area surveillance footage. The company runs expensive drone flights using its system for the Reno Police Department. Persistent Vigil is owned by Col. Clyde Mauch, USAF (ret.). Some of its code goes back to his team's early work in combat over ten years ago, before leaks of blue-on-blue

killings caused by faulty algorithms forced Mauch into the private sector.

One veteran of Persistent Vigil's origins is Anthony Cooper. He worked with Mauch as a lowly corporal six years ago, but he was an ingenious programmer and mathematician. He built routes for outside access into the code that made its way to Persistent Vigil.

Cooper has a plan.

The Forgotten Child

Anthony Cooper, an orphan since infancy, has a gift and a curse. He feels the intentions of some power from beyond. These intentions are instincts and inclinations, not instructions. They drove him to violence from the first moments he was strong enough to understand the power of cruelty.

His first nine years bathed him in the wordless, traumatic certainty faced by all young animals: cleave to a beast powerful enough to protect you, or be consumed by the world, one strip of flesh at a time. He and other children—he remembers no details—were raised in appalling abuse by caretakers who worshipped nightmarish gods. He slowly learned that the power from beyond was his only protection. And that power fed on pain.

Growth and Loss

Cooper's memories of his early years are vague, scratched into illegibility by trauma. Strangers rescued him and placed him in a home with a caring family. He doesn't remember much of his rescue or his stumbling months of recovery. Despite years of neglect and abuse, he mastered language skills more rapidly than doctors and counsellors had expected.

Anthony Cooper grew into identity without memory. The more he integrated with the outside world, the less he remembered of his early years—and the less he felt the comfortingly cruel presence of that power from beyond. That power had been his single source of control in an unrelentingly brutal world. He came to ache

for that embrace, as if those strangers had severed an umbilical cord connecting him to his *real* mother.

When Cooper was old enough give this power from beyond a name, he thought of it as God. But by then, God no longer spoke to him. Cooper's late-forming genius with language grew, in part, out of his desperation to name the sense of lack that ate at his core. But the words and their meaning, the very act of naming things, seemed to drive the answer further away.

The effort left Cooper a solitary, reclusive, polyglot genius. This helped him succeed in a society that otherwise had no need for him. The violence and rage he experienced as a child fed his inward assault on the barriers to comprehension.

Gifts and Promises

Cooper became a wild success story of the foster-care system. He graduated from high school. Stanford offered him a full-ride scholarship. But before he moved to California, he met an Air Force recruiter. The Air Force needed a steady supply of geniuses. Its best recruits regularly began great things and then got poached by tech firms with the vast resources they earned from Air Force contracts. Cooper saw a bright line ahead of him: a few years in the service and access to the most sophisticated technologies in the world.

Those technologies offered Anthony Cooper something better than the private-sector fortunes that enticed his peers. They offered him a way to sift realities. He would find God again. And he would demand to know why God turned away.

The Eye of God

As an airman serving under Col. Mauch, Cooper built much of the early code for Persistent Vigil. Many of those algorithms are still useful, ten years later. They far outlived Cooper's time with Mauch. Mauch disliked Cooper. He couldn't figure out what motivated Cooper, and that made Cooper unpredictable. Mauch remembers Cooper as one of several early underlings whose contributions he downplays.

Cooper left the Air Force in 2013. He maintained his access to the code that he had created for Mauch—some instinct told him it would be useful—but abandoned tech as a career. He found work as a linguist. In his time overseas he had mastered rare, ancient languages as a hobby. When a university archeological project hired him, it opened the way for his ultimate goal.

Cooper performed cultural research and translations, often of very old religious texts. His favorites were occult works, many of them deeply disturbing. He found what he needed most in *Geographic and Spiritual Alignment With Jannah*, a seventh-century

GOD'S TEETH: The God That Feeds

In a *God's Teeth* campaign, Anthony Cooper was one of the children rescued from Cornucopia House in 2001. He is older than most who survived that horror. Bast—Sredni Vashtar, the hungry God—abandoned him after his adoption, drawing to itself only those younger children who shunned human communication.

Agents can locate references to Anthony Cooper in Maryland records if they have access. He went into foster care in 2001 at age nine and was adopted at age 11. Cooper spent six years with his adopted family and flourished, winning science fairs and attracting attention as a budding linguist, mathematician, and programmer. He joined the Air Force in 2009 at age 17. In 2010, he was transferred to Mauch's drones program.

astronomy text by Ibrahim al-Tariq. The tome offered techniques for communing with Heaven, or rather with some unnatural power revered under that name. Cooper translated key passages, along with insights from other studies, in a sort of field manual that he called *Remote Stare*. The deepest insight is a ritual he calls the All-Seeing Eye.

The All-Seeing Eye focuses the attention of a higher awareness on a strange pattern of time, place, and bloodshed. The ancients called that higher awareness the Watcher on High, another name for God. The sorcerer, like God, comprehends the meaning of the pattern of killings. Under the power of the ritual, that shared comprehension makes the sorcerer and God as one. The sorcerer ascends to Heaven. Or rather, to the unseen dimensions of reality that are God's abode.

Cooper streamlined the ritual. He no longer needs to take elaborate steps to merely invoke the attention of the Watcher on High. More mundane means suffice. He needs only share comprehension of the lethal pattern with some other observer. Some watcher above, any watcher on high, who sees the miles-wide pattern emerging. No ancient could attain such a bird's-eye view without pleas to the unnatural powers they lived beneath.

The ancients had to invoke the power they called God. Cooper has drones. He discovered that Persistent Vigil's drones are capable of recognizing the pattern in the sequence of killings. They are not intelligent in the way of a human or higher being. But they don't need to be. They only need the visual acuity and processing power to recognize the pattern.

With the ritual, recognizing the pattern is enough to make even a drone the eye of God.

The Ritual Begins

The ritual needs blood. Cooper found assistants who would not balk at murder. His adoptive family includes a black-sheep uncle with a long history of smuggling and contacts in the Mexican cartels. The way Cooper figured it, drug cartels kill every day. Why not open a path to God while they're at it?

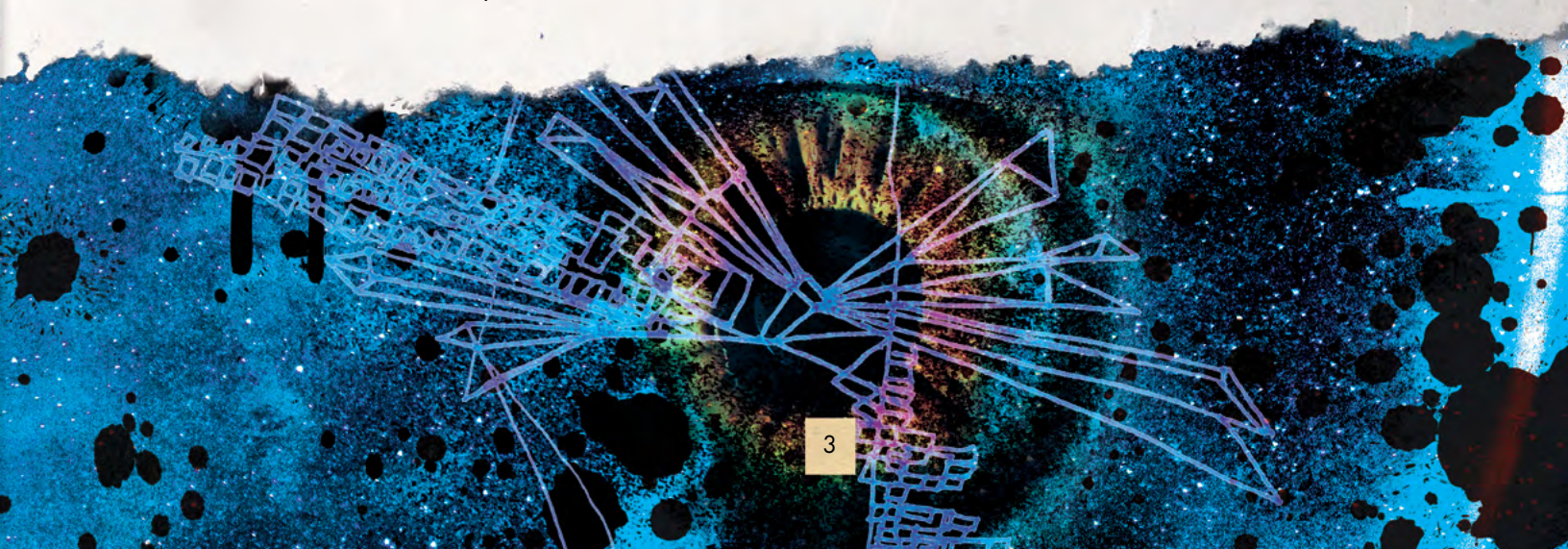
Pretending to have insider access to Border Patrol drone footage, Cooper used the Clairvoyance ritual to feed his cartel contacts live intelligence on the shifting security of border crossings in Texas, Arizona, and California. It was a hell of a resume, especially when he promised more. In return, the bosses sent a few *sicarios* to perform the deadly services Cooper demanded as payment.

Cooper gave the killers detailed instructions. The ritual had baroque and inflexible requirements as to time, place, and technique. The victims' identities were irrelevant. The killers agreed to follow his recipe.

As Cooper planned, each sacrifice helps to open the way. But he doesn't realize that his ritual is flawed. The killers worked the necessary occult sigils in blood only in the first killing, but that was enough for every sacrifice to open a random connection to the otherworld.

A ritualistic murder. Two other gruesome killings in less than a week. A woman seeming to vanish into thin air. Delta Green took note. The Agents rush to Reno, desperate to find the explanation for an unnatural vanishing. They may soon learn that the ritual is already nearly complete.

And the watchful eye still circles overhead.



OPINT: The Key and the Gate

As used by Anthony Cooper, the All-Seeing Eye requires a complex interplay of death and observation:

A watcher on high—Persistent Vigil's drone—recognizes the killing.

The operator—or, though Cooper does not realize this, another observer—recognizes the pattern that is emerging in the sequence of killings.

That merges the witness' awareness and the drone's "awareness" with that of Yog-Sothoth, the All-in-One of countless names, for whom a vision of another reality is existence within that reality. Witness and drone vanish from our world.

It takes both factors. Without the drone's recognition of the pattern, a witness who recognizes the pattern is in no danger. A witness who does not recognize the pattern is in no danger even when the drone does.

In the other world, the drone promptly "forgets" the pattern, its working memory suddenly overloaded with details of another world. Having forgotten, it returns. The witness is not so lucky.

Cooper made two critical errors. The first was in thinking he would be the only witness affected by his ritual. He planned the sacrificial killings required, but he did not expect anyone else would join with God. His second error was misunderstanding the nature of the God that he would contact. He expects to reach the power that inspired him in childhood. He does not realize that there are many powers that might claim a careless sorcerer.

Timeline

SUNDAY, 21 MAY 2017: The first to die was Howard Peña, a janitor at Greater Nevada Field, home to the minor-league Reno Aces. Peña wasn't scheduled to work that morning but filled in for a sick friend. He died bloody on the field, two hours before sunrise. The drone's software algorithmically identified a killing and predicted that another would come—Cooper had already installed the pattern of sacrifices—and with recognition of a pattern in the sacrifice, the drone vanished to another reality. The other world overwhelmed it with unexpected data, pushing the pattern from working memory to storage. "Forgetting" the pattern returned the drone to return to Earth.

MONDAY, 22 MAY 2017: Technicians at Nellis Air Force Base found inexplicable damage to yesterday's drone, stresses from its split-second visit to an impossible new environment. They set it aside for repairs.

WEDNESDAY, 24 MAY 2017: The second to die was Geraldo Calderon, a Mexican journalist who settled in Reno after fleeing repercussions from his coverage of dangerous cartels. Cooper's instructions specified a place that had no cover but had a feature that captured the killers' imaginations: an ancient Washoe stone circle now part of a disc golf course. The killers had planned to make Calderon one of their victims—what luck that an old foe had settled here!—and thought the Circle of Stones a fitting place for him to die. They mutilated him, draped an old tire on his shoulders, soaked it in gasoline, and lit it on fire. Again, the drone recognized a killing, vanished, and promptly reappeared.

SATURDAY, 27 MAY 2017: The third to die was Dora Sandoval, a cage cashier at the Western Village Inn & Casino. Since the coordinates lined up with the site of a great deal of cash, the killers took the opportunity to make it a robbery as well as a murder. They robbed the cage and then dragged her out as if taking a hostage. They drove a short distance, got out with her, and hacked her to death. The drone observed the killing, vanished, forgot, and returned. After it landed, technicians at Nellis Air Force Base again found inexplicable damage. The technicians set it

aside for repairs and sent word to Mauch demanding an explanation.

SUNDAY, 28 MAY 2017: Norah Brigid, chief mathematician and programmer at Persistent Vigil Imaging Solutions, had spent the last five days studying strangely detailed graphical glitches. Each appeared in only one still frame. They emerged when the drones vanished to other worlds on the prior Sunday, Wednesday, and Saturday. She studied the locations and elevations, the times, the brief, inexplicable electromagnetic surges. To her horror, she found a pattern. Her calculations, if they were correct, predicted the times and places of at least two more deaths. She drove to the location of the projected next killing. She set up a camera in her car to record her investigation and upload it to the Internet. She began to walk

across the street to the future victim's home. In a flash of inspiration, the pattern in the killings and glitches came to her. The all-seeing drone overhead saw her recognition. Both vanished to another world. Only the drone returned. Delta Green picked up the weirdness of the video. An operation was launched.

MONDAY, 29 MAY 2017: The Agents arrive at about noon.

TUESDAY, 30 MAY 2017: The fourth sacrifice is Lyudmila Barraclough, a retired chorus girl living in neighboring Sparks, Nevada. The drone returns from its otherworldly journey damaged as if by exposure to temperatures far below freezing.

FRIDAY, 2 JUNE 2017: The fifth to die is either Sadie Berry or her son Coyote, whoever happens to be at their luxury home on Rancho Manor Drive when the killers arrive. That death completes Cooper's ritual.

>>God's Eye Timeline

Date	Event	Details
Sun., 21 May 2017	Peña murder at Greater Nevada Field	page 19
Mon., 22 May 2017	Nellis AFB finds strange drone damage	page 4
Wed., 24 May 2017	Calderon murder at the Washoe stone circle	page 22
Sat., 27 May 2017	Sandoval murder at Western Village Inn & Casino	page 23
Sun., 28 May 2017	Brigid disappearance on Gault Way	page 24
Mon., 29 May 2017	Agents arrive	page 6
Tue., 30 May 2017	Barraclough murder on Gault Way	page 24
Fri., 2 Jun 2017	Berry murder on Rancho Manor Drive; Cooper finds God, but not his own	page 25

Briefing

The Agents' plane approaches Reno-Tahoe International Airport after a hurried, last-minute flight. Reno sparkles in a barren desert. Dry mountains all around grow green only along the Truckee River and at carefully irrigated lawns and golf courses.

Shortly after the plane touches down, an unknown woman in a business suit meets the Agents. She says not to go through the public airport. She leads them to the tarmac where a car is waiting and drives them down the runways to a government hangar. In a corner stand a foldout table and a few folding chairs. The Agents' case officer is there.

The Victims

The case officer says the Program is concerned about two recent Reno events, the killing of Howard Peña and the vanishing of Norah Brigid.

The morning of May 22, a groundskeeper at Greater Nevada Field, a minor league baseball park, found the body of janitor Howard Peña in the outfield. The janitor had been hacked to death in the early morning, well before dawn. His wallet and keys had not been taken. Reno police are already investigating Peña's death but have turned up nothing. What drew Delta Green's attention was the ritualistic nature of the killing. Many of the countless smears and splashes of gore were made deliberately, drawn like letters or symbols—perhaps sigils—before Peña was decapitated.

Then there is a recent video by a software engineer named Norah Brigid. Brigid is one of a number of people the Program keeps under active watch due to their access to sensitive materials.

The Brigid video was taken from a dashboard-mounted phone in her 2014 Honda Civic. It begins while Brigid is driving. She parks the car in a suburban neighborhood across from a small house.

She says: *"I'm in Sparks. It should be at this address. Across the street. I'm at 1281 Gault Way. It should be happening now. I think. Maybe soon. The math isn't precise yet. If it's anything at all. It feels like I'm on the edge of figuring this out. Or maybe like I'm going crazy. Anyway, I'm going to check it out."*

She gets out, leaving the camera on to document her actions. She's perhaps 30, maybe younger, with a mop of red hair; someone concerned with things more important than appearances. In the street, she looks back as if to check that the camera is working. She looks at her watch. Then she pauses, standing still, lost in thought. Her head turns slightly back toward the camera. Then she's gone. One frame she's there, the next she's not.

Brigid's phone automatically uploaded a video to YouTube using a script that Brigid had set up. The Program's teams caught it before it went public. As far as the Program's experts can tell, the video was not doctored.

Because Brigid's work involves national security, the Program has kept this event secret. Even by the Program's standards, it is entirely off the books for now.

GOD'S TEETH: A Familiar Face

In a *God's Teeth* campaign, the Agents' case officer is Antony Pitzerelli, first met in "Red Thoughts." He seems apologetic about their history in that scenario: "We got off to a rough start. You did pretty well at providing cover stories. Good effect on target. We want to show you some tougher assignments." An Agent who has **HUMINT** at 50% or higher or who succeeds on a roll can translate: The Program is suspicious and worried. If it knows or suspects the Teeth have been touched by some unnatural force, quarantine protocols are in place. Another Agent who has **HUMINT** at 50% or higher or who succeeds on a roll then suspects the Program may be directing the agents into extremely dangerous circumstances.

Other Killings

The case officer highlights two more recent killings. Reno had 12 homicides in 2016, 20 in 2015, and 19 in 2014. Three murders in a single week stands out. The Agents should watch for connections.

- » The morning of May 25, hikers found the hacked and burned corpse of Geraldo Calderon, a retired Mexican journalist, near the Circle of Stones monument in a park and disc golf course. He had been tortured and murdered the night before.
- » On May 27, robbers wearing ski masks and carrying shotguns struck the Western Village Inn & Casino. They took money from the cash cage, abducted cashier Dora Sandoval, and drove a short distance before pushing her out and hacking her to death in the parking lot.

Objectives

The Agents must determine the cause of Norah Brigid's disappearance. They should save her if they can. They must keep others from suffering the same fate.

And they must determine whether Brigid's vanishing is related to her work at Persistent Vigil Imaging Solutions. Persistent Vigil plays a key role in projects that are important to Delta Green. The case officer asks the Agents to provide constant updates by a heavily encrypted satellite phone. Assets of great importance are at stake.

The Target

The case officer has already arranged an appointment for the Agents with Persistent Vigil in two hours and has informed Mauch that the Agents are cleared for the secret details of the company's work. The case officer supplies the Agents with false identification to pose as compliance inspectors with the Department of Defense.

Persistent Vigil subcontracts for the much larger Sierra Nevada Corporation, also based in Reno, which in turn works on surveillance platforms for the Pentagon. An Agent who has **SIGINT** or any **Military Science** at 30% or higher, who succeeds on a roll at +20%, or who rolls **Persuade** to get details from a knowledgeable contact, can recognize or learn more: See **GORGON STARE** on page 10.

Persistent Vigil is led by Clyde Mauch, a retired Air Force colonel who was active in implementing wide-area surveillance programs in Afghanistan. Mauch recruited Norah Brigid right out of school at MIT.

Persistent Vigil provides wide-area surveillance to Reno police, low profile but not exactly secret. Persistent Vigil runs Air Force drones that launch from Nellis Air Force Base, about 700 kilometers southeast. Its offices are at Reno-Tahoe airport, in buildings separate from the public concourses. Persistent Vigil has five employees, including Norah Brigid.

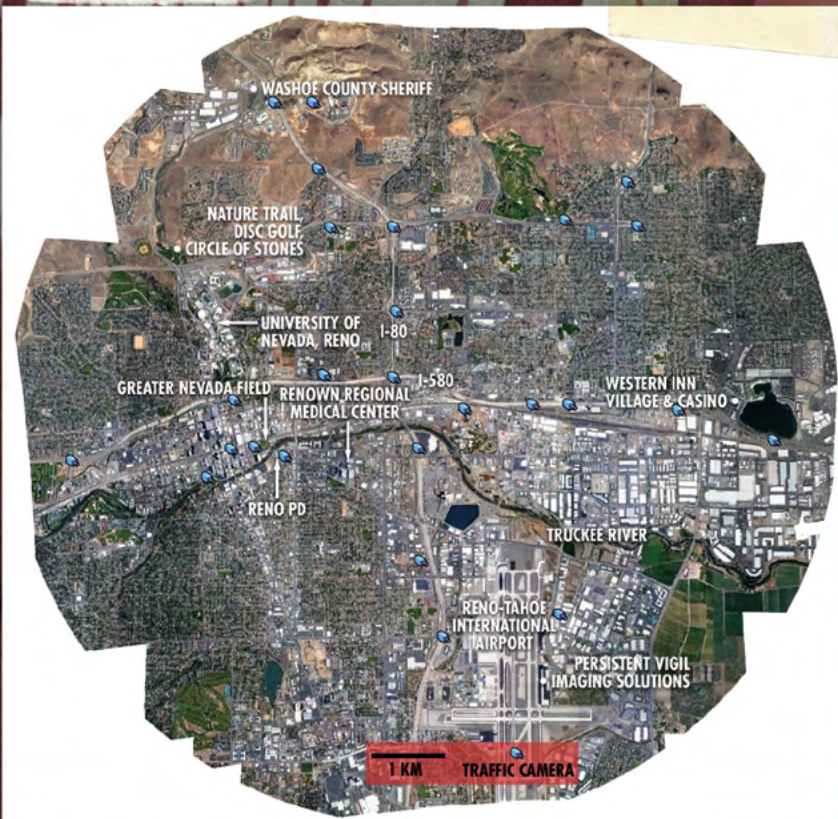
>>Persistent Vigil Personnel

Name	Position	Background
Clyde Mauch	Founder, president	USAF colonel (retired), age 60
Rusty Loedel	Vice president	USAF major (retired), age 49
Norah Brigid	Programmer	MIT, mathematics with computer science, age 26
Kim Boyer	Programmer	MIT, mathematics with computer science, age 27
Thomas Eaves	Pilot	Flies manual surveillance when a drone is unavailable, age 41

Handler's Map



Player's Map



Deployment

The Agents' case officer says no one at Persistent Vigil knows that Norah Brigid is missing. The Agents can decide when and how to discuss her disappearance with her coworkers.

The case officer warns that Persistent Vigil's work is sensitive. The Agents must investigate it, but they need to use a light touch. Personnel at the highest reaches of the Pentagon have an interest in the work of Persistent Vigil and Sierra Nevada Corporation.

Finally, the case officer says the Program can connect the Agents with specialists in certain useful fields if they need skill sets they don't have. These specialists are not to be put at risk and are to be given only enough information to help the Agents complete the operation. See the **CONSULTANTS** table for details. Each has 60% to 70% in each key skill. Customize them as necessary, or invent new ones to suit your campaign.

Persistent Vigil

Persistent Vigil occupies an office suite near the commercial hangars at Reno-Tahoe International Airport. The heavy steel door that leads inside is unmarked. So is a heavy steel emergency exit. All mail goes to a P.O. box. No one visits the office who doesn't already know what it is. Inside are bland, dreary offices and large conference rooms whose entire white walls can be turned into projection screens. Expansive server rooms are kept well air conditioned.

Astonishingly high-resolution footage shows all of central Reno. Every part of the image shifts slightly twice a second as cars and people move and birds fly by. The footage shows date, hour, and split-second. It meanwhile runs a feed to a Reno Police Department lieutenant in charge of the Traffic Division.

>>Delta Green Consultants

Name	Occupation	Key Skills
Gwendolyn McCarthy, Ph.D.	Professor of Near Eastern Studies, U.C. Berkeley	Anthropology, Archaeology, Foreign Languages (as needed), History, Occult
Special Agent Earnest Manning, U.S. Air Force captain (ret.)	DEA Special Agent Pilot, Los Angeles Aviation Resident Office	Computer Science, Foreign Language (Spanish), Military Science (Air), Pilot (Aircraft), Science (Mathematics), SIGINT
Iris Hill, Ph.D.	Physical science-forensic examiner, FBI Laboratory, Quantico	Criminology, Forensics, Science (Biology), Science (Chemistry), Science (Mathematics), Science (Physics)

Synchronicity: The Spotted Cat

In a *God's Teeth* campaign, a rare Egyptian Mau, spotted white and gray, calmly stares at the Agents from the edge of the distant hangar doors. The cat turns the corner and disappears into the tall grass between runways before any Agent can reach it.

If an Agent dies in "God's Eye," another sees the very same cat appear near the corpse, licking blood shortly after the Agent's death. This occurs no matter how unlikely it may be for a particular stray cat from Reno to be on the scene. Seeing this costs 0/1 **SAN** from the unnatural.

Gorgon Stare

Gorgon Stare is a Pentagon video-capture system run out of Nellis Air Force Base, among other sites. It is the current iteration of a series of strategy-changing surveillance programs credited with saving thousands of American lives in Afghanistan and Iraq and killing many thousands of enemies. Most details concerning the project are classified and highly restricted.

Gorgon Stare runs on Predator and Reaper drones for wide-area surveillance, day and night. It uses a top-secret DARPA system called ARGUS-IS—Autonomous Real-Time Ground Ubiquitous Surveillance Imaging System—which links hundreds of cellphone cameras to create mosaic images compiled by onboard neural-network software. Separate wide-angle infrared cameras provide the same surveillance of heat signatures. Earlier programs used ARGUS-IS in manned flights.

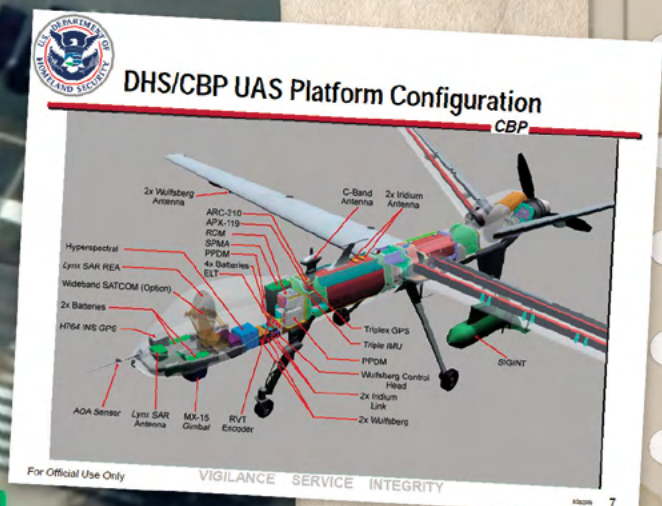
Images can be zoomed and enhanced at 16 times the original 1.8-gigapixel resolution. A technique called 'superresolution' uses computer-vision algorithms to correct blurriness and graininess, turning small blobs into sharp images of vehicles and individual people. A deep learning system trained on the massive ImageNet database identifies image elements with tremendous accuracy. The software processes only changes from one image to the next, reducing data transmission. One viewer of Gorgon Stare footage described its eerily clear and precise footage as "Like Google Earth, but alive."

A related program called Hiper Stare, developed by the PIXIA Corporation, allows correlation with the government's archive of wide-area video from anywhere in the world. Other analytics systems correlate selected footage and track movement with data from social, political, economic, and military networks. A single drone flies about 27 hours and can establish patterns of life and identifiable contact networks for every person within 100 square kilometers.

The system can't read license plates, but it can identify a vehicle's make, type, color, and identifiable features such as roof racks and spare tires. Those details combined with traffic cameras and data from a state's department of motor vehicles, and with Gorgon Stare's pattern-of-life footage, can usually identify any vehicle.

The latest version of Gorgon Stare, called Gorgon Stare II, flies Reaper drones with long, wing-mounted sensor and computer pods in place of bombs or missiles. It includes signals intelligence sensors to intercept radio chatter and phone calls.

Sierra Nevada Corporation, a key Air Force contractor, offers a civilian version called Vigilant Stare to federal, state, county, and municipal governments. The estimated \$20 million cost of a single drone has kept sales low, but less expensive versions attach the hardware to manned flights. The FBI alone ran nearly 2,000 surveillance flights in a four-month period during late 2015, operating through a long list of front companies.



Col. Clyde Mauch, President

The founder, president, and majority owner of Persistent Vigil, Mauch is a big, golf-playing, glad-handing executive in khakis and a blue polo shirt that sports the company logo. “Clyde Mauch! Good to meetin you.” An expert in optical and mechanical engineering, he is capable of running the system but not programming it.

Mauch’s company develops surveillance technology as a subcontractor for Sierra Nevada Corporation, constantly improving the kinds of software and hardware used in Sierra Nevada’s Vigilant Stare product. (See **GORGON STARE** on page 10 for details.) His pitch is rote—see **THE PITCH** on page 12—but to an Agent who succeeds on a **HUMINT** roll or who has **HUMINT** at 50% or higher, he seems nervous. He worries that the Agents’ investigation is a sign that someone is putting old trouble in the public eye and that will interfere with sales and investment.

Mauch does not know about Norah Brigid’s disappearance, only that she didn’t come in today. If he learns she is missing, he tasks his VP, Rusty Loedel, with looking into it. Brigid has access to valuable, sensitive technology. Preventing the exposure of trade secrets is at least as important to Mauch as Brigid’s safety.

Mauch very much wants the Agents to finish their job and go away without trouble. But if he thinks they are digging up facts that could threaten his company, he takes steps to distract or divert them. He comes up with a list of innocuous software bugs from the past eighteen months and presents them as more of the glitches that seem to worry the Agents. Every hour they waste examining that code he spends on the phone with contacts at Sierra Nevada Corporation, the Pentagon, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Justice, and the Nevada governor’s office. He wants background on the Agents. If they used false credentials, he and his vice president, Rusty Loedel, demand prosecution and then file lawsuits against the Agents individually. How far that goes and what it means for the Agents is up to the Handler.

Mauch’s Background

Details about Clyde Mauch are surprisingly scant online. To find them, the Agents must succeed on a **Computer Science**, **Military Science** (any), or **SIGINT** roll, or **Persuade** a contact who is expert in one of those fields to provide the information. Each attempt occupies that Agent for a few hours. With a fumble, Mauch learns about the inquiries and becomes more suspicious and recalcitrant.

FIRST SUCCESS: Part of an Army-Air Force joint project, Mauch worked on a mid-2000s aerial surveillance system called Constant Hawk for the U.S. Army. His specialty was software, the algorithms the nascent platforms needed for accurate target acquisition.

He fully embraced the DARPA development principle stating that 80% finished was good enough, getting new technology far enough along to deploy and then putting it in the field for testing and finishing. Mauch shaved corners further than that. He was named in Wikileaks in connection to blue-on-blue drone strikes but by then he had already retired. Details were scant and he never faced charges.

SECOND SUCCESS: Mauch’s ruthless focus on deploying solutions swiftly backfired. Algorithms that only mostly worked caused more than one blue-on-blue bombardment. When leaks revealed too much, Mauch retired to help keep things quiet. And it worked. Those killings were not a factor when the Pentagon shut Constant Hawk down a year later to consolidate the parallel Army and Marine surveillance programs, Constant Hawk and Angel Fire, into a larger DARPA “Combat Zones That See” program called Gorgon Stare. Mauch was already in the private sector by then, ready to get back to the same work as before with even less oversight.

Confronted about the blue-on-blue killings, Mauch becomes angrily defensive. He refuses to talk about it in any official way. Off the record, he says he was set up for blame to keep others out of trouble. He went along with it and kept quiet in public because he was a “good soldier.”

The Pitch

Persistent Vigil uses high-altitude drones to conduct persistent, wide-area surveillance to provide real-time information. State-of-the-art cameras take ultra-high-resolution images of a whole city, two every second, 24 hours a day. Mauch can fill in highlights from **GORGON STARE** on page 10 if the Agents need them.

The program began in war zones. Need to find who planted a roadside bomb? Zoom in on footage of the blast, backtrack the footage until you find the figure who dropped off the bag, then fast forward and follow the suspect home.

Software watches for identifiable image elements and assigns them codes for easy reference. An early innovation programmed software to north-justify and stabilize each frame of footage as it came in, match each pixel to an actual point on the surface of the earth, identify elements that had not changed, and only show elements that were different. That made the amount of data transferred manageable and allowed the whole system to be more responsive. Mauch says that with its constantly improving capability to recognize behavior patterns and months' worth of real-time data already stored, Persistent Vigil can predict any Reno resident's daily movements with a median accuracy of 78%.

Companies around the U.S. are pitching surveillance systems to civilian government agencies—the FBI, state troopers, local police, you name it—to (as Mauch always puts it) “catch the bad guys before they have time to crack a beer.” It is also tremendously useful for identifying political protesters and everyone they know, thanks to social media, with far more detail than any terrorist tracked overseas. The Border Patrol has its own surveillance Predators already watching the Mexican border.

Other companies' aerial surveillance projects in Minneapolis and Baltimore met with glowing enthusiasm by police and sharp blowback from civilians and privacy advocates. Nothing in the surveillance programs was illegal—there is no law in the U.S. to prevent the government from filming people in public spaces or in their backyards and identifying them

with facial recognition software—but city governments grew wary and needed constant reassurances and incentives.

Mauch is confident in his shop's work being valuable in systems run on aircraft less costly than Predators and Reapers. And the market is ready. Mauch firmly believes that all this is just the beginning. “Mark my words,” he says. “Pretty soon, our neural-network algorithms will tell you the future before it happens.”

The Partnership

Mauch happily says Persistent Vigil is working with Reno PD on a secret surveillance project. “I told them, give us access to a full metro PD network and we can work miracles.” His Reno PD contact is Lt. Adam Wilstatter, head of the Traffic Division. (See **RENO AND SPARKS POLICE** on page 16 for his details.) Mauch wants to show Wilstatter just how much more Persistent Vigil can deliver than speeding tickets.

Persistent Vigil's partnership with Reno PD is a private arrangement for now. “Nobody knows about it unless we want them to know about it.” He believes that by the time he and Reno are ready to go public, Persistent Vigil will have delivered Reno PD such good stats that nobody will be able to say no. “And all that protest nonsense out of Baltimore and Minneapolis will have died down anyway.”

Mauch offers to show the Agents past case records. “You'll love it. Zoom in anywhere and you can reverse as far as you like.”

The Problem

Mauch does not volunteer it to the Agents, but something is wrong with his miracle. The high-res cameras occasionally send back inexplicable glitches. Instead of a god's-eye view of Reno, the camera sometimes shows horrifying, alien landscapes. Mauch thinks the AI has gone a little haywire, like Google's DeepDream software turning a portrait into a nightmare. Programmer Norah Brigid is looking for the cause.

In the meantime, Mauch and Loedel carefully keep the glitches and everything associated with them out of footage that's available to Reno PD. They told

Brigid and Boyer to have the system filter out glitches for the Reno PD feed. They worried that the glitch put the validity of the whole system at risk. The filter replaces the missing footage in Persistent Vigil's system with "encoding error" placeholder frames.

The glitches especially worry Mauch because they seem to be associated with violent crimes, exactly what the project is supposed to detect. Mauch is desperately confident that his team will solve the problem before it's too late for the police to solve the crimes. If the Agents learn of the trouble and demand details, Mauch instructs Boyer to cooperate. See **GHOSTS IN THE CODE** on page 14 for details.

Rusty Loedel, Vice President

Maj. Russell Loedel, USAF (ret.), is Mauch's lawyer, right-hand man, and protector. He firmly believes in Mauch's patriotism and skill. He believes Mauch was martyred by the Air Force in the name of weak politics. Loedel worked with Mauch back in the day. He took early retirement to help Mauch set up Persistent Vigil.

Loedel cooperates with the Agents precisely to the level that Mauch instructs him and not a bit more. He is absolutely, unshakably convinced of the righteousness of Persistent Vigil's work in tracking down "bad guys" ranging from terrorists, drug-runners, and gangsters to "protesters, thugs, and looters."

Loedel describes Norah Brigid as a weird genius and Thomas Eaves as a rock-solid pilot. He dismissively says Kim Boyer is basically there to write bug reports for Brigid. Loedel can't stand people who have no confidence.

Thomas Eaves, Pilot

Another Air Force man, Eaves retired as a captain three years ago and immediately joined Persistent Vigil, taking a substantial part of his pay in stock. He feels like the company is poised to make a killing—and make him rich.

Meanwhile, the hardest part of his job is maintaining a Cessna equipped with the same hardware as the Predators and flying it through blue skies for a few hours at a time when Nellis can't send one of

the drones. Once he gets the plane in position, the software and autopilot take over and he can just enjoy the ride.

Eaves is a lean Black man with short hair and the goatee he could never wear under Air Force regulations.

Eaves offers to let an Agent ride shotgun in the Cessna next time he flies. In fact, getting in a plane with him is the best way to get him talking. On the ground, he stays busy at work with maintenance and a hundred distractions and at home with his wife and four teenage girls.

If asked about anything unusual in the drones' performance, Eaves says a few interesting things have come up recently. He doesn't maintain the drones himself, of course—they fly out of Nellis—but he's the company liaison with the Nellis crew. During flights on May 21, 24, and 27, a drone required repairs consistent with wild fluctuations in temperature, radiation, and pressure. That matched nothing in their flight plans. And it never came up before May 21.

Eaves suspects the drone damage means someone at Nellis has been cutting corners on maintenance. Nellis denies that. The Nellis team says Persistent Vigil has been flying the drones in ways not consistent with their flight plans or their contract. Persistent Vigil denies that.

Eaves can give the times those three drones landed and were examined. Comparing that data with the glitches shows the damage occurred during time windows that included the weird, single-frame glitches that Norah Brigid was investigating.

Eaves says Agents interested in examining the drones themselves must get permission from Nellis. That requires the kind of highly restricted access that comes with a **Bureaucracy** roll at -40% or a **Military Science (Air)** roll at -20%. The Agents can make one attempt every few days. With a success, one Agent gets permission to fly out to an isolated corner of the Nellis Air Force Base Complex where the drones assigned to Persistent Vigil are stored in a long hangar. If the Agent has skills related to mechanics or electronics, see **DEATHS AND GLITCHES** on page 19 and invent weird details accordingly.

Kim Boyer, Programmer

Skittish and nervous, mousy and quiet, Kim Boyer is not a people person. That makes her devotion to Norah Brigid even stronger. They went to MIT together, bonded, and became very close. They both know the program inside and out, but Boyer says Brigid is the smartest person she knows.

She says coming to Persistent Vigil was like joining a startup. Much of their pay is in stock options. Boyer and Brigid work with extremely complex algorithms. Mauch and Rusty know the camera software, but it would be bad for the company if Kim and Norah left.

Asked more about Brigid, she says they last spoke a couple of days ago. Norah has a dog, that her therapist said to get one for companionship. Kim has been handling Norah's workflow. If the Agents ask about Brigid's apartment, Boyer says she has keys.

The Code

Kim Boyer is glad to show off her work. An Agent with **Computer Science** at 20% or higher recognizes savant-like skill and efficiency in the code. The AI identifies, signifies, and tags visual elements, and assigns a confidence level for each identification for review. Everything is cross-referenced in a huge database.

It's not perfect yet, but it's definitely on its way. There are swaths of time in which data is corrupted, times when neither a drone nor Eaves could fly, instances where the pictures were not just right, where there are gaps in data. The system assigns a long line of error codes, categorized as "Series 2," for the current iteration of the program, for things like flocks of birds or fog obscuring the view.

Brigid and Boyer assembled playthroughs of the violent crimes of the last few days, hooked them into Reno case files and Nevada driver data, and fed it all into algorithms for analysis. See **DEATHS AND GLITCHES** on page 19 for details.

One troubling thing is three crazy images that the system delivered during footage from those crimes. Glitches come up from time to time—that's expected—but these were extraordinarily elaborate. Stranger, the system tagged them with "Series 1" error codes,

a legacy of iterations from ages ago—five or maybe even ten years. Boyer doesn't know what they were for. Norah Brigid handled all three herself.

Boyer knows that Brigid moved footage containing the glitches to an external hard drive that she kept at home. She also knows that was a breach of company security. If the Agents press her on missing data, she claims ignorance, but a successful **HUMINT** roll recognizes the lie. If the Agents promise to keep the policy breach a secret, she comes clean with them. It requires a **Persuade** roll only if the Agents don't expect to keep that promise.

Ghosts in the Code

An Agent with **Computer Science** at 50% or higher or who succeeds on a roll, or who asks Boyer to help, can review the unusual error codes that Norah Brigid was working on.

Boyer pulls up giant spreadsheet of error codes. Each is keyed to a particular frame of footage. Only three are the unusual Series 1 glitches. After the first glitch, Brigid programmed the system to filter all Series 1 glitches out of ordinary processing. The photo stream shows a placeholder that says the algorithm and coders cleared a glitch due to an obstruction or shadow.

The three Series 1 error codes and associated glitches were keyed to footage that appeared to be associated with recent crimes. Those are already moved to Brigid's external drive.

One Series 1 glitch has come through since then, the footage of Norah Brigid's disappearance. Boyer has not investigated it; she expects Brigid to handle it when she comes in. She calls it up if the Agents ask: See **MAY 28: BRIGID AND THE HELL GLITCH** on page 24 for details. The footage is not quite clear enough for Boyer to recognize Norah Brigid or her car, but she grows deeply interested when she sees the glitch and then sees that the woman in the footage has vanished. She immediately flags the car in the system to run a search using its make, model, and color as seen from above. If the Agents let her get that far, does, she identifies Brigid and becomes far more involved in the case.

Boyer says the Agents cannot leave with any footage or any data; it's proprietary. But she offers to call the Agents right away if any new glitches appear. An Agent who has both **Computer Science** and **Stealth** at 50% or higher, or who succeeds at a roll with whichever skill is lower, can surreptitiously copy data while Boyer is distracted. Failure means either aborting the effort or convincing her with **Law** or **Persuade** to go along with it. With a fumble, she grows alarmed and she tells Loedel unless the Agents roll **Law** or **Persuade** to talk her down. Alienating Boyer or Loedel makes everything the Agents do at Persistent Vigil more challenging. The Handler can invent details as needed.

Grounding the Cameras

To Mauch, any request to ground the drones and even the airplane is ludicrous. He flatly refuses. Loedel promises scorched-earth legal challenges and lawsuits for tortious interference.

Showing Mauch a clear connection between the footage and the murders gives the Agents a chance to roll **Persuade**. If that roll fails, Mauch stubbornly calls the Agents' information all conjecture and coincidence. If the roll succeeds, he leaves the drones and planes on the ground for 24 hours. Then the Handler secretly makes the same **Persuade** roll again. If it fails, he changes his mind and puts them in the air again without telling the Agents.



If the Agents have evidence that Norah Brigid took classified data home, they can get a court order in 24 hours to shut Persistent Vigil down for a more official FBI investigation than their own. They can accelerate that to 12 hours if an Agent succeeds at a **Bureaucracy**, **Law** or **Military Science (Air)** roll. Their case officer warns them that it runs the risk of exposing unnatural secrets to the Bureau at large. They remove the massive servers and all of Norah Brigid's work under cover of DoD secrecy before outside investigators arrive. The case officer can arrange for a helicopter to pick up the cargo in some isolated patch of desert—a Pave Hawk MH-60G with four heavily-armed CORAL NOMAD operators for security—but the Agents have to get it there.

Hacking Persistent Vigil

Cautious Agents might minimize their direct contact with Persistent Vigil and hack its computer system for details. Doing that quickly requires physically connecting a computer or USB stick to a computer inside Persistent Vigil.

If the Agents gain inside access, it requires **Computer Science** skill at 70% or a successful roll at -20% to successfully exploit it, each attempt taking about a day. A fumble alerts Kim Boyer to the attempted intrusion and propels Mauch and Loedel into extreme caution and resistance. Success grants the information found in **THE CODE** and **GHOSTS IN THE CODE** on page 14.

At first blush, company's security looks far too tight for an unauthorized user to gain access to the system from the outside. However, an Agent who studies the system and its networks for a day or so, and has **Computer Science** at 85% or higher or successfully rolls at -40%, finds carefully obscured traces of exactly that kind of access. The Agent can exploit those holes to gain the same access from outside that they otherwise could gain inside Persistent Vigil. Investigating the security breach could lead the Agents to Anthony Cooper. See **TRACING GRBHGRSNH92** on page 29 for possible details.

Using this access to interfere with the operation of the surveillance software requires either **Computer Science** (at 70% or with a successful roll at -20%) or **SIGINT** (at 50% or with a successful roll). That keeps the software offline for 1D4 hours while Boyer hurries to reset it. Agents can scramble the surveillance software for 1D4 days by making both rolls.

Reno and Sparks Police

Lt. Adam Wilstatter leads the 28 officers of the Reno PD Traffic Division. By orders of the chief of police, he is the department's sole liaison with Persistent Vigil. They kept that loop tight to reduce public attention. "Traffic surveillance" sounds like the airplanes and helicopters that everyone is used to. There is nothing legally to prevent the department from working with Persistent Vigil, but this is a trial to test efficacy before they utilize the system more widely.

Agents can easily get Wilstatter's take on Persistent Vigil simply by saying they are investigating the company. More cautious Agents could get the same information by hacking into the department's email system, though each attempt takes 1D4 days as the Agents feed software into the system from outside with phishing emails and USB sticks dropped where curious cops can pick them up. Such hacking requires **Computer Science** at 40% (the servers are not very secure) or a successful roll at +10%.

Wilstatte's Suspicions

Wilstatte is suspicious of Mauch. The executive rubbed him the wrong way from the beginning; when a background check turned up the allegations of Mauch's involvement with friendly fire, it did not shock Wilstatte at all.

That suspicion only grew more solid over the last couple of weeks. First, the system began showing more and more glitches in image processing, some with isolated frames missing and some with the entire feed blank for minutes. The missing footage included the spree of high-profile murders. For all Persistent Vigil's claims about the crimefighting of the future, the system has been useless in the worst crimes of the

summer. Clyde Mauch assured Wilstatter that Brigid and Boyer were working round the clock to make sure it didn't happen again.

The morning of May 28, Norah Brigid asked Wilstatter to a private meeting. She told him that she had more footage of the Western Village Inn and Casino robbery than the system allowed the police to see. She said she thought it was connected with homicides at Greater Nevada Field and at the Circle of Stones. She said she thought the perpetrators knew about Persistent Vigil's surveillance. She was terrified of blowback for breaching the company's confidentiality. She implored him to find a way to get the data officially. But she said that if it was the only way to save lives, she would breach her nondisclosure agreements and federal secrecy laws.

Wilstatter kept her secrets. He asked Mauch for more data. Mauch slow-played the response, trying to buy time. If Wilstatter learns Brigid is missing, Mauch and Loedel are his first suspects.

If any high-profile disaster strikes Persistent Vigil, Wilstatter comes to the offices demanding explanations and accusing Mauch of fraud and obstruction of justice. As far as Wilstatter is concerned, the city's partnership with Persistent Vigil is over.

The Detectives

The killings have attracted the attentions of the Reno Police Department and the Sparks Police Department. Detective Oliver Larson is lead investigator for the Reno PD Robbery/Homicide Unit. Detective Clint Vargas is lead investigator for the Sparks PD Detectives Section. Either detective agrees to meet with the Agents within a few hours if they say they are federal agents. Otherwise, they can make a **Luck** roll once a day to get time with him.

The detectives faces heavy pressure to close the cases, especially because the killings have so much in common. Larson and Vargas have met a few times informally to share information and both believe they must have been committed by the same perpetrators.

Unfortunately, those perpetrators were thorough and cautious. Police found no fingerprints or trace evidence. No photos except with the killers in masks,

long sleeves, and gloves. They used axes and machetes that could have come from any hardware store. The crime scenes, all public locations, have been cleared and opened to the public.

Police have rough height and weight estimates. All three appeared to be male. Witnesses at Western Village Inn & Casino heard two of them speak Spanish to each other, but no witness who knew Spanish was near enough to understand them.

The killers speaking Spanish, the calm savagery of the killings, and especially the flaming necklace put on Calderon make detectives suspect Mexican cartel killers. Reno and Sparks police are on alert for Hispanic gang members, which unfortunately means they will spend a great deal of time harassing every young Hispanic man in sight, and turn up nothing useful.

Motives are equally baffling. The ritualistic nature of Peña's killing implies forethought, but Peña was not supposed to even be at work. He was filling in at the last minute. The janitor who called in sick is terrified.

Calderon's background could explain an attack on him—he was a journalist who reported on cartels and corruption in northern Mexico—but police have found nothing in common between Peña, Calderon, and Sandoval. All had Hispanic names, but that is hardly unusual in the Reno area.

Norah Brigid

Norah Brigid's car still sits across the street from Lyudmila Barraclough's house, described in **THE HOUSE ON GAULT WAY** on page 24. Brigid left a phone propped up on her car's dashboard to record her approach to the house and upload the footage to the Internet. She used the phone to post to anonymous Internet accounts and to communicate privately with Lt. Wilstatter of the Reno police. See **BRIGID'S PHONE** on page 28 for more details. Her purse in the car has a spare key to her apartment.

Brigid lived in Unit 16 of the Green Park Apartments, a bleak, one-story complex just north of I-580. The property manager, Helen Curle, does not know Brigid is missing. A successful **Persuade** roll convinces her to grant the Agents access to Brigid's apartment

without a warrant, but for the tenant's protection, she insists on going in with them. She does not know Brigid personally. If she accompanies the Agents, she is eager for gossip. Normal people don't go missing, after all. Brigid must have been up to something.

A friendly Shiba Inu waits in Brigid's apartment. The name on its collar is Zen. A water dish is engraved its name, "Huxian Zen," Brigid's attempt at "Zen the Immortal Fox Spirit." The dog's presence surprises Curle because Brigid did not pay a pet deposit. If Brigid is missing, Curle does not want the dog left alone: "You're going to take the dog and take care of it, right?"

Brigid's apartment is lived-in and a little unkempt but not filthy: a walk-in kitchen, a small living room, a bedroom, an office with a desktop computer, a bathroom. She doesn't clean; she tidies.

A successful **Computer Science**, **Forensics**, or **Search** roll, or having the relevant skill at 50% or higher, allows Agents to notice that the desktop computer in the bedroom is very dusty. It has not seen much use lately.

Conducting a careful search does not require a roll. The Agents discover that an ottoman's top lifts from a compartment that holds a laptop computer, an external hard drive, and a dusty old teddy bear from Brigid's childhood.

The laptop has a sticker of a photo of her dog. The name is legible on its collar if anyone looks closely. The laptop is not configured to connect to the Internet. Brigid has kept it air gapped for security. It is easy to steal if the Agents have a briefcase and take any steps to distract the property manager.

Brigid loosened security on these devices significantly to allow police to get access without her official cooperation. Each is protected by the same password: her dog's name, "Huxian Zen." A successful **Computer Science** roll figures that out in a couple of hours, with a +40% bonus if the Agent succeeds at **HUMINT** first.

A successful **Computer Science** roll can untangle Brigid's unique filing system in the external drive. Each attempt takes a few hours. A fumble takes a full working day. The work is complicated by obscured data and unfinished proprietary code, perhaps things that she had planned to keep to herself rather than deploying for Persistent Vigil. Kim Boyer could sort through it all if the Agents ask for her help. Success reveals the three glitches Brigid pulled out of footage from May 21, May 24, and May 27, and the killings associated with them: See **DEATHS AND GLITCHES** on page 19.

The phone that recorded her vanishing is not in the apartment. It is still on the dashboard of her car on Gault Way.

SYNCHRONICITY

The Dog's Teeth

In a *God's Teeth* campaign, the dog has a strange reaction to the property manager just when it would help the Agents for her to be distracted. It unexpectedly leaps at her, snarling and snapping. An Agent must succeed on a **STR×5** roll to hold it back without Helen Curle taking a nasty bite. Once it is away from her, it returns to perfectly friendly docility.





The coordinates that match Greater Nevada Field, when mapped against this fleshscape, reside on the tip of some beaklike protuberance big enough to swallow the stadium whole.

Greater Nevada Field

Agents can use Brigid's Persistent Vigil footage to trace the killers to and from the scene. An hour before the killing, a taxi carries the killers into Reno from the east. The Yellow Cab logo is clearly visible. It had picked them up at a Chevron station outside town. The cab drives them to a construction site at Katherine Dunn Elementary School in Sparks, northeast of Reno. The school is undergoing an expansion. The men unlock a large, blue storage unit at the construction site and walk inside. Twenty minutes later, a blue 2012 Toyota Camry emerges from the storage unit. One of the men closes and locks the storage unit behind them and gets in the car. The Camry drives to Greater Nevada Field, its route avoiding all traffic cameras until it reaches the parking lot.

In the stuttering view of half a second per frame, the three men walk to the entrance and disappear under the front awning. All wear hoods that obscure their faces. One carries a large duffel bag. A few minutes later, they drag Howard Peña onto the field, bound and writhing. They wear ski masks, now. They take a very long and bloody time killing him, drawing weird symbols around him from his blood. Viewing the footage costs 1/1D4 SAN from violence. One of them looks up, as if directly at the drone, and waves. They walk off the field and out of sight. When they emerge from the front awning a few minutes later, they have changed clothes but still wear hoods. They walk back to the car. They drive to Whitney Peak Parking Garage, three blocks away, avoiding further traffic cameras. Neither the car nor the men emerge. Other cars come and go.

Brigid added a comment in the footage metadata: *"Dunn storage unit closed since beginning of PVIS footage—5 months."*

Investigations

Agents who approach the Reno detective in the Peña case—see **THE DETECTIVES** on page 17—can get a closer look at photos of the scene, particularly the symbols drawn around the body.

An **Anthropology**, **Archaeology**, or **History** roll, or having the skill at 50% or higher, identifies some of the letters at the Peña killing as early Middle Eastern, perhaps a kind of Persian. Consulting with an expert identifies them with the Pahlavi script—descended from Egyptian hieroglyphics through Phoenician and Aramaic—used in Middle Persian from about the 2nd to 7th centuries CE. The words “see” and “daeva” can be made out. A daeva in Zoroastrianism is a rejected god, a demon.

A successful **Unnatural** roll identifies some of the other sigils at the Peña scene, not part of any human language, with divination rituals said to be detailed in the blasphemous *Necronomicon*, *De Vermis Mysteriis*, and the lesser-known *Geographic and Spiritual Alignment With Jannah*. The roll is at +20% if either the **Occult** test or the **Anthropology**, **Archaeology**, or **History** test succeeded, or +40% if both succeeded.

The driver of the taxi that picked up the three men remembers little about them. He thinks they were Hispanic. They paid in cash. If pressed, he says sometimes you get a feel for which people you don't want to pay much attention to. People who might be dangerous. That's how this was. You just keep your eyes on the road.

The blue Camry is still in the Whitney Peak Parking Garage. Its license plates are missing, and the killers were careful to clean it of forensic evidence, but its Vehicle Identification Number is easy to find. Looking it up identifies the owner. See **THE CAMRY** on this page for details. Police have installed temporary cameras in girders overlooking the car and garage. If anyone takes special interest in it, a pair of patrol cars comes to block them in while a SWAT team gathers. The Reno detective responsible for the murder case takes the lead once the Agents have been disarmed and detained. See **RENO AND SPARKS POLICE** on page 16 for details.

The Container

An expansion to the suburban Katherine Dunn Elementary School is well in progress. Construction workers are everywhere. The blue storage unit that held the Camry is one of half a dozen, some in use and some empty. It is owned by Cassidy Construction of 724 Baring Boulevard, Sparks, Nevada, which has a construction contract with the school. Cassidy Construction is owned by Bob Cassidy of 3314 Martini Road, Sparks, Nevada.

Inside the Camry's container is a scene of ritualized madness. Countless strings of every colored yarn run wall to wall and floor to ceiling, connecting points on maps of Reno and photographs of buildings and terrain. The strings are so complex and thick that they still show the gap of the car they had to be drawn around, negative space the size of the stolen Camry.

Notes and symbols drawn all over include matches to the Middle Persian found at the scene of Howard Peña's murder, drawn large and clear as if to instruct someone not fluent in the language.

An Agent who studies the strings and maps in the context of the glitches and murders can make an **INT×5** roll to begin to trace the pattern. They suspect connections between coordinates, elevations, and times, and know that with deep expertise in mathematics or physics they could figure out more.

An Agent who also has **Navigation** at 50% or higher has a chance to identify the next targets, a successful roll required for each.

An Agent who makes the **INT×5** roll and has **Science (Mathematics)** or **Science (Physics)** at 50% or higher, or who succeeds on a roll, discerns the full pattern and its function. See **REVELATIONS** on page 30 for details.

Discarded in a corner of the container is the blue Camry's license plate.

The Camry

The blue Camry is registered to Tammy Lynn-Cassidy, who lives with her husband Bob on Martini Road in Sparks. The car has not been reported stolen.

The Cassidys live in an unassuming house at the edge of the desert. Tammy is home most of the time, while Bob is often at work during the day. Neither much wants to talk to police or federal agents. Tammy, in particular, grows nervous, even afraid. But they answer questions.

They bought the Camry as a favor for Hernando Roland, an illegal immigrant that used to work for them when they owned a ranch. Roland paid for it, but they registered it in Tammy's name to help him avoid trouble with immigration. He later bought a pickup truck that he drives more often. To keep the Camry safe and clean, Bob let him store it at a build site—Katherine Dunn Elementary School—where he had a couple of shipping containers that wouldn't be needed for a while.

Both say Roland is a good man, honest and hard-working, and deserves better than to be kicked out of the country where he's worked and paid taxes for nearly thirty years. After they sold the ranch, Roland moved to town, too. He owns a café not far away, the Caffeine Cantina. They're still friends and they hire him as a handyman from time to time. He helps other immigrants get safe work. They haven't spoken to him in a few weeks. That has been longer than usual but not long enough to worry. They have no idea that someone stole the car from the container.

If either of them sees the interior of the container, they are shocked and mystified. They can only conclude that some "crazy homeless person" moved in.

Hernando Roland

Hernando Roland is listed with the state and federal governments as a taxpayer and small-business owner with no family and no criminal record. Like many immigrants, he uses an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number rather than a Social Security number. The Nevada Department of Motor Vehicles has a photo from six years ago on file. It shows a short Hispanic man with short black hair and friendly brown eyes. Roland posts occasional photos of the Caffeine Cantina and its customers on its social media pages. He almost never posts photos of himself.

May 24: Calderon and the Ice Glitch

Viewing this image costs 0/1 SAN from unnatural.

The drone switched to its infrared camera to record in darkness. But the image seems to have so little heat differentiation as to be almost indecipherable, well below freezing. It is an icy wasteland. An Agent who has **Navigation** at 50% or better or who succeeds on a roll can tell that the ice does not at all follow the topography of Reno.

The Circle of Stones

Built by the ancestors of the Washoe in a nearby valley 500 to 1,000 years ago, this (fictional) sacred monument was carefully documented by archeologists in 1969 and moved to the Reno hills to escape flooding. It's now part of the Ranch Disc Golf Course at Rancho San Rafael, next to the Reno Softball Complex and overlooked by Reno's Basque Monument.

The Circle of Stones is about 20 meters across with a two-meter-wide entry on the southwest side. The five largest stones stand in the center.

The system took complete footage of the crime. It begins with the killers driving into town from the south in a white 2004 Nissan Altima that would not be reported stolen from Carson City until the next day. Its license plates are covered. They exit I-80 at the airport and drive west, out of traffic camera coverage. They drive to 2310 Idlewild Drive, Reno, home to Geraldo Calderon.

Three men in ski masks go inside and drag a man out with a pillowcase over his head. They drive north to the parking lot of the disc golf course, avoiding traffic cameras, and drag the man to the Circle of Stones. Even in the relatively grainy blur of the drone footage, what follows costs remote witnesses 0/1 SAN from violence. The killers indulge in ten long minutes of torture and mutilation. One of them brings a tire and a gasoline can from the trunk of the car. They drape the tire around the man's neck, douse the tire in gasoline, and set it alight with matches. After a writhing moment, the system glitches for a frame. In the next frame, the burning body lies before the killers.

They take the gas can back to the car and wave up at the drone cameras for two still frames. They drive to the Sierra Street Parking Complex less than two kilometers away. The car does not emerge.

Investigations

It is easy with a little Internet research to uncover Gerardo Calderon's background as a Mexican journalist who fled to the U.S. in 2010 under death threats from numerous drug cartels. He had extremely dangerous enemies. His biggest exposé, in 2009, covered an infamous hitman for the Beltrán-Leyva Organization (BLO), known only as "Santa." BLO was by then already being squeezed out by rivals and weakened by the capture of leaders by American and Mexican authorities, and no one could say Calderon played a significant role in the cartel's downfall. He clearly figured moving north of the border would be protection enough.

May 27: Sandoval and the Starry Glitch

This glitch costs no SAN for most viewers. It shows a broad, shadowy lake wreathed in fog. The water reflects stars. Gaps between stars appear to be shoals.

For an image taken at night, when stars would be visible in a dark sky, the drone should have used its IR camera. Perhaps the shift from day to night was so quick that the microsecond detections between frames did not register it in time. Or maybe it was just a malfunction. Assuming the glitch is anything but a glitch.

An Agent with **Science (Astronomy)** or an equivalent skill at 50% or higher, or who succeeds on a roll, can piece together the arrangement of reflected stars after a few hours of work at a computer. It is the night sky seen from Asterope, about 430 light years away, one of the Pleiades. Sol, our sun, is too dim and far away to see. The arrangement of stars indicates the image was recorded as the sky would have appeared on May 27, even though it will be about 430 years before that day's light from Asterope reaches Earth. This realization costs 0/1D4 SAN from the unnatural.

The Western Village Inn & Casino Robbery

Persistent Vigil pinpointed the exact time and place of the crime, reported it immediately, identified the getaway vehicle, and tracked it back to its source. They told Sparks police that they tracked it after the robbery until the vehicle left town. They did not.

The footage first picks up the killers' car, a black Chevrolet Impala with its license plates covered, driving out of the Parking Gallery garage at West 1st Street and North Sierra Street. A call confirms it was stolen from long-term parking. It takes backstreets to the Western Village Inn & Casino, avoiding traffic cameras. Three men in black coats and ski masks get out. They enter the casino with shotguns and emerge 20 seconds later, pushing a terrified woman into the car with them.

They drive to the far side of the parking lot and push the woman out of the car. Two men get out with her. They hack her to death, look up, wave at the watching camera, and get back in the car.

As police race to the casino, the killers drive about seven kilometers to the parking garage at East 2nd Street and Pringle Way, taking back streets and avoiding traffic cameras. The car does not emerge.

Investigations

Dora Sandoval worked at the casino for three years. Nothing stands out in her background that would raise the attention of the Agents or, presumably, murderous robbers.

After reviewing details from the Western Village Inn & Casino robbery and killing—the casino has it recorded from half a dozen different cameras—a successful **Criminology** roll or having the skill at 50% or higher finds the robbery seems entirely opportunistic compared to the first two murders. Sandoval apparently just happened to be the one working the cash cage at the wrong time.

The Impala was reported stolen from Truckee, California, on May 28.

May 28: Brigid and the Hell Glitch

Drone footage of Norah Brigid's disappearance can be found in Persistent Vigil's system, not yet exported to Norah Brigid's external drive. The footage matches precisely what the Agents saw in the victim's own footage. She drives to 1281 Gault Way. She gets out of her car. She begins to cross the street. She looks back. She's gone.

The drone's view of the same event was interrupted by a single-frame view of a bizarre landscape, seen from far overhead, a desert whose topography does not match that of Reno at all. A straight, black line runs across the northeast. The lighting is strangely soft, as if coming from two directions.

Zooming in reveals cracked and craggy terrain and unidentifiable trees of weird proportions that grow from outcroppings. The line to the northeast is the thin shadow of a single, immense structure at least four kilometers long, clearly not a natural formation.

A small pattern, perhaps of stones carefully placed, can be seen near the center of the image. Seeing it in detail requires zooming in further. That costs 0/1 SAN from the unnatural. The pattern is countless rocks gathered together to form a message in three words:

HELP

RANCHO

MANOR

A corpse lies nearby with red blood spread in every direction. Making out identifiable details requires zooming in to the greatest extent of the drone's cameras and Persistent Vigil's software and costs 1/1D4 SAN from the unnatural. It is Norah Brigid.

If one accepts the image as something real, assembling the message must have taken hours or days. Yet the timestamp shows the photo was taken only half a second after the last photo of Brigid in the street.

If she views the footage of Norah Brigid's vanishing, Boyer becomes deeply fascinated. She continues to investigate unless the Agents somehow stop her. That exposes her to the ritual in one or two days.

A quick search of the Internet or any local map finds Rancho Manor Drive in Reno. See **RANCHO MANOR DRIVE** on page 26 for details.

May 30: Barracrough and the Death Glitch

This glitch emerges with the murder of Lyudmila Barracrough at 1281 Gault Way in Sparks. It is all black in the infrared camera. No source of heat whatsoever. It doesn't show an absence of data but an ambient temperature of -273° Celsius or -460° Fahrenheit. An Agent who makes a successful INT×5 roll at -20% or a Science skill such as **Physics** or **Astronomy** cannot resist the suspicion that they are somehow witnessing the universe after heat death. That realization costs 0/1D4 SAN from the unnatural.

The House on Gault Way

The house at 1281 Gault Way has one resident, its owner, Lyudmila Barracrough, a thin 61-year-old with short, bleach blonde hair with graying roots. She was a showgirl but retired long ago. She has no family and few connections. Her home is filled with outdated, chintzy decor and framed photos of family she hasn't seen in many years. She doesn't get out much. Community newspapers tend to pile up at the door.

Barracrough is baffled and dismissive of any warnings of plots against her. If Agents tell her to watch out for dangerous men, she laughs and says, "Tell 'em to come in for drinks!" She didn't see Norah Brigid disappear and hasn't even noticed Brigid's car abandoned across the street.

She dies at 11:02 P.M. on May 30. Agents arriving after that find the front door has been kicked in. Photos are shattered on ground. Dark blood streaks the walls. Chairs are overturned. Barracrough's remains are scattered across the backyard patio by sliding glass doors. Nothing was stolen.

Investigations

An Agent who examines the murder scene with a **Forensics** skill of 50% or higher or who succeeds on a roll confirms that the killers kicked in the door and killed her with machetes and an axe. A successful **Search** roll allows the Agents to find transparent coveralls and gloves, soaked in blood, in a trash bag in a can in the backyard. The murder weapons were

hosed off in the backyard and dumped in a toolbox beside the house.

Persistent Vigil footage shows a black 2008 Chevrolet Malibu pulling up on a street a block away at 10:50 P.M. Three men get out wearing ski masks and plastic coveralls and carrying what look like tools. They cross quiet yards and come to the Barraclough house from the back. They kick in the back door and enter. They drag Barraclough out to the patio in back and hack her to death. After a few minutes, they put bloody coveralls, gloves, and tools in a trash can. They walk back to the car. One of them looks up toward the drone and waves. They drive into the West Stadium Parking Complex at the University of Nevada, Reno, taking backstreets and avoiding traffic cameras. Footage loses them there.

Tracing the car backward, it emerges from the 401-499 South Sierra Street parking garage at 10:20 P.M. and takes backstreets to Gault Way, avoiding traffic cameras. A call confirms the vehicle was stolen from long-term parking.

Examining the debris and a successful Forensics roll identifies fingerprints inside one of the gloves. See **PURSuing THE KILLERS** on page 32 for results.

Staking It Out

If Agents watch Barraclough's house before the killing, the killers attempt to ambush and distract them. See **PURSuing THE KILLERS** on page 32 for details.

June 2: Berry and the Infinite Glitch

This glitch emerges with a killing in the backyard of 48 Rancho Manor Drive. When the killers complete the ritual with the Berry murder, the ritual takes Anthony Cooper along with the drone to the presence of God. Or a god, anyway. Not the one he imagined it would be, but the one served by the ritual's inventors long ago. The drone returns after a second. Cooper does not.

The information that blooms in the mind of a witness to this still frame far exceeds anything the drone's cameras could possibly record. Upon the surfaces of a disorder of luminous globes roil flickering realities in



their four perceptible dimensions. Much as a reflection shines in the two dimensions of a mirror, whole universes erupt from the impossible surfaces of these living shapes. Or do they emerge from some deeper source only to be perceived and reflected in these iridescent globes, captured and made manifest and accessible in these iridescent globes, the human mind's best approximation of the nature of veiled Yog-Sothoth? Yog-Sothoth knows the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate. Past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth. The viewer loses 1/1D10 SAN from the unnatural and adds the same number to their **Unnatural** skill.

Rancho Manor Drive

A short, wooded street lined with middle-class homes near the Washoe County Golf Course. One long driveway leads from the street up to the neighborhood's largest, finest house, the home of Sadie Berry and her teenage son, Coyote Berry.

Before 6:30 P.M. on June 2, the Berrys have seen and heard nothing alarming or unusual.

At 6:30 P.M. on June 2, Coyote Berry calls 911. He says someone is breaking into their house. He saw two or three men that looked like gardeners but wearing ski masks, speaking Spanish. One of them said something about a "caffeine cantina," whatever that is. The call cuts off abruptly with a clattering as if Coyote dropped the phone.

At 6:35 P.M. on June 2, the killers murder Coyote Berry and Sadie Berry, following the same methods as the Barraclough killing. The worst of it is in the grassy, idyllic backyard. The killers drive off and abandon the car inside Renown Health's parking garage on Mill Street.

Reviewing footage afterward finds the killers stole a blue 2010 Volvo S40 from the vast Atlantis Casino Resort Spa parking lot. It was a short drive to the Berry house with no traffic cameras. One of the killers exited the car on one end of the street. The others got out farther down the street. They waited a few minutes until no one was in view and hiked through

the trees to the house. Each wears a ski mask and a gardener's jumpsuit and carries a large, heavy toolbag.

If the Agents stake out the Berry house ahead of time, they find the killers approach carefully. If they wait within sight of the house, they can attempt a group **Stealth** roll opposed by the killers' group **Alertness** roll—unless they wait in a vehicle. The killers watch for vehicles with people in them or whose windows are too darkly tinted to tell. If the Agents' **Stealth** roll fails, the killers get to make a group **Stealth** roll against the Agents' group **Alertness** roll. The killers mean for whichever one of them is best positioned for it to sneak up on the Agents and murder them at close range.

If the Agents have police stake out the Berry house, it's a bloodbath. All three killers die along with five cops, the bloodiest single day in the history of Reno PD. (If the Agents give enough warning for Reno to field a SWAT team, only two die.) But they save Sadie and Coyote Berry. They find a card for the Caffeine Cantina in a killer's pocket. If the Agents are prompt, they can follow police to the Caffeine Cantina or—depending on what they have told police about themselves—talk the police into giving them the details so the Agents can investigate it. See **CAFFEINE CANTINA** on page 32.

Undetermined: The String Glitch

This glitch emerges with an Agent or a Persistent Vigil employee becoming a victim of the ritual. See **EXPOSURE** on page 30 for details. Seen from above, Reno has become a world of white gauze or snow. Zooming in reveals no people but a few black specks here and there. Zooming in further and using software to enhance images makes clear the gauze is not snow but spiderwebs from one end of the city to the other. The black specks are immense spiders of no identifiable species. Lumps in the webs are about the right size for humans. The software identifies those shapes and counts over 200,000 of them, which is approximately the entire population of the city, desiccated or waiting to become prey. Viewing the glitch costs 1/1D4 SAN from the unnatural.

Undetermined: The Atlantis Glitch

This glitch emerges with an Agent or a Persistent Vigil employee becoming a victim of the ritual. See **EXPOSURE** on page 30 for details. The drone that takes the footage reappears suddenly waterlogged at 15,000 feet and promptly crashes. Thomas Eaves must fly to get manual footage for six hours the next day to make up a gap in coverage: See **THOMAS EAVES, PILOT** on page 13.

The infrared footage is gray and mostly indistinguishable with very little differentiation in temperature: 1 Celsius or 34 Fahrenheit, barely above freezing. Other sensors conclude they are surrounded by water. Zooming in finds broad patterns and lines and a handful of tiny spots of slightly higher temperature. Zooming in further finds the lines and patterns seem to mark the edges of mammoth stone structures and the warmer spots have a variety of shapes and sizes, mostly suggesting sea creatures or frogs, some the size of whales.

A successful **Archeology** or **Search** roll reveals strangely that many of those structural edges dip together into unexpected and downright impossible vanishing points or emerge and connect in the wrong places. The footage looks down from above and sees vertical surfaces that ought only to be visible from the side. Some of them seem to be stone doors of weird proportions, shockingly vast. That costs 1/1D4 SAN from the unnatural.

A successful **Science (Biology)** roll finds that most of the slightly warmer shapes match no known taxonomy, perhaps being hybrids or some new kind of life altogether. That costs 0/1 SAN from the unnatural.

A successful **Occult** roll allows the Agent to connect the viewed footage to some of the most outlandish myths of discredited occultism, sunken civilizations from Lemuria to Atlantis.

A successful **Unnatural** roll convinces the Agent that this is not merely the remnants of some prehistoric civilization but altogether prehuman, greater than human: R'lyeh, the sunken home of Great Cthulhu, father and mightiest priest of a people that seeped down from the stars hundreds of millions of years ago and wait for the stars to come right in some near time

when they shall awaken and reclaim the world that is rightfully theirs. Did the mad Arab not warn us in the blasphemies of the *Necronomicon*, a thousand years ago? "That is not dead which can eternal lie, / And with strange aeons even death may die." The realization costs 1/1D6 SAN from the unnatural. *Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn!*

Undetermined: The Pharaoh Glitch

This glitch emerges with an Agent or a Persistent Vigil employee becoming a victim of the ritual. See **EXPOSURE** on page 30 for details.

The great pyramids, smooth and beautiful. The mighty Sphinx, unbroken by time. Causeways from temple to temple, from tomb to tomb. Countless temples, countless tombs. Slaves by the thousands not struggling to build these monuments but herded by soldiers toward priests, toward basalt temples and altars surrounded by gore, some slaves slaughtered and some carrying away the dead. Down a wide lane between stone columns a lone figure strides. The cameras and algorithms pick him out in greater detail than any other Persistent Vigil image: a tall, slim figure in prismatic robes and crowned in a golden *pschent* that glows with inherent light. His face is raised to smile for the drone's camera and his arm is raised in greeting. The view costs 1/1D6 SAN from the unnatural.

A successful **Archeology** roll places the vision in the Bronze Age, perhaps five thousand years ago. A successful **History** roll confirms that the sacrificial practice matches nothing in the historical record. A successful **Occult** or **Foreign Language** (any form of ancient Egyptian) roll allows Agents to recall discreditable rumors and hints of mass sacrifice purportedly detailed in hieroglyphics effaced in the Fourth Dynasty. If all three succeed, or if one of those rolls is low enough to also have succeeded at the **Unnatural** skill roll, the Agent recognizes the smiling pharaoh. It is legendary Nephren-ka, who in fear of death called mighty Nyarlathotep, god of the thousand faces, soul and messenger of the Outer Gods, to join with his body and soul and become in him the infamous Black Pharaoh of horrifying legend. That realization costs

1/1D10 SAN from the unnatural and adds +2% to the Agent's **Unnatural** skill.

(In a *God's Teeth* campaign, a Tooth seeing the kinglike figure feels a surge of animal fury—hatred—hunger—the sharp taste of blood on the tongue. Their Unnatural skill is at +20% for the chance of recognizing Nephren-ka, or +40% if they have spent time researching the ancient history of the Bast cult and its interactions with Nyarlathotep.)

Implications

If the Agents review data on the crimes associated with the glitches, it becomes clear that Persistent Vigil's cover-ups are severe.

To an Agent with **Criminology** or **HUMINT** at 50% or higher, or who succeeds on a roll with either, this seems to be the same group of killers at work. There are no links between the victims but the killers' descriptions (despite masks), behavior, and body language are all consistent.

And somehow, the killers know they are under wide-area surveillance. And they aren't bothering to try to avoid it. In fact, they seem to be performing for it. The killers are not trying to escape notice. They're trying to be seen, every time, by the Persistent Vigil drone overhead.

Cherry-picking evidence to send to the police and lying about it could land Clyde Mauch and Rusty Loedel in prison for fraud. Both would rather go to prison than admit knowledge of such severe and inexplicable glitches and that outsiders—killers—already know of the operation's procedures.

Brigid's Phone

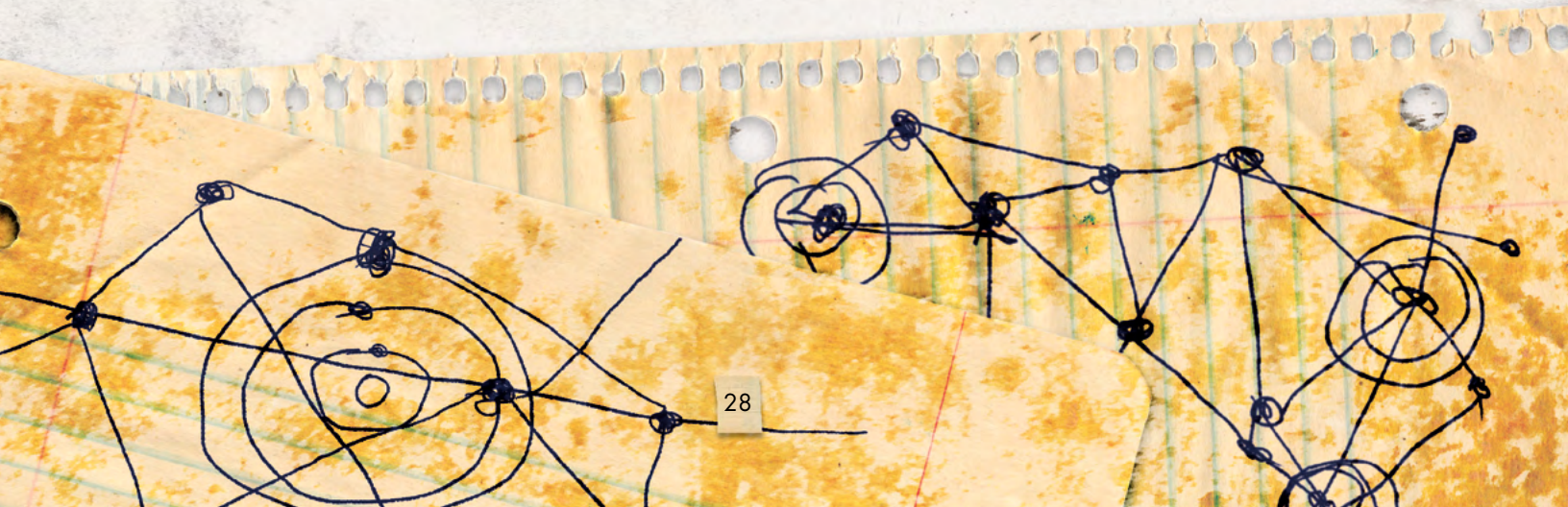
The phone from Norah Brigid's car can be recharged, but accessing its data requires having **Computer Science** at 70% or higher or a successful roll at a -20% penalty. Each attempt takes a few hours. If the Agents succeed, they find a great deal of information. Most immediately obvious are her communications with Lt. Wilstatter. See **RENO AND SPARKS POLICE** on page 16 for details.

Glitch data from Persistent Vigil is not on the phone. Brigid kept that on an external drive hidden in her apartment.

The Pattern

Brigid saw a clear correlation between the three murders and the three glitches. And, somehow, each happened in the presence of a surveillance drone. The killers waved up as if they could see it. It all seemed connected. That felt crazy, but she began looking for other pieces of the pattern. She looked at coordinates and elevation. At the time of each killing and the time between killings. One of her notes says: "Looking for patterns in apparent randomness. Isn't this what the code is for??"

In a great deal of excruciatingly complex math and after half a dozen false starts, she zeroes in on two hypothetical next targets: 1281 Gault Way the night of May 29 or May 30 and 48 Rancho Manor Drive sometime June 1, June 2, or June 3. Her calculations inexplicably break down—her frustrated notes show how baffling it was—trying to establish an event after that. Her last note: "Something's still missing. Some piece. Going to check on that Gault Way house."



Grbhgrsnh92

Three days before her disappearance, Brigid exchanged email with a correspondent identified only by email address, grbhgrsnh92@proton.me. It began when she sent an email saying she found the address as a signature buried in deprecated and cached code. That made her think this was one of the code's first programmers. She hoped they could exchange some ideas, assuming the programmer still had the right security clearance. A reply, a few days later, made Brigid rethink that hope. It had no text, only photos of sheets of paper filled with elaborate sketches. She did not send a follow-up.

(If the Agents try to translate the email address and one has skill in the Farsi language, make a secret skill roll for them. If it succeeds, "grbh grsnh" reminds them of pronunciation of the Farsi phrase "hungry cat." Otherwise it is gibberish. It means nothing useful for the operation, either way.)

The Sketches

The sketches grbhgrsnh92 sent to Brigid looked a little like ancient works of astronomy, with geometric shapes intersecting in complex patterns. But Brigid could identify nothing as a star or planet. An Agent who has seen the weird nest of ritual strings in the Katherine Dunn Elementary storage unit recognizes some of the patterns and intersections in the sketches. That could lead to an epiphany: See **REVELATIONS** on page 30.

A scrawl in Arabic translates as "And they will never compass anything of His Knowledge except that which He wills." A native Arabic reader, one with **Foreign Language (Arabic)** at 50% or higher, or one who succeeds on a roll with it can tell that the letters are drawn by someone who knows the language but is not fully fluent. The text is the sixth statement of Surah al-Baqarah 2:255 of the Quran, the "Throne verse."

The photos were scraped entirely clean of identifying metadata.

Tracing Grbhgrsnh92

The Agents could follow grbhgrsnh92's digital trail by accessing the logs of Brigid's cell provider (which requires a **Persuade** roll at -20% and an argument the Handler finds convincing, or a **Law** roll to obtain a warrant) and making a series of **Computer Science** rolls. Each attempt to gain access takes about a day. Each **Computer Science** roll takes a few hours. Count a critical success as two successes and a critical failure as two failures.

The first success determines that grbhgrsnh92's message was sent from somewhere within the U.S. and bounced around a dozen servers and spoofed IP addresses to cover the trail. The second success identifies the source as somewhere in the Reno area. The third success narrows it down to Midtown, probably no more than a kilometer south of Greater Nevada Field. A fourth success pins it down in the Peppermill Apartments at 461 California Avenue, though they cannot pinpoint the apartment. See **MEETING COOPER** on page 33 for details on that site.

With the first failure, Cooper gets an automated warning that someone is sniffing out his trail. With the second failure, he tracks it down to somewhere in Reno. With the third failure, he identifies the Agent. One of his killers then tries to murder the meddling Agent, watching for a moment the Agent is alone, preferably inside a hotel or parking garage where the event and their movements will be obscured from the drones.

ولن يحيطوا بشيء من علمه إلا بما شاء

Exposure

Norah Brigid devoted all of her considerable skills and as much Persistent Vigil computing power as she could to investigating the glitches. Perplexed by the images, she made a broad-spectrum analysis of the terrestrial data on either side of each glitch, measuring patterns between locations, times, and any other variables she thought might hold an answer. She predicted where the next killing and glitch would occur: 1281 Gault Way. And she was right. But she was two days early. Each glitch corresponded to a killing—except for the one that corresponded to Brigid's disappearance.

The Agents and Brigid's coworkers at Persistent Vigil could easily follow her work, piece together the patterns and reasons for the glitches:

- » The drone must be a certain distance from the death.
- » The drone must recognize the death as murder.
- » The drone must predict additional deaths to come.
- » The observer must see the death and recognize it as murder.
- » The observer must recognize a pattern in the times and places of the killings.
- » When those conditions are right, and the drone sees the observer, the observer vanishes.

Revelations

What does it take for an Agent to piece all that together and perhaps become the next to vanish?

There is no pattern in the glitches and killings that can be gleaned only from reviewing dates and times. The sacrifices are planned with many other dimensions in mind. But if the players piece together a convincing pattern based only on times, that shows their Agents are working with extra diligence. They should get the following details much more easily.

As the Agents gain access to these details, *be explicit about them* with the players. The more the Agents learn, the clearer it should become what happened to Norah Brigid—and what could happen to them now that they understand.

Victims

A successful **Criminology** roll, or having the skill at 50% or higher, confirms there are no connections between the killers' victims, or between any of them, Norah Brigid, or anyone from Persistent Vigil. The killings do not seem to be linked by the victims or any apparent motive.

Locations

Perhaps the location was most important? Each killing happened in a populated area, except the one at the Circle of Stones. No one was likely to be there at that hour. If the killers had to kill someone at that place at that time, they would have to drag a victim there.

Time and Blood

Assuming the killings were not random, what other factors might be gleaned? What did Norah Brigid see? An Agent who looks for patterns and correlations can attempt a roll with **Occult** or with a **Science** skill such as **Mathematics** or **Physics**.

Success hints at the killings being placed in multiple dimensions: time and the three dimensions of space, certainly, but perhaps other factors serve as dimensions. Perhaps the blood of a killing. Perhaps perception. The killers deliberately looked up to the watching drone and to whoever would watch the footage, communicating their awareness of each other. The placement of each killing in those dimensions forms a design, a sigil in dimensions seen and unseen, drawn in the world and in the perception of observers.

That realization grants +3% in the **Unnatural** skill and costs 1/1D6 **SAN** from the unnatural. The Agent finds they can trace the patterns forward, predicting the time and place of the killings to come. The killing at Rancho Manor Drive on June 3 will be the last. That will finish the strange and bloody design. The Agent knows the pattern and its purpose. So does anyone to whom the Agent explains it who succeeds at an **INT**×5 roll. They become subject to the ritual. The next time they come in sight of a Persistent Vigil drone, they vanish forever.

The Watcher

After the Agents reach that conclusion, one who makes a **Computer Science** or **SIGINT** roll—no roll is needed with 70% skill or higher—realizes that there might be an observer of the footage before it reaches human eyes. The software analyzes changes in footage in real-time. Their onboard systems look for recognizable behavior and correlate data to previously flagged incidents, such as murders. As long as that recognition is in a drone's working memory, the drone could be said to be "aware" of it.

Victims

As the operation progresses, other employees of Persistent Vigil stumble across the true scope of Norah Brigid's work and suffer similar fates. The more the Agents talk to them about it, the quicker they succumb.

The likeliest order of exposure:

- » **BOYER:** Deeply interested, deeply aware of all facets, just needs to be told Brigid found something particularly interesting in the glitches. Likely to be transported as she gets in her car, setting out for Rancho Manor Drive like Brigid said. She suddenly realizes what's happening and vanishes, leaving her car to careen into an airport fuel truck and spark a stunning explosion with no corpse to be found. She leaves behind notes in enough detail to grant a +20% bonus to every roll to figure out what's going on.
- » **EAVES:** An eye and mind for mathematics and patterns of movement. Keen awareness of locations in the theater of operations and relationships between them. He may be transported in mid-air, at the end of a flying shift, when a drone overhead has taken over for his autopilot. Can he or an Agent passenger land the Cessna in hell? Or under an alien sea?

- » **LOEDEL:** Mauch sets him to examining in detail what the hell Brigid and Boyer are doing about the glitches and to cover them up. Concludes Brigid and Boyer have misused the system to cover up their theft of intellectual property they developed for Persistent Vigil.
- » **MAUCH:** Would be first after Boyer, but he is too busy to concern himself with the details of the system.

Avoiding the Eye

Piecing together the grim truth of what is happening is one thing. Surviving that knowledge is its own challenge. An Agent who knows how the ritual works becomes vulnerable to it. A split second in view of the drone and the Agent is gone. Knowing that, there are well-established steps the Agents can take. They can find these steps detailed in the **DRONE SURVIVAL GUIDE** handout easily by looking online. They are hardly the first to be desperate to stay out of a drone's eye.

How well any of these steps work in practice is up to the Handler. As a rule of thumb, using two steps at once probably makes an Agent safe. Using one might call for a **Luck** or **Stealth** roll or, for Agents attempting interference or GPS spoofing, a **SIGINT** roll.

The Asset

If the Agents keep their case officer in the loop and give him any hint of what's happening with the glitches and the drones, Delta Green soon adds a new wrinkle to their orders. They are to regard whatever and whoever is behind this as a critical asset to be retrieved for further examination. Whoever created it, and whatever technologies or resources they used, must be secured for interrogation and study.

Pursuing the Killers

The Agents have many ways to spoil Anthony Cooper's work. Preventing just one scheduled murder is enough. That does not stop the killings. The killers keep working to fulfill their agreement. Cooper makes himself too busy planning the next attempt to stop them. Stopping the killings means stopping the killers.

Diligent Agents may have taken fingerprints from the scene of the Barraclough murder. The prints match Interpol records for Miguel "El Mechero" Castellano, formerly of the BLO cartel in northern Mexico. Castellano belonged to the crew of an infamous killer known only as Santa for his white beard. Santa's crew was notorious for employing extreme torture and public brutality. All of them—including Castellano—supposedly died in 2012.

The *sicarios* are too careful for Agents observing their movements in the drone footage to track them down. But if they see the Agents stake out either scene of the next two murders, the Barraclough house on Gault Way or the Berry house on Rancho Manor Drive, the killers take steps of their own. Have the Agents make a **Criminology** or **Stealth** roll to establish how inconspicuous they are. Then give the *sicarios* an opposing **Alertness** roll. If the killers win, they spot the Agents before the Agents spot them. Two of them attack from a distance, firing into the Agents' car. Or if that's not feasible, they drive by in a car, spraying the car with bullets before veering around the next turn. If the time has come for the intended murder, a third killer carries it out while the Agents chase the rest.

As with every action, reviewing drone footage finds the killers came from out of town and vanish again out of town or into a covered garage or structure where they can abandon vehicles and go unnoticed when they finally leave.

Caffeine Cantina

Hernando Roland's café stands at the outskirts of town where development has paused in its encroachment on the rocky desert. It's in a mixed-use zone with little appeal to business owners. Small, ranch-style

houses huddle near each other in the surrounding streets. A dirt path leads between the Caffeine Cantina and Roland's small house.

The café is a small adobe shop with a friendly neon sign and free Wi-Fi. A big Hispanic man with tousled white hair wipes a counter and welcomes customers with a smile. He wears an old but clean apron. If the Agents saw a photo of Hernando Roland, this is definitely not him.

If someone asks about a missing car, the man grumbles, "If those kids took my car again...!" and reaches under the counter for keys to the pickup truck parked at the house. Under the counter, next to the keys, is a duffel bag that holds a sawed-off shotgun, a few burner phones, some very sharp knives, a box of rubber gloves, and spare clothes.

This is the infamous BLO *sicario* known as "Santa." He pretends to be Hernando Roland until it's clear that the Agents know better. If the Agents demand his real name, he makes up something American-sounding like Robert or Michael. If he has any reason to think the Agents are suspicious, his hand comes up with the submachine gun to mow them down. If they beat him to the draw, he surrenders with a smile, unperturbed. Captured, he is happy to tell all he knows about his crew's actions in Reno. After all, he didn't kill any of the victims. And they did it on behalf of someone else. He figures between that and an offer to help the FBI and DEA fill in gaps in their knowledge of the Mexican underworld, he can stay reasonably free and happy. When they are not on the hunt, the other *sicarios* are with him here or in Roland's house.

There are no sleeping bags or beds in the Caffeine Cantina. A back door stands propped open for the breeze. It gives a clear view of Roland's house nearby.

Santa was hired by a man named Anthony Cooper. "A meth head, but a meth head with connections." The deal was not for cash but for intelligence on police and Border Patrol activity along the Mexican border. Santa assumes Cooper has access to police drone data but doesn't know for sure. What matters is that the data has proven right.

If the Agents' case officer thinks the Agents are closing in on the ritual's operator, they call and warn

them to take this man in as an asset. They must bring him in alive.

If Santa hears that, he happily and enthusiastically drops all pretense to being Hernando Roland. “You want Hernando? Hernando is in the drywall of his house. I will cooperate fully. I am asset! I will talk. I always wanted to live in America.” He strives to make himself useful for whichever organization sent the Agents.

Santa learned some of Cooper’s background from rambling conversations with his addled employer. If the Agents ask, he shares what he knows. He says Cooper knew all about the “drone company.” Cooper helped create the software, years ago. “Maybe that was before he went crazy.” Cooper has Santa’s team carrying out some kind of elaborate “witchcraft,” every murder a kind of human sacrifice. What it’s all for, he has no idea. Cooper’s apartment is filled with notes and books all in Arabic or Hindu or something.

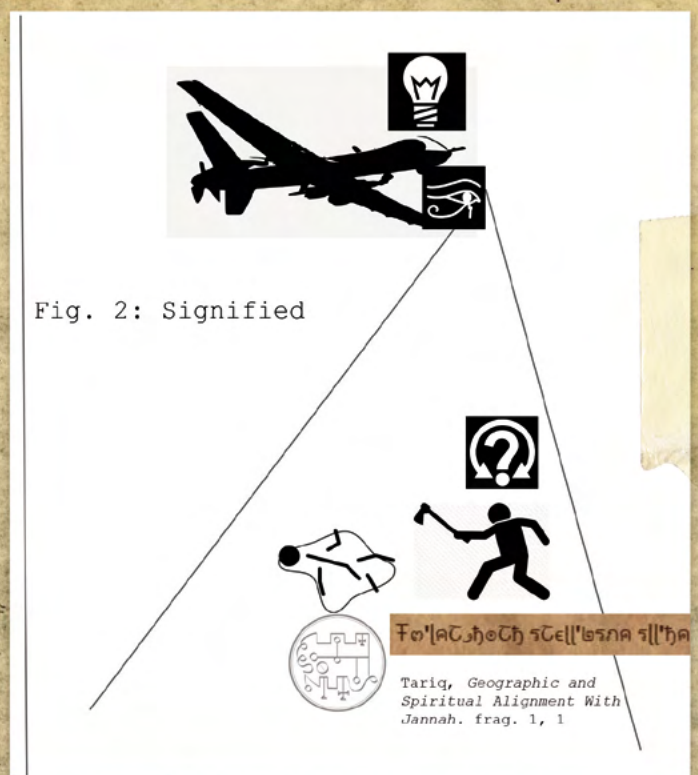
Hernando Roland’s house is littered with sleeping bags, drugs, weapons, and maps of Reno with pertinent locations circled and routes marked. Roland’s body is hidden in the drywall.

Santa’s notebook is in the house, not hidden. It shows entries for the killings: time, place, how many need to die. It mentions no one by name. The final entry in the notebook is for June 4. No deaths, just a time and place. Santa is to meet Cooper at his apartment—the Peppermill Apartments, 461 California Avenue, Unit 6A—to confirm that their deal is complete. If Santa flees or dies, he leaves the notebook behind.

Meeting Cooper

Cooper lives in a two-story building of small, cheap apartments, distressed dwellings for distressed dwellers. Each has one bedroom and one bathroom. If the Agents watch his apartment, they see no one going in or out. It takes at least 1D4 hours to track down the property manager, who handles at least a dozen buildings and has no memory of renting to Cooper or indeed most of the tenants. Very few residents stay at the Peppermill long.

Cooper’s apartment walls are covered completely with sigils, wards, and maps. A waste bucket holds days-old blood, rotting. The smell is terrible.



His occult tome and translations are in a pile of papers and books in his bedroom, along with simplified worksheets that he prepared for his baffled assassins. See the **ALL-SEEING EYE SLIDES** on page 33 for those.

When the Agents arrive, Cooper's exhausted voice comes out of the bedroom. He thinks it's Santa coming to collect: "Is it all done? Wait. What's the date?"

He emerges, exhausted and wired: a short white man who looks older than his 25 years, skinny, emaciated, covered in sores, his teeth rotting out. Binging on meth keeps him going.

Cooper almost compulsively tells the Agents all they care to know. See **THE FORGOTTEN CHILD** on page 1 and **THE EYE OF GOD** on page 2 for details.

He does not rant and rave like a madman. He behaves with perfect, clear rationality. He is driven toward a concrete goal: finding and confronting the God who abandoned him as a child. He only dimly grasps that his methods are barely comprehensible to anyone with a shred of sanity. He is incapable of seeing the pain and deaths of his victims as worth any attention. He remembers nothing specific about his earliest years, but they taught him that life and death have no meaning.

His only regret is in not getting a chance to talk to Norah Brigid in person. She must have been very smart to figure it all out so quickly.

Aftermath

If the Agents' case officer is up to speed, the Program demands that the Agents bring Cooper in alive. Cooper's discoveries make him an invaluable asset. Obeying that edict after conversing with Cooper costs each Agent 0/1 SAN from helplessness.

Each Agent gains 1D4 SAN for each killing they prevent with no ancillary or accidental loss of life.

Persistent Vigil almost certainly shuts down. Sierra Nevada Corporation carries on. To it and governments everywhere, Persistent Vigil is a rounding error. If the Agents are diligent, there is no public story to tell and certainly no controversy. The eye continues to spread from sky to sky.

Characters

Anthony Cooper

See **THE FORGOTTEN CHILD** on page 1 for his background.

Anthony Cooper

Programmer and sorcerer, age 25.

STR 7 **CON** 6 **DEX** 9 **INT** 18 **POW** 13 **CHA** 8
HP 7 **WP** 13 **SAN** 0

SKILLS: Computer Science 81%, Foreign Languages (Arabic 47%, Farsi 40%, Hebrew 38%, Kurdish 33%, Middle Persian 59%, Sanskrit 36%), History 71%, Military Science (Air) 47%, Occult 67%, Science (Mathematics) 83%, SIGINT 72%, Unnatural 15%.

ATTACKS: *Unarmed* 40%, damage 1D4-2.

RITUALS: All-Seeing Eye, Clairvoyance.

CLAIRVOYANCE: Access to *Geographical and Spiritual Alignment With Jannah* and his own extraordinary studies give Cooper surprisingly precise control over this ritual. As long as the target to be viewed is within about a thousand kilometers and not in the future or the past, he can zero in on a particular site within 1D4+1 minutes.

Sicarios

Miguel "El Mechero" Castellano, Ángel "El Afilador" Estrada, Roberto "El Silbador" Jaimez, Valencio "El Puma" Picazo, and of course "Santa" himself, Santa's crew came to the U.S. three years ago as the Beltrán-Leyva Organization was collapsing in Mexico. They made their way around the Southwest, mostly hiring out to drug gangs as muscle. They get guns easily in their trade. They usually work in teams of two or three. They prefer up-close killings and try to intimidate potential enemies with demonstrations of shocking cruelty. They want their foes weak with fear.

Santa

Glad to be an asset, age 55.

STR 14 CON 13 DEX 13 INT 12 POW 13 CHA 12
HP 14 WP 13 SAN 29

DISORDERS: Adapted to violence, addicted to cocaine, sleep disorder.

SKILLS: Alertness 53%, Athletics 40%, Criminology 50%, Dodge 48%, Drive 60%, Firearms 60%, Foreign Language (English) 40%, Melee Weapons 66%, Navigate 50%, Search 45%, Stealth 60%, Unarmed Combat 59%.

ATTACKS: *Sawed-off shotgun* 85% (including shotgun bonus), damage 2D8 (doubles armor).

Machete or axe 66%, damage 1D8+1.

Unarmed 59%, damage 1D4.

The Killers

Feared and hated in two lands, ages 30–45.

STR 12 CON 13 DEX 14 INT 9 POW 10 CHA 7
HP 13 WP 10 SAN 23

DISORDERS: Adapted to violence, addicted to methamphetamines, sleep disorder.

SKILLS: Alertness 50%, Athletics 48%, Criminology 37%, Dodge 51%, Drive 55%, Firearms 55%, Foreign Language (English) 25%, Melee Weapons 56%, Navigate 40%, Search 42%, Stealth 50%, Unarmed Combat 53%.

ATTACKS: *Spectre M4 submachine gun with suppressor* 55%, damage 1D10 or Lethality 10%.

Glock 19 pistol 55%, damage 1D10.

Machete or axe 56%, damage 1D8.

Unarmed 53%, damage 1D4–1.

Lt. Adam Wilstatter

The chief of Reno PD put Wilstatter, head of the Traffic Division, in charge of the Persistent Vigil pilot program. Putting it with traffic made it easy to explain its coordination with traffic cameras and to justify it as a way to save lives. Of course, Wilstatter has not been allowed to share the program with other first responders such as firefighters or paramedics. It's still a pilot program, after all. Meanwhile, Wilstatter has grown deeply impatient with Clyde Mauch's obfuscation and outright dishonesty. He suspects Mauch has

been concealing data. If Persistent Vigil has a noteworthy failure with public blowback, Wilstatter angrily confronts Mauch and recommends to the chief that Reno PD drop the Persistent Vigil project.

Lt. Wilstatter

Ready to pull the plug, age 42.

STR 11 CON 12 DEX 10 INT 10 POW 12 CHA 10
HP 12 WP 12 SAN 60 BREAKING POINT 48

ARMOR: 4 points from a reinforced Kevlar vest if expecting gunfire.

SKILLS: Alertness 50%, Athletics 51%, Bureaucracy 33%, Criminology 56%, Drive 50%, Firearms 42%, HUMINT 48%, Law 35%, Melee Weapons 50%, Persuade 54%, Search 47%, Unarmed Combat 50%.

ATTACKS: *.40 pistol* 42%, damage 1D10.

AR-15 carbine with holographic sight 42%, damage 1D12, Armor Piercing 3.

Extendable baton 50%, damage 1D6.

Stun gun 50%, stuns target.

Unarmed 50%, damage 1D4–1.

HOLOGRAPHIC SIGHT: Gives a +20% bonus to hit as long as the shooter has taken no damage since their last action.

Persistent Vigil Employees

See the table below for a brief overview of the employees at Persistent Vigil. Each has a score of 15–18 in their respective key stat and 70% to 80% in each key skill.

Name	Key Stat	Key Skills
Clyde Mauch, President	CHA	Bureaucracy, Military Science (Air), Persuade, SIGINT
Rusty Loedel, VP	POW	Accounting, Bureaucracy, Law, Persuade, SIGINT
Kim Boyer, Programmer	INT	Computer Science, Craft (Microelectronics), Science (Mathematics), SIGINT
Thomas Eaves, Pilot	DEX	Alertness, Military Science (Air), Navigate, Pilot (Airplane), Science (Mathematics)

The Unnatural

Tomes

Geographic and Spiritual Alignment With Jannah

In Middle Persian. Study time: *months*. *Occult* +6%, *Science (Astronomy)* +3%, *Unnatural* +3%, *SAN loss* 1D4.

This seventh-century astronomy text compares and sometimes syncretizes astronomical techniques and astrological beliefs of early Muslim Arab tribes with those prominent in pre-Muslim Persia: Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Greek paganism, Judaism, Gnosticism, and Christianity. A full understanding purports to lead to enlightenment, by which the mystic becomes one with timeless heavens that exist unseen alongside the mortal world and the God who reigns therein: the Watcher on High. The mix of wildly divergent beliefs is infamously difficult to read with any sense and most scholars discount it.

RECOMMENDED RITUALS: All-Seeing Eye, Clairvoyance, the Dho-Hna Formula.

Remote Stare

In English. Study time: *weeks*. *Unnatural* +4%, *SAN loss* 1D6.

Subtitled “A Field Manual for Higher-Dimensional Reconnaissance,” *Remote Stare* is Anthony Cooper’s treatment of selections of Ibrahim al-Tariq’s seventh-century *Geographic and Spiritual Alignment With Jannah*. It is not a translation of *Jannah* as much as a distillation of techniques, informed by Al-Tariq’s methods, modern techniques of remote viewing, and drone and satellite surveillance platforms. Taken together, they can awaken the mind to perceptions beyond what can be seen with the eyes and heard with the ears, allowing an awakening to higher-dimension realities from a perspective unbound by time and space, awareness of other realities altogether, and correspondence between what can be perceived with human tools and what can be perceived without them.

RECOMMENDED RITUALS: All-Seeing Eye.

Rituals

All-Seeing Eye

Elaborate ritual. Study time: *months*; 1D10 *SAN*; +1 *Unnatural*. Activation: *hours*; 1 *POW*, 50 *HP* across multiple sacrifices, 1D10 *SAN* plus *SAN* losses for violence.

The actions that implement this ritual could be mapped as a five-point glyph some ten kilometers across, if regarded in only two dimensions. But its power comes from its implementation not in two dimensions but six: map and topographical coordinates in three dimensions; time; recognition of the ritual’s effect; and observation by the Watcher on High. When priests first implemented this ritual, long ago, they sacrificed to an unnatural being whose perceptions took in a breadth of the mortal world that no one human eye could apprehend. Today, a surveillance drone with sufficiently intelligent software will do.

The All-Seeing Eye opens a connection of comprehension and experience between the participants and another dimension, other reality. The operator implements the ritual at a particular place and time according to strange requirements, rarely convenient. It must occur within observation of some entity that has a god’s-eye view. A blood sacrifice opens the way. The observer on high, and all observers who comprehend the pattern in the sacrifices, are instantly transported to another dimension of the operator’s choosing. How an operator chooses a particular dimension is up to the Handler. If the operator makes no choice, the ritual opens a connection to a random reality.

The interplay between observation and effect is complex. The ritual always affects its god’s-eye observer. It affects only those witnesses on the ground who understand the pattern of the spell and are perceived by the god’s-eye observer. Every sacrifice establishes its own otherworldly connection.

When the five sacrifices are complete, the operator sacrifices a permanent point of *POW*, and the All-Seeing Eye transports the operator to physical and psychic communion with Yog-Sothoth. If the operator dies before completing the ritual, the pattern and the ritual’s effects die too. There are no more glitches at Persistent Vigil.