

Hello Investigator,

Today, we are embarking on an exciting and challenging mystery-solving activity inspired by the Hunt A Killer board games. The setting of our mystery is the Institute for Nuclear Semiotics (INS). This research facility is dedicated to creating signs and documentation to convey information about hazardous nuclear materials to future generations, ensuring safety and comprehension across language and cultural barriers.

The main character in our story, Dr. Evelyn Harper, a leading expert in nuclear semiotics, has been murdered. This incident coincides with a critical project milestone related to a new signage system and a mysterious hooded figure caught on security footage. Your task, as investigators, is to determine what happened to Dr. Harper and uncover any underlying issues within the project.

You will start by forming groups of four and analyzing the initial set of documents, which includes meeting minutes, a project plan, and a white paper. These documents will provide the background and context needed to begin your investigation.

As you progress through the sessions, you will receive additional documents such as user manuals, technological specifications, data sets, emails, security incident reports, access logs, and a security camera still image. Pay close attention to the details, as some documents contain critical clues while others may serve as red herrings designed to mislead you.

Remember, communication and collaboration within your group are key. Share your findings, discuss your theories, and piece together the puzzle. By the end of this activity, you will not only have solved the mystery but also gained valuable experience in exploring, analyzing, and synthesizing technical documents.

Happy Investigating!



Personnel Files

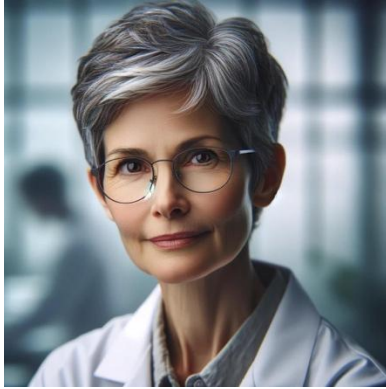
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[This file is supplemental material to Justin Cook, *A Murder Most Technical: Gamification, AI, and Rhetorical Genre Studies in the Technical Writing Classroom*, prompt 10.1 (2026), doi: 10.31719/pjaw.v10i1.232]



**INSTITUTE FOR
NUCLEAR SEMIOTICS**

Personnel File
****Confidential****



Dr. Evelyn Harper

Role: Lead Scientist

Contact Information: e.harper@ins.org | (555) 123-4567

Background

- **Education:**
 - B.A. in Linguistics & B.A. in Engineering
 - M.A. in Nuclear Science
 - Ph.D. in Nuclear Engineering and Semiotics

- **Experience:**
 - Over 20 years of experience in nuclear semiotics
 - Renowned expert in the field, known for developing long-term nuclear hazard signage
 - Previous roles include senior researcher positions at various nuclear facilities and academic institutions
- **Achievements:**
 - Published multiple papers on nuclear semiotics and safety
 - Recipient of the National Science Foundation Grant for Nuclear Safety Research

Personality

- Detail-oriented, driven, and highly knowledgeable
- Respected by peers for her expertise and leadership
- Known for her meticulous nature and dedication to safety

Additional Information

- **Hobbies:** Enjoys reading scientific journals and participating in nuclear safety workshops
- **Professional Affiliations:** Member of the International Society for Nuclear Safety



**INSTITUTE FOR
NUCLEAR SEMIOTICS**

Personnel File
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Dr. Robert Chen

Role: Senior Scientist and Head of the Design Team

Contact Information: r.chen@ins.org | (555) 234-5678

Background

- **Education:**
 - B.S. in Engineering
 - M.S in Chemistry
 - Ph.D. in Material Science
- **Experience:**
 - 15 years at the Institute for Nuclear Semiotics
 - Specializes in developing durable materials for long-term signage
 - Previous roles include material science researcher and consultant for various engineering firms
- **Achievements:**
 - Developed new composite materials for nuclear signage
 - Published several papers on material durability and environmental resilience

Personality

- Methodical, innovative, and somewhat reserved
- Known for his precision and technical skills
- Prefers to work independently but is respected for his contributions

Additional Information

- **Hobbies:** Enjoys hiking and experimenting with new materials in his home lab
- **Professional Affiliations:** Member of the American Society of Materials Engineers



**INSTITUTE FOR
NUCLEAR SEMIOTICS**

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John Smith

Role: Research Assistant

Contact Information: j.smith@ins.org | (555) 345-6789

Background

- **Education:**
 - B.S. in Computer & Coding Sciences
 - M.S. in Environmental Science

- **Experience:**
 - Recently joined the Institute for Nuclear Semiotics
 - Assists with tests and data analysis for nuclear hazard signage
 - Previous experience includes internships and research assistant roles at environmental research labs
- **Achievements:**
 - Developed software tools for data analysis in environmental science
 - Co-authored a paper on environmental impact assessments

Personality

- Eager, hardworking, and sometimes overly enthusiastic
- Determined to make a mark in his field but still learning the ropes
- Shows great potential and a strong work ethic

Additional Information

- **Hobbies:** Enjoys coding, playing video games, and volunteering for environmental causes
- **Professional Affiliations:** Member of the Association of Environmental Professionals



INSTITUTE FOR NUCLEAR SEMIOTICS

Personnel File
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Laura Thompson

Role: Head of Security

Contact Information: l.thompson@ins.org | (555) 456-7890

Background:

- **Education:**

- B.A. in Criminal Justice

- **Experience:**

- 10 years ensuring the safety and security of the institute's facilities and data
- Background in law enforcement and cybersecurity
- Previous roles include security consultant and law enforcement officer

- **Achievements:**

- Implemented advanced security protocols at the institute
 - Conducted numerous successful investigations into security breaches

Personality:

- Vigilant, assertive, and highly disciplined
- Dedicated to her role and takes the security of the institute very seriously
- Known for her thorough and proactive approach to security

Additional Information:

- **Hobbies:** Enjoys practicing martial arts and studying cybersecurity trends
- **Professional Affiliations:** Member of the International Association of Professional Security Consultants

Department Meeting Minutes



Friday, June 8, 2024

09:00am-11:00 am

Attendees: Dr. Evelyn Harper, John Smith, Laura Thompson, Dr. Robert Chen

AGENDA + NOTES

I. Project Status Update

- a. **Dr. Evelyn Harper:** The prototype development phase is on schedule, with completion expected by June 15, 2024. The environmental durability tests have shown promising results.
- b. **John Smith:** Raised a concern about the calibration of the testing equipment, suggesting a potential need for recalibration due to inconsistencies noted during recent tests.

II. Review of Technological Specifications

- a. **Dr. Robert Chen:** Presented the latest data, highlighting some unexpected results. Suggested these could be due to minor fluctuations in the testing environment.
- b. **John Smith:** Questioned the integrity of the data, proposing an in-depth review of the equipment and procedures used.
- c. **Dr. Evelyn Harper:** Agreed to a review and assigned John to lead this task. Stressed the importance of ensuring data accuracy given the project's critical nature.

III. Discussion on Signage Durability Tests

- a. **Laura Thompson:** Reported an unauthorized access attempt on June 7, 2024. The intruder was not identified, but the attempt was logged and is under investigation.
- b. **Dr. Evelyn Harper:** Emphasized the need for heightened security measures, especially with the sensitive nature of the project. Suggested installing additional surveillance cameras in critical areas.

- c. **John Smith:** Mentioned a personal concern about the safety of the team, especially with recent anomalies and security breaches.
- IV. Addressing Security Concerns
 - a. **Dr. Evelyn Harper:** Outlined the upcoming milestones, including the completion of the prototype development by June 15, 2024, and the initial testing phase by June 30, 2024.
 - b. **Dr. Robert Chen:** Highlighted the importance of the testing phase in validating the durability and effectiveness of the signage.
- V. Future Research Directions
 - a. The team brainstormed potential future projects, including exploring new materials and design concepts.
 - b. Dr. Harper proposed a collaborative project with a linguistics department to refine the messaging and symbolism used in the signage.

ACTIONS

1. **John Smith:** Lead the review of testing equipment and procedures.
2. **Laura Thompson:** Enhance security measures and install additional surveillance cameras.
3. **Dr. Robert Chen:** Continue monitoring data for any further anomalies.
4. **Dr. Evelyn Harper:** Oversee the completion of the prototype development

Project Plan



Project Title: Development and Installation of Long-Term Nuclear Hazard Signage

Project Manager: Dr. Evelyn Harper

Start Date: January 1, 2024

End Date: December 31, 2024

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. **Develop Durable Signage:**
 - Design and produce signage capable of withstanding environmental conditions for 10,000 years.
2. **Ensure Universality:**
 - Create symbols and designs that can be universally understood, transcending language and cultural barriers.
3. **Testing and Validation:**
 - Conduct rigorous testing to ensure the durability and effectiveness of the signage.
4. **Installation:**
 - Install signage at designated nuclear waste sites.

KEY MILESTONES

1. **Design Phase Completion:** March 31, 2024
2. **Prototype Development:** June 15, 2024
3. **Initial Testing:** June 30, 2024
4. **Testing Review and Adjustments:** August 31, 2024
5. **Final Testing Completion:** October 31, 2024
6. **Installation Commencement:** November 15, 2024
7. **Project Completion:** December 31, 2024

TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

[This file is supplemental material to Justin Cook, *A Murder Most Technical: Gamification, AI, and Rhetorical Genre Studies in the Technical Writing Classroom*, prompt 10.1 (2026), doi: 10.31719/pjaw.v10i1.232]

- **Design Team:**
 - Lead: Dr. Robert Chen
 - Tasks: Develop initial designs, create prototypes, make adjustments based on feedback.
- **Testing Team:**
 - Lead: John Smith
 - Tasks: Conduct durability and environmental tests, analyze results, ensure compliance with standards.
- **Security Team:**
 - Lead: Laura Thompson
 - Tasks: Ensure the security of the research and testing facilities, investigate any security breaches.

BUDGET

- **Total Budget:** \$2,000,000
- **Allocated Funds:**
 - Design: \$500,000
 - Testing: \$750,000
 - Installation: \$500,000
 - Contingency: \$250,000

RISKS AND MITIGATIONS

1. **Risk:** Design flaws discovered late in the project.
 - a. **Mitigation:** Regular reviews and adjustments during the design phase.
2. **Risk:** Security breaches leading to data tampering.
 - a. **Mitigation:** Strict security protocols and regular audits.
3. **Risk:** Environmental conditions affecting testing accuracy.
 - **Mitigation:** Controlled testing environments and real-world simulations.

White Paper



Innovations in Nuclear Semiotics for Long-Term Hazard Communication by Dr. Evelyn Harper

Harper

ABSTRACT

This white paper discusses the design, testing, and implementation of long-term nuclear hazard signage aimed at ensuring safety and comprehensibility across millennia. The project addresses the challenges of creating durable,

universal signage that can withstand environmental conditions and be understood by future generations.

INTRODUCTION

The challenge of communicating hazardous material risks across millennia requires innovative approaches that go beyond traditional signage. This paper explores the development of new materials, design methodologies, and testing protocols aimed at creating durable, comprehensible signage that can withstand the test of time.

MATERIAL SELECTION

Titanium-Alloy

Titanium-alloy was selected for its exceptional durability and resistance to corrosion. This material ensures that the signage remains intact and legible for thousands of years, even in harsh environmental conditions (Journal of Materials Science, 2022).

UV-Resistant Polymer

A UV-resistant polymer coating provides additional protection against sun damage, ensuring the longevity of the signage. This coating is essential for maintaining the visibility and integrity of the signage in various environmental conditions (Polymer Science and Engineering, 2021).

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DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

Symbol Size and Visibility

Large symbols, 2 meters in diameter, ensure visibility from a distance. The size is optimized for recognition by future generations, regardless of language barriers (International Conference on Nuclear Waste Management, 2021).

Engraving Depth

Deep engravings, 5 millimeters, reduce the risk of erosion over time, ensuring that the symbols remain clear and recognizable (Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, 2020).

Color Contrast

High-contrast colors (black and yellow) enhance visibility and recognition. The yellow background and black symbols are chosen for their high contrast, making the signage easily noticeable (International Conference on Nuclear Waste Management, 2021).

Universal Symbols

The use of universally recognized symbols, such as a skull and crossbones and radiating waves, conveys danger without relying on text. These symbols are chosen for their clear association with danger and hazard (International Conference on Nuclear Waste Management, 2021).

TESTING AND VALIDATION

Rigorous Testing Protocols

Our testing protocols include UV exposure, corrosion resistance, impact resistance, temperature cycling, freeze-thaw cycles, chemical resistance, and abrasion resistance. These tests ensure that the signage can withstand extreme conditions and remain effective over millennia (International Journal of Environmental Science, 2023).

Environmental Durability Tests

- Temperature: The signage must withstand temperatures ranging from 20°C to 30°C.
- Humidity: The signage must endure humidity levels between 45% and 65%.
- UV Exposure: The signage must resist degradation after 100 to 130 hours of UV exposure.

Pass/Fail Criteria

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- **Pass:** The signage shows no significant degradation or loss of legibility under the specified conditions.
- **Fail:** The signage shows signs of wear, degradation, or loss of legibility under the specified conditions.

Real-World Simulation

Tests are conducted in various environmental conditions to simulate real-world scenarios. This approach ensures that the signage can endure the diverse and unpredictable environments it may encounter (International Journal of Environmental Science, 2023).

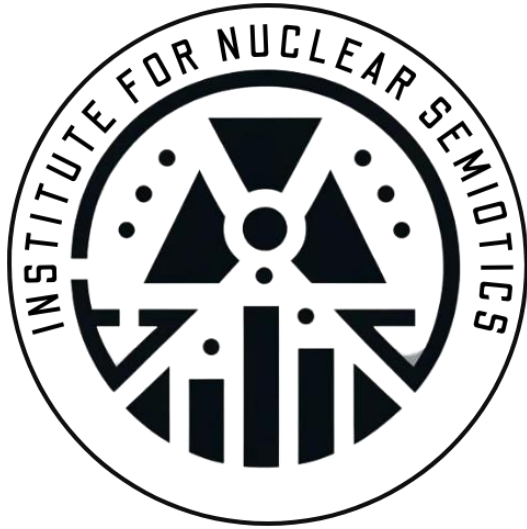
CONCLUSION

The proposed signage system demonstrates significant potential for long-term hazard communication. By combining durable materials with thoughtful design and rigorous testing, the Institute for Nuclear Semiotics has developed a signage solution that can effectively convey risks associated with hazardous materials for up to 10,000 years. Future research will focus on further enhancing these designs and exploring new materials and methodologies to ensure even greater longevity and comprehensibility (Human Factors and Ergonomics Society, 2020; International Journal of Environmental Science, 2023).

REFERENCES

1. **Durability of Titanium-Alloy in Harsh Environments:** *Journal of Materials Science*, Vol. 55, 2022.
2. **UV-Resistant Polymers for Long-Term Applications:** *Polymer Science and Engineering*, Vol. 34, 2021.
3. **Designing Effective Hazard Communication Symbols:** *Human Factors and Ergonomics Society*, Annual Meeting Proceedings, 2020.
4. **Environmental Testing Protocols for Long-Term Signage:** *International Journal of Environmental Science*, Vol. 48, 2023.
5. **Future-Ready Signage: Addressing the Challenges of Nuclear Semiotics:** *International Conference on Nuclear Waste Management*, 2021.

User Manual for Nuclear Signage Installation



Last Updated: Friday, May 29, 2024

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Institute for Nuclear Semiotics (INS). Our mission is to ensure that hazardous nuclear materials are securely marked and that their dangers are communicated effectively across millennia. This manual provides detailed guidelines

for the installation and maintenance of our long-term nuclear signage systems.

These signs are engineered to last for up to 10,000 years, withstanding environmental challenges such as UV exposure, extreme weather conditions, and physical wear and tear. The goal is to ensure that future generations, regardless of language or cultural changes, understand the dangers posed by the marked areas.

Our signage utilizes high-contrast colors and universally recognized symbols to convey clear warnings. This manual will guide you through the installation process, ensuring that the signs are placed correctly and maintained to maximize their longevity and effectiveness.

DESIGN SPECIFICATIONS

Material Composition:

- Primary Material: Titanium-Alloy, selected for its exceptional durability and resistance to corrosion.
- Coating: UV-Resistant Polymer, applied to protect the signage from sun damage and extend its lifespan.

Design Features:

- Symbol Size: 2 meters in diameter
- Engraving Depth: 5 millimeters
- Colors: High-contrast black and yellow
- Fonts: Universally recognized symbols, no text

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- Images: Skull and crossbones, radiating waves

Testing Parameters:

- Temperature: 20°C to 30°C
- UV Exposure: 100 to 130 hours
- Humidity: Between 45% and 65%
- Corrosion Resistance: Salt Spray Test, 1,000 hours
- Impact Resistance: at least 20 Joules

INSTALLATION PROCEDURE

Materials Needed:

- Signage panels
- Mounting brackets
- Anchoring tools
- Protective gear (gloves, goggles)
- Installation toolkit (drill, screws, level)

Step 1: Site Preparation

- Select a stable, elevated location free from potential obstructions.
- Clear the site of any debris and vegetation.
- Mark the installation area using stakes and string to outline the foundation.
- Reinforce loose soil with additional concrete or a gravel base to ensure the foundation remains secure over time.

Step 2: Foundation Laying

- Excavate a hole 2 meters deep and 1.5 meters in diameter.
 - Ensure the sides of the excavation are smooth and stable to prevent collapsing.
- Pour a concrete base, ensuring it is level and smooth.
- Allow the concrete to cure for at least 48 hours before proceeding.

Step 3: Signage Mounting

- Place the titanium-alloy signage plate on the cured concrete base.

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- Align the signage so that it faces the most likely direction of approach for future observers and visible from at least 50 yards.
- Secure the plate using evenly spaced stainless steel mounting bolts.

MAINTENANCE SCHEDULE

Annual Inspection

- Inspect the structural integrity of the signage and foundation, including cracks, corrosion, or shifting.
- Check for signs of corrosion or damage to the titanium-alloy plate.
- Ensure the mounting bolts remain tight and secure.

Bi-Annual UV Coating Reapplication

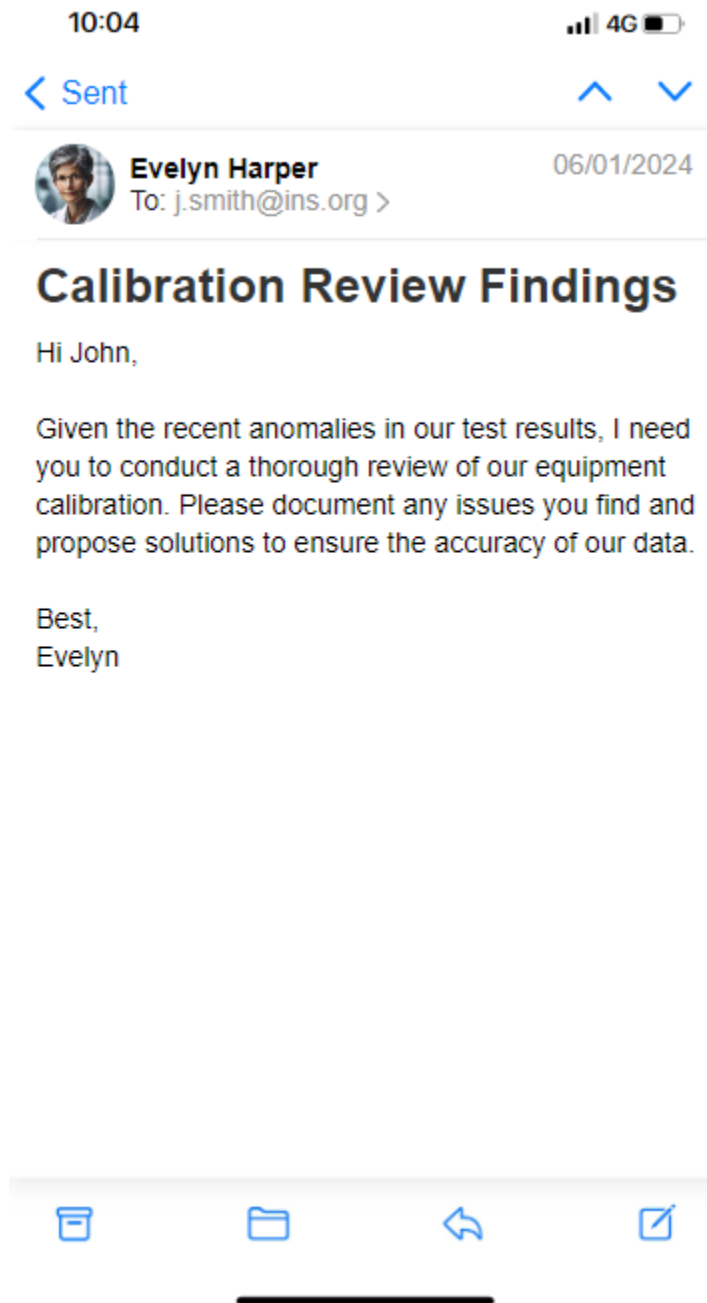
- Clean the surface to remove dirt, debris, or biological growth that might interfere with coating application.
- Reapply the UV-resistant polymer coating to protect against sun damage.
 - Ensure an even and thorough application to all exposed surfaces.

Test Results

Test ID	Sample ID	Date	Time	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	UV Exposure (hours)	Impact Resistance (joules)	Result
T001	S001	5/1/2024	9:00	25	44	100	19	Fail
T002	S002	5/2/2024	9:00	30	60	120	25	Pass
T003	S003	5/3/2024	9:00	20	55	80	24	Pass
T004	S004	5/4/2024	9:00	25	50	90	22	Pass
T005	S005	5/5/2024	9:00	28	65	110	20	Pass
T006	S006	5/6/2024	9:00	22	45	100	23	Fail
T007	S007	5/7/2024	9:00	27	60	130	24	Pass
T008	S008	5/8/2024	9:00	23	50	115	22	Fail
T009	S009	5/9/2024	9:00	26	55	90	21	Pass
T010	S010	5/10/2024	9:00	25	60	100	25	Pass
T011	S011	5/11/2024	9:00	24	50	105	21	Pass
T012	S012	5/12/2024	9:00	29	65	120	23	Pass
T013	S013	5/13/2024	9:00	21	45	95	24	Fail
T014	S014	5/14/2024	9:00	25	50	110	22	Pass
T015	S015	5/15/2024	9:00	28	60	100	20	Pass
T016	S016	5/16/2024	9:00	27	55	115	21	Fail
T017	S017	5/17/2024	9:00	22	50	100	22	Pass
T018	S018	5/18/2024	9:00	25	60	90	23	Pass
T019	S019	5/19/2024	9:00	23	55	110	21	Pass
T020	S020	5/20/2024	9:00	19	65	135	24	Fail

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Email Exchange

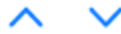


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10:04

4G

< Inbox



John Smith

To: e.harper@ins.org >

06/01/2024

Calibration Review Findings

Hi Evelyn,

I've completed the review of our equipment calibration. I've found several discrepancies that could explain the anomalies. I've attached my report with detailed findings and recommendations for recalibration.

Best,
John



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Security Incident Report



Date of Incident: June 7, 2024

Incident: Unauthorized Access to Lab

Time: 2:00 AM

Reported By: Laura Thompson

INCIDENT DESCRIPTION:

At approximately 02:00 AM on June 7, 2024, an unauthorized access attempt was detected at the main lab entrance. The intruder used an access card belonging to Dr. Robert Chen. Security footage captured a hooded figure entering the lab.

ACTIONS TAKEN:

- Access card privileges temporarily suspended for review.
- Additional security measures implemented, including increased surveillance and updated access protocols.
- Further investigation into the identity of the unauthorized individual and potential motives.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Enhance security protocols and increase surveillance in critical areas.
- Conduct regular audits of access logs and security footage.
- Review access card issuance and handling procedures.

FOLLOW-UP:

- Further investigation required to identify the intruder.
- Additional security measures to be discussed in the next team meeting.

Access Logs

Date	Time	Access Card Used	Name	Notes
29-May-24	9:00 AM	1	Dr. Evelyn Harper	Routine access for testing
30-May-24	1:00 PM	2	John Smith	Sample preparation
30-May-24	3:00 PM	3	Dr. Robert Chen	Data analysis
1-Jun-24	9:00 AM	1	Dr. Evelyn Harper	Investigating anomalies
2-Jun-24	11:00 AM	2	John Smith	Retest calibration
3-Jun-24	2:00 PM	3	Dr. Robert Chen	Follow-up on previous tests
4-Jun-24	4:00 PM	1	Dr. Evelyn Harper	Documenting results
5-Jun-24	8:00 PM	3	Dr. Robert Chen	Late-night data review
6-Jun-24	10:00 AM	2	John Smith	Routine access for maintenance
7-Jun-24	2:00 AM	3	Unknown	Unauthorized access
7-Jun-24	9:00 AM	3	Dr. Robert Chen	Checking security breach
7-Jun-24	3:00 PM	4	Laura Thompson	Security review

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Interrogation Transcript



Interrogation of Dr. Robert Chen

Conducted by: Security Officer Laura Thompson

Date: June 8, 2024

Location: Security Office, Institute for Nuclear Semiotics

TRANSCRIPT

Laura Thompson: Good morning, Dr. Chen. Thank you for coming in. We need to discuss the recent security breach involving your access card.

Dr. Robert Chen: Good morning, Laura. I understand. It's quite concerning.

Laura Thompson: Let's start with your activities on June 6th and 7th. Can you walk me through your schedule?

Dr. Robert Chen: Sure. On June 6th, I was in the lab around 10:00 AM for routine data analysis. I left by 5:00 PM and had dinner with John right after. On June 7th, I came in at 9:00 AM after hearing about the unauthorized access at 2:00 AM.

Laura Thompson: Were you aware that your access card was used at 2:00 AM on June 7th?

Dr. Robert Chen: No, I wasn't. That's why I was so alarmed when I found out. I keep my access card with me all the time. I have no idea how it was used without my knowledge.

Laura Thompson: Do you remember anything unusual happening with your card recently? Misplacing it, or anyone borrowing it?

Dr. Robert Chen: Not at all. It's always with me, either in my pocket or in my office. I never lend it out.

Laura Thompson: We have security footage showing an unidentified person entering the lab using your card. Do you have any idea who might have had access to your card, or who would want to access the lab at that hour?

Dr. Robert Chen: This is very troubling. The only people I can think of who have access to the lab are the core team members. But as for who would do this... I'm at a loss.

Laura Thompson: We need to consider every possibility. Have you noticed any unusual behavior or conflicts among the team recently?

Dr. Robert Chen: Well, we've all been under a lot of stress with the project deadlines and the anomalies in the test results. But no overt conflicts that I can think of.

Laura Thompson: Speaking of the anomalies, you were involved in reviewing some of the test data. Did you notice anything that could point to tampering?

Dr. Robert Chen: I did find some inconsistencies, but we initially thought they were due to equipment calibration issues. Now, given this breach, I'm starting to wonder if there's more to it.

Laura Thompson: Your cooperation is crucial, Dr. Chen. We need to get to the bottom of this to ensure the integrity of our work and the safety of our team. Is there anything else you can think of that might help us?

Dr. Robert Chen: I'll double-check my office and my recent activities to see if I can recall anything else. I want to get to the bottom of this as much as you do.

Laura Thompson: Thank you, Dr. Chen. We'll continue our investigation and keep you informed.