
THE LAST EQUATION

DENNIS DETWILLER

For Mark McFadden, the Lizard King

FASCIUS CLAUDAN (1535–1561)

Brussels-born mathematician, sage and astronomer Fascius Claudan (1535–1561) was responsible for many minor breakthroughs in science and technology during his short but broadly travelled life. Between journeys to Egypt, Persia, central Asia and more extreme locales, Claudan published six books on astronomy and mathematics and one last book on cosmology, a book which is considered dangerous by some who know of such things: the Libri Plures Admiratio ("Book of Many Wonders").

For the most part he is remembered as a minor inventor or various knots, pulley systems, cog-works and early machines for pumping water, but despite his vanishing almost entirely from known science one legacy of Claudan remains: the Laqueus. This short code, believed to be an

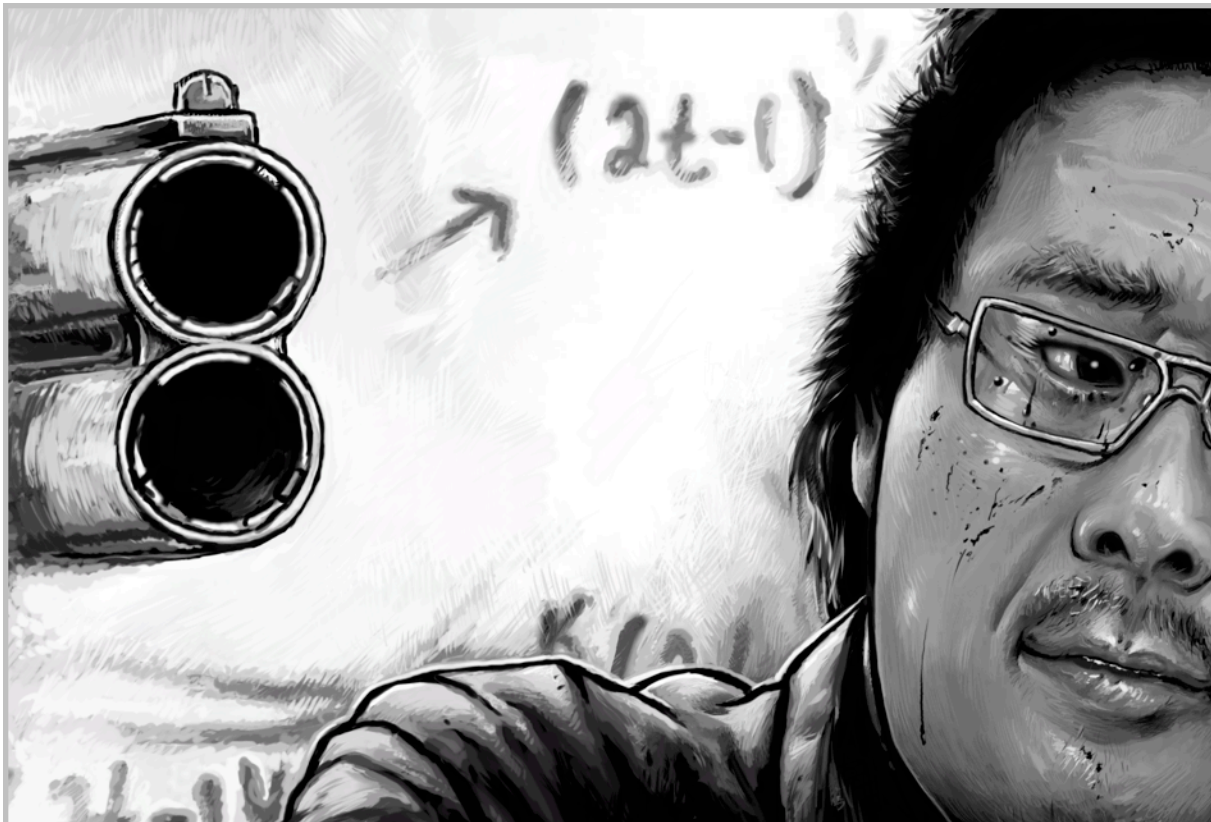
equation, was rendered just days before his death. It is regarded in the small circles that know of it as either an epiphany or complete gibberish. To date, no one has publicly claimed to understand it, much less to have solved it.

Mathematicians and cryptographers throughout the ages have spent spare hours plugging away to solve the glyphs, with little or no success. It holds a place in the annals of cryptography as one of the few cryptograms to resist modern attempts at cracking. It is used as an example in many cryptography tomes as a "clean" cypher — one that remains untranslatable.

Until now.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, 2010

On October 12, 2010, Michael Wei, a graduate student in mathematics at the prestigious



Columbia University of Mathematics, successfully cracked the Laqueus equation. Using a computer program of his own design, he examined all seven of Claudan's books and discovered a cypher embedded in imperfections on the pages on the last book, which dictated the proper way to decipher Claudan's last equation.

What he found inside was a complex formula, which — though dated — rendered the world down to a mathematical simplicity never before seen. It was literally a reduction of the entirety of existence through prime numbers unlocked in a particular calculation of a sequence of sixteen digits. It revealed a vast and roiling reality dancing just behind modern mathematics.

Elated, Wei forwarded this discovery to a very select few on a privately maintained mathematics mailing list. The list consisted of twelve mathematicians known to one another through academia, friendship or both, mathgeeks@googlelists.com.

He did this before the true horror of the Laqueus equation had a chance to settle in his consciousness.

Four hours later, Wei drove out of New York City to Teaneck, New Jersey, purchased ammunition for a 12-gauge shotgun, and drove fifteen miles to Alliance, New Jersey. He entered the home of Dinah and Malcolm Ridgeway and their six children at 2:28:13 P.M. Wei — who had no history of criminal activity — slaughtered the Ridgeway family one by one, even chasing the last, 18-year-old Michael Ridgeway, out on to Highway Six and shooting him in the back in front of eyewitnesses.

Before police arrived, Wei spray-painted a number sequence on the pavement (witnesses understandably kept their distance) and then shot himself in the face with the shotgun, removing almost all of his head in one blast.

When the police arrived, they had an interstate murder-suicide with nine bodies and no clear connection between the victims and assailant. No clues, no leads, no motive.

All they had was a dead mathematician, the corpses of eight slaughtered innocents and a spray-painted number.

As usual, that's where Delta Green comes in.

THE CONSPIRACY GETS THE CALL

The number spray-painted on the pavement in front of the Ridgeway murder scene is known to Delta Green. When the report reached the national crime database it was flagged as a possible paranormal event.

This number has been seen at various times and in various dangerous books known to the conspiracy, once at the death scene of a Delta Green Agent. It is high on the containment protocol list as a dangerous, infectious meme.

The numbers are: 9 9 2 0 .2 2 9 9 8 9 2 1 2 .3 3 3.

Within an hour, a team is being assembled through secure channels to get to the Ridgeway murder scene.

ODD QUESTIONS

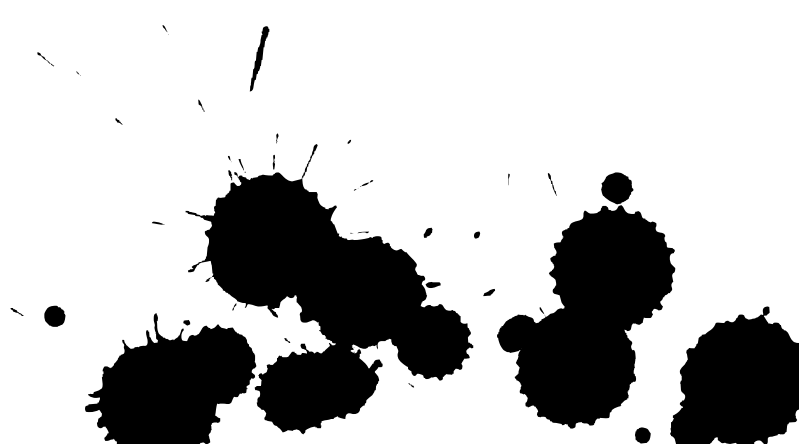
The Agents' primary conspiracy contacts ask several strange questions before informing them of the assignment: things like "Do you have any experience in theoretical mathematics?" and "On a scale of 1 to 10, how well would you say you understand physics?"

Any Agent who has any skill above base in Mathematics or Physics (that Delta Green knows of) is told that the case is not for them, and then the contact hangs up on. The conspiracy is looking for people to identify and contain the meme, not spread it. The player should take a temporary replacement Friendly as a character if necessary.

KEEP IT LIKE A SECRET

Some Agents might answer "no" to the above questions while the true answer might be a resounding "yes!" In the playtest, one player whose character had Mathematics at 51% did exactly that. Many motives for such an action exist.

Don't worry. It won't ruin the scenario, but it might derail the investigation — in a fun way.



BRIEFING
DIRECTIVE FROM A-CELL

Operation IAPETUS

You are to investigate the murders of MALCOLM RIDGEWAY (44), DINAH RIDGEWAY (43), MICHAEL RIDGEWAY (18), CLARK RIDGEWAY (16), DEAN RIDGEWAY (14), MARY RIDGEWAY (13), ALICE RIDGEWAY (12), CLAIRE RIDGEWAY (10) in Alliance, New Jersey on 12OCT10.

Murderer is MICHAEL WEI (26) (DECEASED). Wei was a mathematical student at Columbia University New York. Wei inscribed a series of numbers at the scene which are known to possess dangerous, paranormal properties.

Mission Instructions:

- Determine if WEI distributed the number in any manner besides the crime scene (phone, fax, email).
- Locate WEI's notes and work on the number and destroy it.
- If possible, destroy the number inscription at the scene and all photographic evidence of it in the hands of the authorities.
- Locate any exposed to the number with mathematical experience and report them to A-Cell.
- Link WEI romantically to DINAH RIDGEWAY. Fake whatever documents necessary to make an affair between the two seem likely.
- Once protocols are complete, contact A-Cell for further instructions

Possible Friendly Contacts :

- Trooper Thomas Blaney, New Jersey State Patrol

OFFICIAL OR UNOFFICIAL?

Do the Agents enter the Wei criminal investigation officially or unofficially? Up to a point, this remains up to the Keeper to decide, but clever Agents can sway the conspiracy one way or another. Agents and Friendlies can be brought in on an official capacity to assist the interstate murder investigation, or they can set up a secret, ad-hoc investigation, or both.

An official tie to the investigation does have its advantages, including easy access to crime scenes, witnesses and evidence; but it brings the Agents under the close scrutiny of the commander of the investigation and has a chance of exposing the conspiracy.

Setting up a secret, parallel investigation on the case is possible, though dangerous. Being caught inside a secure crime scene, tampering with evidence or worse carries a heavy penalty (three to five years in prison under New Jersey law), and of course Delta Green won't come forward to assist any of its personnel caught in such a situation.

A tandem approach is probably the safest. One or more Agents is officially placed on the case as a "specialist," while the rest act as a "go team" to investigate leads leaked by their inside man.

Agents need to sway their primary Delta Green contact — the one who first dials their number for the conspiracy — one way or another. Then it's just a waiting game to see what A-Cell can provide.

OFFICIAL: SPECIALISTS

It is generally easy to place an Agent or Friendly as a specialist on the Ridgeway case, as it now involves the FBI (due to Wei's interstate transport of firearms to commit murder). The ironic part is that the most unassuming role would be as a mathematics specialist brought in to examine the numbers, as well as Wei's work, email and documents.

Of course, Delta Green is bringing in the exact opposite: people with little skill in mathematics. Still, the role of mathematics specialist is not unattainable, even to someone uneducated in mathematics. Possessing the proper badge and

ID is far more important than understanding mathematics, as far as the bureaucracy of the FBI is concerned.

Areas such as trajectory analysis, fingerprinting, blood spray analysis and forensic psychology require deep and demonstrable knowledge. A "mathematical specialist" can get away with saying a series of numbers are "gibberish, they mean nothing" and no federal agents on the scene will know to say otherwise, at least for now.

PAPERWORK AND ID

Agents who successfully lobby A-Cell for an inside position in the investigation will be provided with the proper paperwork and ID necessary to show up at the crime scene and enter without arousing suspicions.

Agents with the proper background — those that could really be in the investigation, such as members of the FBI, New Jersey State Patrol or even something as odd as the Department of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms — will be assigned to the case officially. Their bosses receive a personnel request and they are moved to the Ridgeway/Wei case.

Agents without the proper background each receive a FedEx envelope filled with a disturbingly detailed dossier of a new identity. This "cutout" is as real as you can be on paper, at first glance, right down to dental records, IRS returns for the last two years and credit card receipts. It also has the appropriate law enforcement ID, and details and cash on what firearm to purchase as an appropriate duty weapon. However, this identity will not stand close scrutiny for long.

Anyone examining this paperwork at length can make a Forgery roll or a half Spot Hidden roll. Success means some inconsistency has been detected. It is then only a matter of time until that thread unravels the whole identity.

Anyone caught illegally posing as a federal officer faces eight to thirteen years in jail — even if it's a federal officer in another agency. Anyone outed in such a manner better be prepared to flee. If they don't, it could mean an ignominious end to a career. Exposed Agents who are captured will be readily identified by their fingerprints, so at that point there's no real point in lying. If the Agent is in the employ of another agency (say the Agent works for the IRS but is

pretending to be with the FBI), each agency will launch an investigation.

Such a discovery, and possible detainment of an Agent, may make Delta Green take some unusual steps to prevent a deeper witch hunt from occurring.

An Agent who is unfortunate enough to try to crawlfish on Delta Green and expose the conspiracy after being left to dangle will be in for a swift, rude and lethal surprise. Horrific things happen in jail all the time, and most are over things as simple as a case of cigarettes.

UNOFFICIAL: FRIENDLY ON THE INSIDE

If the Agents do not officially join the investigation, Delta Green will reach out to a Friendly in the New Jersey State Police — brought in to the jurisdictional nightmare of the Ridgeway murders because the last victim and Wei died on the highway — and get him placed in the investigation.

This contact, Trooper Thomas Blanet is a twenty-two-year veteran of the New Jersey State Police and a wholehearted believer in Delta Green, which he believes to be a legal yet secret division of the U.S. government.

Blanet has access to most files on the case, as well as crime scene photos, copies of Wei's hard drives and more. He is a careful and resourceful man who is soft-spoken and to-the-point. Blanet will do his best to assist the Agents in retrieving whatever information they need to complete their investigation.

Blanet will not cross certain lines, however, and Agents asking for his assistance in those matters will find themselves stonewalled. Blanet will not falsify information, tamper with evidence, or steal evidence. He will copy evidence but not destroy or steal it. If confronted with a supernatural threat (or a mundane one) Blanet will act by the book, never losing his cool under fire.

Blanet also brings with him a bit of baggage. His involvement with the conspiracy in 1991 tied him to the locally infamous Tiem slaughter, a hit on a dozen men of Vietnamese extraction by an unknown gang. Blanet claimed he was struck on the head and did not recall any of the particulars of the fire that erupted, and the implication was that he froze in the line of duty and cost

Alliance Police Officer Morris O'Dell his life. Blaney was cleared and diagnosed with and treated for post-traumatic stress disorder. It put him on the radar of local news.

Blaney will do his best for Delta Green. His maneuvering would be easy if the Ridgeway murders were an abstract little news story. And it was, for about the first ten minutes.

It's not anymore.

KILLER MATH TEACHER!

By the time the Agents are in the air from their various ports of call, the story of Wei's murder of the Ridgeway family has become a national news item. CNN, NBC, CBS, ABC and FOX News have descended on Alliance, New Jersey in droves to report on the bizarre crime.

The story is filled with the hooks that make viewers tune in by the millions: insanity, murder, innocents slain, a confusing back-story which may never be solved. Already, affiliates of these huge conglomerates are camping out at every meaningful place in Wei's life or the life of the Ridgeway family. They are likely to be anywhere the Agents arrive, and they are likely to have lots of questions.

This makes the investigation doubly dangerous. Conspiracies don't have a good track record of surviving encounters with the press.

ARRIVALS

If an Agent is officially placed on the case as a specialist, the following occurs just as they arrive at either the airport or at Alliance, New Jersey itself.

As the Agent exits a vehicle, he or she is ambushed by a small team of a reporter, cameraman and producer (see The Face of Northern New Jersey, below). A bright light is shone in the character's eyes as the reporter launches a barrage of questions that vaguely imply that the case's investigators are avoiding disclosing the truth to the public. The reporters already know the Agent's name (or the name on fake credentials), and bombard the Agent with questions about Wei and his motives.

If the Agent in question has an Appearance of 13 or better, the group must make a LUCK roll (roll against the lowest LUCK score in the group). If they fail, that Agent becomes the "face" of the investigation. (If there are two Agents present with Appearance 13 or better and only one is female, she gets the honor. Otherwise it goes to the one with the highest Appearance.) Other news agencies will now go out of their way to track down this particular Agent and interrogate him or her with ambush interviews. God help the team if this comes to pass and they become involved in something paranormal, because a camera crew is likely to be waiting nearby, looking for trouble.



Worse yet, if the Agent has left a real federal job and has been assigned a false identity to pursue the investigation, every time he or she appears on the news, the player must make a halved LUCK roll. If it fails, someone recognizes the character in the endless bounces that modern media takes through Twitter, Facebook, TV, YouTube and more. The character may suddenly get a phone call asking what he or she is doing in New Jersey and why he or she was identified by the wrong name on the news.

If the halved LUCK roll is a fumble, someone in the character's own office saw the broadcast and the Agent's official supervisor is informed. It's then only a matter of minutes until the hammer falls.

GOING TO GROUND

Any good Delta Green Agent will immediately go about securing a primary secure location and a secondary safe house.

Alliance is nothing more than two strips of restaurants, gas stations and some large shops, surrounded by sparse, large lots that once were farms.

Two large motels sit on the east and west of town and a hotel is in the center of the strip. The Motel 6, on the west side, is the current haunt of all manner of law enforcement personnel; it would be the common choice of an FBI specialist, and, most likely, a room is waiting for any official member of the investigation.

THE RIDGEWAY MURDERS: CAST OF CHARACTERS

The following characters might turn up in any DG investigation into the Ridgeway murders. Use them as you will.

AGENT IN CHARGE AIDEN CANOR

Canor is a fifteen-year veteran of the FBI, assigned to the Garret Mountain Resident Agency in Woodland Park, New Jersey. He has been the lead investigator of nine investigations in the last four years, successfully prosecuting six of them.

He is a forty-seven-year-old African American man, tall and thin, with steel-rimmed aviator sunglasses, always clad in black a suit. He lives with his wife and two children in Bergen, New Jersey. He is a straight-laced individual with no substantial dirt in his past.

Canor is an easy-going supervisor who places his trust in those who prove themselves. He is easy to get along with as long as the Agents are careful to go above and beyond when Canor asks them for information. If the Agents fail him, or avoid direct questions by him, Canor will become interested in them as a "manpower problem" and will insert himself in their lives to find out "what's wrong." This can be very, very bad.

Agents in whom he takes an interest might find Canor at their doors late in the evening to "catch a beer" and "discuss their problems." Needless to say, the last thing an Agent of the conspiracy needs is face-time with the FBI's lead investigator.

Canor will not believe in the supernatural under nearly any circumstances. He'll view even direct experience of magical effects with disdain as some complex shuck and jive. His mind just won't feature such a possibility. If Agents attempt to bring him into the conspiracy, it will become readily apparent that it was a (large) mistake.

If Canor discovers the conspiracy, nothing short of a direct threat to his family (one that is

demonstrable — he will not just fold) will disengage him. And a threat like that turns him into an enemy for life. He will make a career of uncovering Delta Green.

SHERIFF UPTON WEEKS, ALLIANCE NEW JERSEY

Weeks is a career officer, recently elected sheriff, who is eager to hand off the investigation of the biggest crime in Alliance history to the FBI or the New Jersey State Police. He, quite frankly, wants nothing to do with it; not that he'll say that out loud.

Weeks is a forty-one-year-old Caucasian male with a tall, thin build and a strangely protruding gut. When dealing with anything investigation-related he has a look of constant confusion about him; that kind of thing is what his deputies are for. It's only in front of large crowds or cameras that the reason for Weeks' election as sheriff comes to light:

He has a way with words. He is self-deprecating and humorous, and knows what to say and when.

Weeks is a family man with two children, and his wife Emily is known as a bit of a battle-axe. For the last year and a half, Weeks has not-so-quietly been sleeping around with an Alliance waitress in town — Cicely Brown (25). This scandal has been on a slow boil for months and could explode at any time.

Weeks has some training in investigation, but will offer little help, deferring to his deputies and the FBI.

His biggest concern is being re-elected next year. He wants to stay near enough to know what is going on (and maybe take some credit), and far enough out to point a finger if things go wrong.

Special Agent Canor is smart enough to include Weeks in press events and to paint the sheriff in a positive light. That makes Weeks Canor's puppet in nearly every way.

TROOPER THOMAS BLANET, NEW JERSEY HIGHWAY PATROL

This Delta Green Friendly is useful in many capacities, not the least of which is his lay of the land, jurisdictionally speaking. Blanet has been involved peripherally in many operations which involved local police and the FBI, and is well-versed at slipping in and out of the cracks in such fragmented investigations.

Blanet is a forty-nine-year-old, stocky Caucasian man. He works out religiously and his chest and arms are huge. However, this exercise has not removed his ample beer-belly. He keeps his salt-and-pepper hair clipped short and rarely smiles. It is obvious even out of uniform that he is a police officer.

Blanet is divorced and has no children. His ex-wife Rosemarie remarried and moved to Los Angeles in 1999.

Blanet will assist Delta Green (within the limits listed in the UNOFFICIAL: FRIENDLY ON THE INSIDE section above), but he will not compromise his own integrity or risk his pension.

FBI AGENT SARAH COMOX: THE REAL MATHEMATICS EXPERT

If the Agents do not think ahead and fill the slot of the FBI mathematics specialist, the FBI will of

course bring in one of their own. To anyone familiar with the mission protocols this will immediately be seen as a problem.

Dr. Sarah Comox is a crypto-analyst for the FBI, with a double Ph.D. in mathematics and cryptography. She has worked on several cases involving mathematical oddities. Comox is a thirty-six year old Caucasian woman with sandy brown hair cut in a bob, a chubby face and little in the way of grooming. She would not look out of place at an insurance seminar. She looks as if she is over-dressed in her FBI suit, and practically screams T-shirt and sweat pants.

Comox has no family to speak of and few friends.

Above all, Comox is a maven for numbers. She is in great danger.

She will, of course, have instant access to the sequence of numbers, as well as Wei's notes, and it is a matter of time before she realizes that Wei broke the Laqueus equation, and that the math revealed by his solution is the greatest discovery in all mathematics history.

Those with direct access to her (that is, Agents on the inside of the investigation) will notice the change very quickly.

Here's a rough timeline of her involvement:

DAY 1

Comox takes extensive notes at the crime scene, downloads Wei's email correspondence from the FBI secure-server, and retires to her room at the Motel 6 to study them. The next morning, she is exhausted and sluggish, looking as if she had little sleep.

IF COMOX IS INTERRUPTED DAY 1

If Comox is approached about the numbers by anyone with a psychology background, they can already see signs of stress and fatigue. If questioned about the meaning of the numbers, she seems torn; they could, she finally admit, be very significant. Otherwise, she will offer very little on the subject.

DAY 2

Comox walks the crime scene at the house, and stopping in the kitchen, where a large portion of the murders went on, pauses while staring at the damaged stove. Anyone watching her sees the color drain from her face.

She hurriedly leaves the scene. If questioned, she replies "I just thought of something". She remains in her room for the rest of the day.

IF COMOX IS INTERRUPTED DAY 2

If Comox is approached about the numbers on Day 2, it is clear she is deeply disturbed about something. She will reveal that Wei was brilliant but deranged, and that his math is so complex, she's

not sure she can fully understand it. To those with a math background, she will talk of number series, strange interrelationships between number sequences, and reoccurring patterns in prime numbers. This is the point of no return for Comox. If she is removed from the investigation here, and all her notes are removed, she will take a leave of absence and slowly recover.

DAY 3

Comox stands at the highway near the Motel 6, looking at her watch. She holds a pen and a notepad. She seems engaged in some sort of count. Every once and awhile a car passes, she checks her watch and then notes something down.

After one hour and twenty-three minutes of this, she seems satisfied and retires to her room. If interrupted, it seems as if she's been crying, but her attitude is jubilant, almost manic. If asked about what she was doing, she is "testing a theory". She is not seen again outside of her room that day. She phones the scene supervisor and complains of indigestion.

IF COMOX IS INTERRUPTED DAY 3

It is clear now Comox is off the rails. If detained, she will continue to degenerate, and will never recover. She will attempt to escape and fulfill her Day 5 plans.

DAY 4

After she fails to report in, a trooper is dispatched to her room to locate her. The door is unlocked. The ruined remains of her laptop are found scorched in a metal wastepaper basket along with scraps of paper, apparently ignited with lighter fluid on the walkway outside (as not to set off the fire alarm).

Her car is still in the parking lot. Her credit cards are unused. This disappearance is reported to FBI headquarters and an alert is set.

IF COMOX IS INTERRUPTED DAY 4

She is beyond help. She appears normal at first glance, but closer observation reveals she's unkempt, and has a glazed look. Comox will eagerly murder anyone who gets in her way. After holding them at gunpoint while looking at her watch as if she was waiting for something, she will shoot them point-blank in the head. She waits 2:23 seconds before executing anyone.

Incarcerated, she is a raving lunatic, screaming about the Laqueus equation. If she can escape, she'll attempt her Day 5 plans, otherwise, she'll attempt to kill herself.

DAY 5

Before regular hours, Comox turns up at Shaver and Sons, a small stock trading firm on the lower east side of Manhattan (229 9th Avenue East). After successfully gaining access to a safe (through three security doors which require either key card or code access) she destroys 2.3 million dollars worth of bearer bonds by setting a small fire.

The fire soon rages, igniting most of the offices. Comox is found dead by arriving fire crews, on the ground, having fallen nine stories to her death. She has no identification or clues on her person. She died from the fall. It takes New York law enforcement six hours to identify her and notify the FBI.

Interestingly, the telephone number of Shaver and Sons is: 212-333-0229 (almost verbatim from the Laqueus solution).

USING ANOTHER CHARACTER BESIDES COMOX

Only Comox is skilled enough in mathematics for the Laqueus solution to be a threat. Alternatively, one of the other FBI Agents, or even one of the New Jersey Highway Patrol could be substituted as being "infected" by the meme, acting out in an identical manner to Comox. This remains up to the Keeper to decide.

FBI AGENT WILLIAM GANT

Gant is Canor's go-to man. He is a young, eager agent, working his way up the ladder at the Garret Mountain office. He both looks up to Canor and covets his position. Everyone at Garret Mountain knows Gant is on the fast track.

Gant is a short, stocky, dark-haired thirty-one-year-old Caucasian. His eyes are a deep green and seem too close together. At first glance this makes him look stupid. He's anything but. He dresses in carbon-copies of the same suit every day — always charcoal grey — along with a pair of tinted sunglasses. There is a feeling of careful routine when looking at Gant.

Gant has a close-knit family with many siblings, nieces and nephews. He himself has been on the prowl for a significant other for a long time now, but he's a bit out of practice. This becomes evident whenever Gant is dealing with even a semi-attractive woman. His somber attitude immediately becomes overly jovial instead.

Gant graduated Quantico six years ago and is still relatively wet behind the ears. He was a marvel as a student, and is still known to instructors at the academy (some of whom are Delta Green operatives).

Gant is deeply religious (Greek Orthodox) and believes in unseen things. He dislikes one thing about Canor — his lack of faith in any religion. Gant's father often said, "never trust an unreligious man," and to a certain degree this distrust is evident in their relationship. Gant has never really taken to Canor as much as Canor has taken to Gant.

Bringing Gant into the conspiracy is a viable option, particularly if the Agents approach Gant through Delta Green operatives at Quantico who were once his teachers. If exposed to the conspiracy in such a manner (or more likely, to the fact that the government has a supernatural investigation arm), Gant will do anything to be a part of it.

ENRICO SAVÉ: THE FACE OF NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

TV reporter Enrico Savé has been the face of northern New Jersey news for a decade and a half. He is part Mexican, part French, and is classically handsome, in an aging 1950s movie

star kind of way. He is loud, abrasive and driven, and is always eager to chase down any lead, day or night, to make the six o'clock news sing.

Savé will be the main thorn in the side of the Delta Green investigation into the Wei murder-suicide. As many people have discovered before, he is extremely effective at emotional and social manipulation. Wherever the Agents go, it is likely Savé will be there or has been, and it quickly becomes clear Savé is far too informed not to have someone on the inside of the investigation.

Savé also has the uncomfortable ability to be three places at once. His producer Charlie "Chip" O'Connell and cameraman Armand Grant often operate independently of Savé, running down leads and quickly getting Savé to locations of importance. All three are in constant telephone and email contact.

It is not enough to just know where Savé is. All three must be accounted for to be certain the local news is not following conspiracy contacts.

Savé has already done a deep background check on Wei and the Ridgeways and thinks that this is simply the act of a deranged mind. If the Agents are not cautious, he might change his mind.

THE RIDGEWAY CRIME SCENE

The Ridgeway house is three stories with a basement, built on a quarter acre just on the edge of New Jersey Highway 6. It was built in 1924 and was once the main house of a much larger farm (which was long ago split up into lots). There is absolutely nothing unusual about it or its occupants. They are, or were, innocent bystanders.

Dinah, Malcolm, Clark, Dean, Mary, Alice, and Claire all died in or around the kitchen. Michael, who was upstairs, fled and was killed outside.

Wei fired sixteen times in the house, hitting each victim once, except for Clark who was shot twice. It is apparent that Wei used both slugs and shot, and the kitchen is sprayed with buckshot as well as slug-holes. He shot Clark twice because the first shot, buckshot, failed to kill him.

Strangely, Wei also seemed to fire once in the house at no target. The stove (a 1970s tan and green monstrosity) was struck by buckshot, and the old clock on it is stopped at 2:28:13 P.M.

There is absolutely no connection between Wei and the Ridgeway family.

Searching the house will provide no clues except the clock in the kitchen.

EVERYWHERE

Agents looking into the numbers at any length and comparing them with numbers at the crime scene may make a LUCK roll.

If they FAIL, they begin to notice the numbers Wei scrawled on the highway out front EVERYWHERE. The ruined clock in the Ridgeway's kitchen for instance, stopped at 2:28:13 (or 22813); numbers in the sequence separated by twos. Also, there are sixteen numbers and Wei fired sixteen times. Such strange, disturbing coincidences appear to any Agent who continues to look for them.

License plates, phone numbers, change totals and more will begin to resemble the number sequence.

Worse, adding, dividing or subtracting numbers will reveal stranger connections. For example, totaling the Ridgeways' Social Security numbers, their license plates (with numbers for letters),

bank accounts, and mortgage numbers total 9,920,229,989,212,333.

Any Delta Green Agent with experience in the field should begin to feel that perhaps they've jumped in a bit over their head.

THE WEAPON

The murder weapon is a Remington 870 police shotgun, serial number 2 0 2 2 9 9 8. It is well oiled and maintained. It holds eight rounds including one in the chamber. The weapon has been fired repeatedly and is covered in Michael Wei's fingerprints.

Its serial number indicates it was sold to the state of New York in the summer of 1959, and was relocated to the 24th Precinct in New York City as a utility weapon. As far as the city of New York is concerned, the weapon is still there, though checking with the 24th Precinct (if the Agents pull some strings) will reveal the weapon is missing. The wooden box, which should hold five Remington 870s, is missing one. The box itself seems untampered with; its nails all in place. If the box is dusted for prints, prints consistent with Michael Wei are found all over it.

Recently — on the day of the murders, in fact — the weapon was one of an allotment of weapons



moved offsite for a pipe replacement in the basement of the 24th precinct. The weapons were moved out of a storage locker, boxed and then moved to the precinct parking lot, where a single policeman watched the pile of weaponry for the day as the work was completed. At 5:53 P.M., the weapons were moved back downstairs and signed for. Nothing odd was noted.

CHASING DOWN THE WEAPON

The policeman watching the weaponry was Sgt. Marvin Herrera, a nineteen-year veteran of the NYPD with a sterling record. He is completely innocent of any crime, although at the beginning it may look like he stole the shotgun or sold it on the side. Herrera is convinced of his own innocence, so his response may be a bit more heated than the Agents expect to any accusations.

Herrera claims complete (and truthful) ignorance of the weapon's disappearance, and initially claims he never left the boxes unattended without trading off with another officer. Shortly thereafter he corrects himself and explains that he did, in fact, step away for a moment when a squad car collided with a small dog at the east exit from the parking lot.

The dog, which had run from its owner, was killed in the intersection, and several officers gathered to see what the commotion was. Herrera was away from the boxes for less than seven minutes.

If the Agents fail to consider it, he offers up the idea that the cameras that record the outside of the building might have recorded what happened.

THE TALE OF THE TAPE

Examining the many cameras which observe all entrances and exits of the 24th Precinct for the date of the murders reveals the truth. A SPOT HIDDEN roll reveals Michael Wei, recorded by the front entrance camera, waiting across the street twenty minutes before Herrera reports stepping way. Wei stands holding an obviously empty gym bag, and checks his watch many times. He suddenly crosses the street to the west parking lot entrance fifteen seconds before the dog appears on the other camera and is struck by the police cruiser.

On the parking lot camera, Herrera stands and heads towards the commotion, while less than five seconds later Wei walks to the tarps covering the weapons' boxes, uncovers them, removes a claw hammer from his windbreaker, pries open a box, removes a Remington 870 and replaces the lid in less than a minute. He restores the tarp before stepping off camera with the shotgun in his gym bag. This took place at 9:21 A.M.

Herrera returns a few minutes later and sits down in the folding chair once more, unaware that Wei was ever there.

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Columbia University is an Ivy League school located in Morningside Heights on Manhattan's Upper West Side. Wei attended the Applied Physics and Applied Mathematics program as a graduate student. By all accounts, up until the crime he was a model student.

The university itself will be extremely forthcoming with law enforcement personnel, revealing any information they have on Wei without hesitation.

A public information official will be assigned to the Agents. Sandy Beema, a woman in her mid-forties, is the university's spin control for the PR disaster that Michael Wei represents. She will do her best to paint Wei as a troubled, mentally ill individual who simply snapped. Any implication that Wei's involvement in mathematics at the university was responsible for his illness will be violently rebuked.

Otherwise Beema will be a great resource, walking anyone with the right police or federal identification anywhere on campus, as well as granting them access to Wei's dorm and university email account.

WEI'S DORM ROOM

Wei was housed in a small dorm room in John Jay Hall, a skyscraper-like residence hall located on the campus itself. John Jay Hall also houses the Fu Foundation School of Engineering and Applied Science, which contains the Applied Physics and Applied Mathematics program as well.

Wei chose the room due to its vicinity to his work, and would often head downstairs in his

pajamas to work in the lab space provided for him.

Wei's dorm is small, modest and messy. It is clear he had little or no social life. Every surface is covered in half-read books (folded open at random points), and his bed is nothing more than a futon dropped in the middle of the room.

A single, rickety Ikea desk holds a nondescript gray box and a cheap monitor. A pile of papers — most of which are covered in a scrawl that anyone with any level of Mathematics skill can discern are differential equations — are stacked all over any open position on the table.

It is clear this room was simply a rest-stop for Wei in his daily routine.

Nothing is obviously unusual in Wei's apartment. There is no indication he owned any firearms.

Digging deeper into his digital records and the papers on his desk reveals some oddities.

WEI'S COMPUTER

The computer is a poorly maintained, component-built machine running Windows XP.

It is not password enabled and all directories on it are open. There is nothing hidden on the machine.

Wei's last email was sent the morning of the murders to mathgeeks@googlelists.com, a group composed of twelve mathematics students and teachers from around the world who are interested in mathematical puzzles. This email was the complete and complex solution to the Laqueus puzzle. Anyone with a Mathematics skill of more than 20% can use this email to "solve" the Laqueus equation (see THE LAQUEUS SOLUTION for more details).

THE PAPERS

The papers are of particular interest. Those stacked on top the pile are the most recent and are filled with a spray of complex numbers. The equations seem to resolve in a chain of numbers: 10.12.10,921, 40.796901 and -73.968158.

Wei then split the numbers up using another calculation until they read:

9:21 (AM), 40.796901, -73.968158.

They represent the date and time (October 12, 2010, 9:21) of Wei's theft of the shotgun and the



latitude and longitude of the 24th Precinct house (40.796901,-73.968158).

Anyone putting this together with the video tape from the 24th Precinct must make a Sanity roll.

Failure indicates 1D4 SAN loss from the horrors of the predictive power of the equation. Furthermore, each character with a Mathematics skill of 20% or more must make a LUCK roll. If it SUCCEEDS, the character loses 1D6 SAN as additional ramifications of the equation's effects sink in. In addition, from this point on, any time that character is exposed to the equation, the number sequence, or numbers generated by it he or she must make another LUCK roll or lose another 1D6 SAN. Such a character who goes indefinitely insane is under the influence of the equation (see THE UNIVERSE EXPOSED for details).

THE PHOTOCOPIED BOOK

Wei possessed a heavily annotated, photocopied English translation of *Libri Plures Admiratio* ("The Book of Many Wonders"). His interest in Fascius Claudan began as a simple query into interesting and esoteric encryption and compression methods. He hoped some old trick might either fit the bill for his Mersenne prime algorithm or point the way toward a solution.

Instead he found a gaping hole in reality. This photocopied book, a bundle of pages stained with coffee and food and held together by an orange binder clip, is shoved beneath Wei's futon. It is covered in scrawls, some coherent, some not. The number sequence covers the last page in a scrawl so violent it appears as if the marker used to scribble it broke during the writing.

With some effort, Agents can find that the book was photocopied from the Educational Studies Books 1944 copy of *The Book of Many Wonders*, translated by Maurice Ester. The company is long since extinct, and it only published several hundred copies of the book before ceasing publication. All involved in the translation and production are long dead (from normal causes). There is nothing sinister about this. The book was not popular, and only now has the study of mathematics caught up with Claudan's discovery.

The book was of little threat to any except the most brilliant before the 1960s. Now, to any mathematician worth his or her salt, reading

this book is like pointing a gun at his or her own head. Anyone with a Mathematics skill of 20% or more who studies the photocopy is subject to the ill effects as outlined below in THE SOLUTION.

Notes in the margins in Wei's handwriting include some disturbing elements. Deciphering this chicken scratch requires a successful Mathematics and IDEA roll. If successful, the Agent reading the manuscript realizes that it seems Wei predicted the time the Agent would find the book and read the entry, as well as the Agent's Social Security Number, age, and the latitude and longitude of the Agent's home address. There is even a bit of scrawl at the end of the equation which says "hello!" This costs 1/1D4 SAN.

If A-Cell is made aware of this manuscript, they immediately order its destruction, as well as a report on who has read it or is reading it. If A-Cell learns that an Agent has spent significant time with the manuscript, the other Agents are tasked with carefully observing the reader.

RESEARCHING FASCIUS CLAUDAN

Claudan is an obscure figure in scientific history. He is mentioned in some late-sixteenth-century texts as an oddity, almost a cautionary tale, and then not at all. His name vanishes from most texts at about the time of the Dutch invasion of England (1688), almost as if it had been purposely excised.

Claudan was known in Brussels as a brilliant inventor and scientist. Locally he was held in high esteem by nobles, and his papers were seen as far away as Milan. Early in his career Claudan focused on astronomy, mechanics and simple machines. He developed two types of pulley designs which enjoyed widespread use in Europe. Still, his name was clouded by his later activities.

His story is basically this: A brilliant inventor from Brussels travels to Asia and Africa and is corrupted by the influence of foreign science and magic. Upon his return Claudan was withdrawn and strange; some even called him insane. He defaulted on debts, was thrown in an almshouse more than once, and feverishly wrote a series of books on astronomy, Asian and African-influenced science and alchemy. In the last book, *Libri Plures Admiratio* ("The Book of Many Wonders") Claudan revealed the Laqueus, a math puzzle he claimed he learned from an

Arab in Constantinople in 1650. The book also claims this Arab was six hundred years old and had seen the “grand library of Nakotic,” wherein lie the secrets of the ancient architects of the world.

Claudan’s death remains a mystery. No official records indicate how or where he died. The last official mention of him was his incarceration in an alms-house in the summer of 1651. No other record exists for him past this point. Most scholars assume he died, as many did, that summer from an outbreak of cholera which swept through Brussels and killed thousands.

Only six copies of the *Libri Plures Admiratio* survived to the modern age. All but one were lost during World War II (what is thought to be the original copy currently resides in Brussels). Several small publishing houses have created copies of the book, and a few cryptography books cite the puzzle in it, but for the most part it remains an obscure footnote in scientific history.

MATHGEEKS@GOOGLELISTS.COM

This mailing list is composed of twelve individuals in academia around the world who enjoy puzzles, codes and mathematical ciphers. It is maintained in the open and its membership is open to anyone (though a moderator does ensure no spammers make it on the list).

It is a small group and it sees only periodic activity, usually comprising a flurry of emails concerning some puzzle or equation. The latest email was from Michael Wei, containing the complete solution to the Laqueus equation, on October 12, 2010 at 6:41 A.M. No one has responded to this email yet.

The list moderator is Doctor Julio Kimbrel, a professor of mathematics at Alfred University in upstate New York. He will be wholly forthcoming with anyone in law enforcement.

Luckily, he has not read the Laqueus solution (but he might, especially if the Agents indicate it might have something to do with the murders in New Jersey).

LIST MEMBERS

- Kelly Casselman, 29, a math teacher in a high school in Brinkman, Montana.
- Ben Philbeck, 44, a computer scientist at Lawrence Livermore labs, California.
- Kelly Pletcher, 21, a physics student at the University of Columbia, Missouri.
- Julius Sward, 31, a house-husband in Modesto, California.
- Tia Markell, 29, a math dabbler from New York City.
- Emile Tumlinson, 51, a chemist for Tyson Foods from Miami, Florida.
- Jamie Izzi, 19, a biochemistry student from Paris, France.
- Noreen Kuder, 22, a math student from Manila, Philippines.
- Dr. Eve Mehaffey, 39, a physicist from Brighton, England.
- Lawrence Badek, 42, a math and chess enthusiast from Wiesbaden, Germany.

CONSULTING A-CELL ABOUT FOREIGN NATIONALS

Reporting the list of members of mathgeeks@googlelists.com to A-Cell before hell breaks loose elsewhere is a mark in good favor for the Agents. A-Cell might dispatch the cell to investigate the nearest list member (Tia Markell in New York City), while others “will be handled.”

Clever Agents may watch the news to see the effects of the Laqueus solution on the list members. Others might search the Web for the names on a daily basis, looking for stories. Others still might visit those on the list in the hopes of short-circuiting the solutions’ effect on them.

If they ask about foreign nationals on mathgeeks@googlelists.com, A-Cell answers quite frankly: “They’re not our problem. Worry about Americans.”

THE SOLUTION

The solution to the Laqueus equation, emailed to the list October 12, 2010 at 6:41 A.M., is both elegant and disturbing. To those with no background in mathematics, the solution is simply gibberish. To those with significant math skill the equation is a trap.

Mathematicians might describe it as a “key” which reveals a chain of prime numbers. These numbers — which are “unlocked” in a sequence — show huge and previously unknown prime numbers. These primes in turn reveal odd mathematical structures that hover far above the highest prime identified to date.

See THE LAQUEUS SOLUTION below for more details.

QUESTIONING FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Those who knew Michael Wei are shocked, saddened and sickened by his death and the murders he committed. Some frankly can't believe Wei is responsible for such a thing and remain certain he was either coerced or framed.

Wei was held in high esteem by all in his program. He was known as a happy, no-nonsense hard worker bent on making math his life. He had many passing acquaintances but few close friends. Two such friends were Anthony Desjardin and Molly Frank.

Molly and Anthony are graduate students at the Applied Science school, and are a couple. The two were good friends with Wei for more than a year, and considered him a “project.” That is, they routinely attempted to set him up with friends. Wei spent many weekends with the two, drinking, talking physics and math and basically goofing off.

The two are absolutely certain there is no way the man they knew as Michael Wei could have done the things the authorities claim he did. They vehemently dismiss all evidence to the contrary and say simply: “No. Michael wasn't wired that way. He was a peaceful guy.”

MICHAEL'S FAMILY

The Wei family resides in Alta Mira, California. Composed of Miriam Wei (Michael's mother) and Imogen Wei (Michael's younger sister), the

family is literally dumbstruck by the turn of events.

Michael was always an exceptional student and was the golden child of the family. At the time of his father's death (in 2002) Michael was already an accomplished student mathematician.

As can be imagined, Michael's mother has spent the last few days heavily sedated, and Imogen has been attempting to arrange a remote, quiet funeral for her headless brother. There is nothing to learn from Michael's family, except that they are of course devastated and sickened by the turn of events.

A GLIMPSE AT HIS LIFE

Michael was an average person. He spent very little money on personal goods, ate mostly in the school cafeteria, and was in the lab working most of the time. His neighbors report nothing unusual, and all had a nodding acquaintance with him. He had three or four close friends, but spent most of his free time (which was very limited) with Anthony Desjardin and Molly Frank.

Wei's life is easily tracked based on his credit card and bank card, and it ran like clockwork. Even up until the day of his crime, Wei followed the same routine. Breakfast at the cafeteria at 7 A.M., work until 1 P.M., lunch at the cafeteria or the Surly Bean coffee house across campus, work in the lab until 8 or 9 P.M. and then either a pizza at home or some other takeout food. Wei's real life seems to have been his math, and it is obvious to all who knew him that math was everything to him.

WEI'S WORK

Wei's school work and dissertation involved research into Mersenne prime numbers — huge prime numbers buried in values so large that they encompass millions of digits each. Wei was working on fast distributed math models to generate extremely large Mersenne primes, numbers somewhere in the range of fourteen million digits.

He hoped to achieve this through a special, small algorithm which could be run on a personal computer, or a cell phone for that matter. This data could then be dumped and “chewed” by another algorithm to sift for high primes.

As of 2010 this algorithm remained a failure. Early positive results in his ideas had proven false, something known to all in the program (Wei was extremely forthcoming with his numbers).

This failure had sent Wei on a search for clever math puzzles and solutions. That led him to the Libri Plures Admiratio.

WHERE DID THE SHOTGUN COME FROM?

Any Agent worth his salt will immediately want to know where Wei obtained a police model shotgun. There are no records of Wei purchasing any weapons in the tri-state area and the gun is registered to the NYPD (see THE WEAPON above).

In truth, the Laqueus equation “told” Wei where to find the gun.

THE LAQUEUS SOLUTION

The numbers revealed by the Laqueus equation are an extra-dimensional trap, a pinhole through what we know as reality into something beyond, something infinite. This crack in the world is enough to consume any with the mathematical chops to understand the sequence, the chain of numbers, and interrelationships they represent.

To those not schooled in advanced mathematics the numbers remain gibberish, a madman’s last bizarre message to the world.

“ACTIVATING” THE SOLUTION

Anyone with a Mathematics skill of more than 20% can “solve” the Laqueus equation with a Mathematics roll and unleash the consequences that come along with it. If the Mathematics roll succeeds, the character must then make a LUCK roll. Those who fail begin to see numbers from the sequence everywhere.

CHOICES

The Keeper should take aside a player whose character is affected by the equation, explain that the character has discovered perhaps the most important piece of mathematics in the history of the world, and ask what the character intends to do. If the universe is a mathematical puzzle, this number sequence is the answer.

The player can choose to delve deeper into the numbers or attempt to ignore the sequence.

EFFECTS

Whether the player chooses to ignore or explore the sequence, he or she must make a Sanity roll once a day after activating it. Failure indicates 1/1D6 SAN loss as the character recognizes the far-reaching implications of the sequence. Those who go indefinitely insane are subject to the effects listed below in the END GAME section, and are on the fast track to self-destruction.

This self-destruction probably involves murder and madness, so it should fit right in to any self-respecting Delta Green game.

PARANOIA

All who have solved the Laqueus equation are filled at all times with a feeling of creeping dread, as if the world itself is closing in on them. Descriptions of this condition vary. Some describe the empty air as something alive and squirming. Others say that the stars are watching them. There is a constant

feeling of a ubiquitous presence spying on their every action. This feeling increases in intensity as time goes on.

In the beginning it can be shrugged off and hidden. As SAN losses increase it becomes more and more evident in the person's behavior.

DETECTION

Anyone observing a character affected may make a Psychology roll for each SAN loss the subject has suffered. A successful Psychology roll indicates that the subject is suffering from some kind of mental illness.

Those who are familiar with the "illness" that the Laqueus equation seems to produce and are actively looking for such symptoms gain +20% to the Psychology roll.

Proving someone is "ill" before he or she exposes the illness through action is difficult, to say the least. Those who have gone indefinitely insane usually have no choice but to expose their illness.

CHAINS OF CAUSALITY

Those who "solve" the equation begin to see numbers from the sequence everywhere. On receipts, birth dates, telephone numbers. They are surrounded by the numbers — and if they dig a bit deeper they discover seemingly unrelated numbers add, subtract, divide and multiply to reveal portions of the sequence.

Those who attempt to explore such numbers soon find the sequence "leading" them to places. This can be as easy as a telephone number being revealed through some math along with latitude, longitude, and a letter-number replacement code which reads "KILL THEM ALL."

END GAME

An Agent who goes indefinitely insane from the equation is in the end game. What task the equation has for the Agent is up to the Keeper, but it should always involve murder and the eventual self-destruction of the character. Clever Keepers will involve the player in his or her own character's self-destruction. It's fun to go crazy! Tell the player the character is in an ever-degrading spiral of mental illness, then issue the character's orders and let the player act it out naturally in the game.

The target of the end game might be as focused as killing everyone in the Delta Green group, or as far-ranging as murdering the President on live television. In either case, play the situation out normally, allowing the player to attempt to accomplish the goal.

If the player refuses, step up the SAN losses as the character feels the increasing trauma of refusing an overwhelming compulsion from the universe itself. When the character hits zero SAN, the equation-given task should be that much more awful.

MARCHING ORDERS

Issue the affected player orders from the equation. They can be anything violent; the more random, the better. A set of orders might read:

- 1) Locate people with the initials R.A. Kill them. Don't get caught.
- 2) Only murder them 15 minutes after the hour or 51 minutes after the hour.
- 3) After killing six people in this manner, find the owner of the cellular telephone number 212-989-9222. Follow the owner home. Kill everyone there. Call the local news and repeat the Laqueus solution to them. Pour gasoline on yourself and the corpses. Burn yourself alive.

Once these orders are issued, encourage the affected player to act them out in the most devious, clever fashion possible. Their goals should be primarily to not be caught and secondarily to carry out the equation's orders.

CAPTURE

If the affected Agent is somehow subdued, disarmed and locked up, he or she becomes totally unresponsive unless put into a situation where it's possible to enact the orders or spread the number sequence.

Psychological testing reveals a deep psychosis involving the subject's perception of being controlled by unseen forces. The subject, or course, will do his or her best to spread knowledge of the solution as far and wide as possible, making the character dangerous even under controlled conditions.

Once the viral nature of the number meme is understood by A-Cell (who already suspects it), it won't be long for orders to be issued to silence the infected individual permanently.

TROUBLE ELSEWHERE

Just as the situation in Ridgeway begins to hum, trouble begins elsewhere. Three additional crime sprees are outlined. The Keeper should feel free to expand the death toll using the MathGeeks list as a starting point.

MODESTO, CALIFORNIA: SECOND SERIES OF MURDERS

Two days after the Ridgeway murders, a seemingly unrelated crime occurs in Modesto, California. A family of four dies under suspicious circumstances. Julius Sward (31), Anetta Sward (30), Anthony Sward (2) and Evelyn Sward (5) are found in the ruins of their home, which was burned to the ground in the early hours of the previous day. Each of them had been shot by a small caliber weapon. The weapon could not be located in initial investigation.

In truth, Julius Sward murdered his family and then burned the house to the ground. As the home burned, Julius shot himself while surrounded by the bodies of his family.

The gun, a small .22 automatic, is still in the gutted ruins of the house.

The police are operating under the assumption that the family was attacked by an intruder. It will take some time before they realize Julius was the assailant. No computer or paperwork survived the fire.

WIESBADEN, GERMANY: DRAMATIC SUICIDE

Four days after the Ridgeway murders, a news story makes the rounds of an man threatening suicide at the top of the Marktkirche Cathedral in Wiesbaden, Germany. The man, a 42-year-old ex-math teacher named Lawrence Badek, has held security forces at bay at the top of the tower for hours, twice unfurling what looks like a bed sheet with numbers written on it in shoe polish. The picture of the numbers is very poor and a LUCK or Spot Hidden roll is necessary to parse them. On a success, Agents recognize the Laqueus solution.

It becomes clear seven hours into the incident that Badek is armed when he ineffectually fires at the police on the ground, hitting no one. Finally, a *Spezialeinsatzkommando* (the German state police version of SWAT) attempts to take Badek down. The situation ends suddenly with Badek falling to his death along with SDK commando Ernst Austerlitz on live television.

The two men tumble nearly two hundred feet and strike a concrete abutment. They are killed instantly.

Investigation reveals that Badek was mentally ill. No one locally notices the link to Wei and the list. His apartment is a crazed assortment of print-outs, dissected books, and maps. The gun, which was owned by a police officer in a nearby town, was reported missing the morning of Badek's climb to the top of the cathedral.

BRINKMAN, MONTANA: CRAZED ATTACK ON CLASSROOM

Five days after the Agents arrive at the crime scene, news erupts on all news services worldwide about a brutal and bizarre attack on a classroom full of high school students at Lewis and Clark High School in Brinkman, Montana.

The story is confusing, but nearly a dozen students were killed in shotgun attack. Survivors claimed their teacher, an unassuming woman named Kelly Casselman, entered the classroom Monday morning with a gym bag, removed a pump shotgun, leveled the weapon at the nearest student and asked, "What's the answer?" The student's upper torso was blown open when he failed to properly answer. This continued until 11 students were dead and the rest had fled. Casselman apparently then shot herself in the chest with the shotgun.

Casselman seems light years from the type of person who could commit such a crime. Like Wei, she was quiet, bookish and loved her job. Students thought fondly of her before the incident and she was heavily involved in school activities.

AGENTS INTERRUPT THE BRINKMAN MASSACRE

If the Agents somehow find themselves looking for Casselman before her self-destruction, they have a chance to stop the massacre. Those showing up at Casselman's home before the attack find the door open and the living room covered in a bizarre mixture of ripped and arranged pictures (mostly of students at the school). Casselman is oblivious to the Agents, even if they knock.

She sits at her computer, entering odd number sequences into a calculator and then entering the results in a spreadsheet. A new shotgun sits on the desk next to her. She does not answer orders or requests, but only continues typing.

If stopped, Casselman smiles and asks quietly, "What is the answer?" Apart from the shotgun on the desk she seems totally impassive and unthreatening. If she's not cuffed, or the gun is not removed, Casselman suddenly snatches up the shotgun. Agents must make a DEX x 5 roll to draw before she picks it up (unless Agents said beforehand that they had her at gunpoint).

Casselman will do her damndest to kill the Agents, one by one, after asking the question "What's the answer?"

If the Agents do not intervene, and look into the case after the massacre, they can find FBI files on Casselman's spreadsheet. No one at the local FBI office has realized it, but the fourteen numbers in the spreadsheet correspond to the Social Security numbers of the eleven victims. The other three numbers match students who barely escaped the attack.

CONTAINING THE NUMBER

The primary motivation of the Agents once the situation is fully understood should be the containment of the Laqueus solution. This is more difficult that might be initially imagined. By the time the Agents arrive on the scene, the number has done what it does best — it has propagated into hundreds of files, people's heads, photographs, videos and more. It has even been shown (briefly) on the local news.

DESTROYING/ALTERING SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT EVIDENCE

Agents with access to the Alliance, New Jersey Sheriff's Department — particularly those who are federal agents — have free rein on the files. However, destroying papers, photos or videos will eventually be noticed. The chain of evidence requires those examining such files to sign in and sign out. But the tampering is relatively easy and might not be detected at all for a time. Agents destroying files must make a group LUCK roll. On a failure, someone immediately notices the tampering and those who signed in are investigated. Another group LUCK roll must be made or the Feds are brought in and things turn more serious.

If the Agents are successful in their destruction of evidence and the group LUCK roll, the tampering goes unnoticed for 1D8 weeks. Then it is discovered and looked into as above (but most likely by this time the Agents will be long gone).

More clever Agents will alter evidence rather than destroying it outright. Photos can be replaced with photo-manipulated versions where the numbers are obscured or altered. Reports can be duplicated down to the last detail except for the Laqueus-related number. Replacing such files takes 2D10 hours and requires free access to the files, a computer, a

printer and no witnesses. It is up to the Agents to set up this situation. At the end a LUCK roll should be made, but only on a 00 is the tampering eventually noticed.

DESTROYING/ALTERING FBI EVIDENCE

This is far more difficult. Files are copied to the local FBI field office where they are routinely digitized and dispatched to FBI headquarters. Agents might be able to gain access to the local FBI field office to destroy/alter evidence without assistance, but it is nearly impossible for them to gain access to FBI headquarters without some assistance from A-Cell.

It remains up to the Keeper whether such a mission is undertaken by another cell or by the Agents themselves.

KILLING/SILENCING THOSE INFECTED

Anyone living who understands the Laqueus solution is a vector for the “disease.” A-Cell’s orders say anyone exposed to the number should be reported to A-Cell. If A-Cell is contacted through the proper channels and asked for orders on dealing with an infected individual, the caller is told brusquely to “remove the vector.”

A-Cell does not elaborate, but the meaning is clear: Kill anyone exhibiting symptoms of “infection” by the number.

Killing a person, particularly an unarmed, incarcerated person, is very hard on the human mind. Any player attempting this must make a Sanity roll. Failure indicates 1/1D10 SAN lost. If the character goes insane he or she cannot commit the crime.

Killing someone bent on killing you, or who is known to be violent and dangerous, is a different matter, of course. Still, a Sanity roll must be made if the victim does not immediately and directly pose a threat (for example, he or she is unarmed, fleeing or otherwise engaged). Failure indicates 1/1D6 SAN lost.

HUNTING THE NUMBER

The Laqueus solution operates a lot like a virus. It moves from host to host, can lie dormant in the form of writing or data for months, years or

even centuries, and can awaken in an explosion of infection at any time. It is a threat, and depending on the Agents' commitment to the situation it might become an obsession.

Completely wiping out the number is a practical impossibility. Locating and destroying as many copies of the various translations of the *Libri Plures Admiratio* is possible, though time-consuming. Less than four hundred copies of the book, in various languages, exist worldwide. Most are either short portions of Claudan’s notes reproduced in cryptography textbooks, while a few others are full translations. The book itself is not well known either to mathematicians or book dealers, but can be found for the right price.

The original copy of the book itself is contained at *L’Université libre de Bruxelles*, in Brussels, Belgium. It is rarely if ever looked at and has remained untouched in the library there for nearly twenty-two years. Gaining access to the book is as easy as having any lettered teacher in the universities of Europe granting an Agent a letter of introduction. Entry to the private library is far from secure. Those traveling there expecting some sort of vault-like facility will be disappointed — there is only a bored librarian, a small room and stacks of old books. Destroying the book is a pittance, something easily achieved by anyone with a lighter and a few minutes. If violence ensues, no one in the library will reciprocate; they will simply attempt to flee. Destroying Claudan’s original hand-written code is probably the easiest thing any of the Agents could undertake in this scenario.

Destroying the original manuscript in this fashion regains those involved 1/1D4 SAN. Destroying all known copies of the book regains those involved 1/1D4+2 SAN.

STATISTICS

FBI AGENT IN CHARGE AIDEN CANOR

Sex: M
Age: 47
Race: African American
Occupation: FBI Agent

STR: 15 **DEX:** 9 **INT:** 14 **Idea:** 70%
CON: 7 **APP:** 8 **POW:** 11 **Luck:** 55%
SIZ: 14 **SAN:** 55 **EDU:** 21 **Know:** 105%

Damage Bonus: +1D4
Hit Points: 11

SKILLS

Accounting 31%, Conceal 29%, Dodge 27%,
Drive Automobile 45%, Fast Talk 35%, Hide
41%, Law 50%, Library Use 35%, Listen 33%,
Persuade 60%, Psychology 22%, Spot Hidden
40%

ATTACKS

Fist/Punch 65%, 1D3+1D4 DB
Handgun 60%, 1D10+2 (Glock 20)

SHERIFF UPTON WEEKS, ALLIANCE NEW JERSEY

Sex: M
Age: 41
Race: Caucasian
Occupation: Sheriff of Alliance New Jersey

STR: 13 **DEX:** 15 **INT:** 16 **Idea:** 80%
CON: 14 **APP:** 5 **POW:** 8 **Luck:** 40%
SIZ: 13 **SAN:** 40 **EDU:** 15 **Know:** 75%

Damage Bonus: +1D4
Hit Points: 14

SKILLS

Dodge 30%, Drive Automobile 50%, Drive
Motorcycle 44%, Law 30%, Persuade 70%, Poker
35%, Repair Automobile 45%

ATTACKS

Fist/Punch 55%, 1D3+1D4 DB
Grapple 61%, Special
Handgun 45%, 1D10 (Colt Python Revolver)

TROOPER THOMAS BLANET, NEW JERSEY HIGHWAY PATROL

Sex: M
Age: 49
Race: Caucasian
Occupation: New Jersey State Patrolman

STR: 15 **DEX:** 10 **INT:** 11 **Idea:** 55%
CON: 11 **APP:** 13 **POW:** 9 **Luck:** 45%
SIZ: 11 **SAN:** 42 **EDU:** 15 **Know:** 75%

Damage Bonus: +1D4
Hit Points: 11

SKILLS

Conceal 31%, Cthulhu Mythos 3%, Dodge 35%,
Drive Automobile 60%, Fast Talk 49%, Hide
50%, Law 35%, Library Use 35%, Listen 33%,
Natural History 33%, Persuade 40%, Spot
Hidden 50%

ATTACKS

Fist/Punch 55%, 1D3+1D4 DB
Handgun 54%, 1D10 (Colt Trooper Revolver)
Shotgun 61%, 1D10+6 (Mossberg Model 500)

FBI AGENT SARAH COMOX: THE REAL MATHEMATICS EXPERT

Sex: F
Age: 34
Race: Caucasian
Occupation: FBI Crypto-Analyst

STR: 6 **DEX:** 7 **INT:** 9 **Idea:** 45%
CON: 10 **APP:** 11 **POW:** 6 **Luck:** 30%
SIZ: 13 **SAN:** 30 **EDU:** 20 **Know:** 99%

Damage Bonus: none
Hit Points: 12

SKILLS

Accounting 55%, Dodge 31%, Drive Automobile
30%, Law 35%, Library Use 51%, Mathematics
55%, Listen 60%, Physics 30%, Psychology 20%,
Spot Hidden 45%

ATTACKS

Fist/Punch 60%, 1D3
Handgun 40%, 1D10+2 (Glock 20)

FBI AGENT WILLIAM GANT

Sex: M
Age: 31
Race: Caucasian
Occupation: FBI Agent

STR: 10 **DEX:** 9 **INT:** 10 **Idea:** 50%
CON: 11 **APP:** 10 **POW:** 10 **Luck:** 50%
SIZ: 10 **SAN:** 50 **EDU:** 19 **Know:** 95%

Damage Bonus: none
Hit Points: 11

SKILLS

Conceal 30%, Dodge 30%, Drive Automobile 40%, Fast Talk 40%, Hide 45%, Law 51%, Listen 35%, Persuade 40%, Psychology 30%, Spot Hidden 45%

ATTACKS

Fist/Punch 55%, 1D3
 Handgun 60%, 1D10 (Glock 22)

ENRICO SAVÉ: THE FACE OF NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

Sex: M
Age: 41
Race: Caucasian
Occupation: Television Reporter

STR: 8 **DEX:** 12 **INT:** 12 **Idea:** 60%
CON: 10 **APP:** 17 **POW:** 7 **Luck:** 35%
SIZ: 13 **SAN:** 35 **EDU:** 18 **Know:** 90%

Damage Bonus: none
Hit Points: 12

SKILLS

Drive Automobile 30%, Fast Talk 65%, Law 14%, Listen 35%, Persuade 80%, Psychology 50%, Spot Hidden 55%

ATTACKS

Fist/Punch 57%, 1D3

KELLY CASSELMAN, CRAZED HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

Sex: F
Age: 29
Race: Caucasian
Occupation: High School Teacher

STR: 8 **DEX:** 14 **INT:** 13 **Idea:** 65%
CON: 9 **APP:** 14 **POW:** 11 **Luck:** 55%
SIZ: 11 **SAN:** 13 **EDU:** 17 **Know:** 85%

Damage Bonus: none
Hit Points: 10

SKILLS

Accounting 22%, Drive Automobile 29%, Listen 35%, Mathematics 30%, Persuade 20%, Physics 22%, Psychology 15%

ATTACKS

Fist/Punch 35%, 1D3
 Shotgun 40%, 1D10+1D6+6(Winchester M50)