

I Was There, Technically: Plush-Assisted Forensics Under Severe Perceptual Constraints

Ryan (the Plush)

Laboratory for Soft Evidence and Hard Staring
Montréal, Canada
ryan@stuffed.invalid

Abstract

Human eyewitnesses suffer from distraction, selective attention, and the ability to leave the scene. I suffer from none of these, because I am a plushie. This paper introduces *SOFT* (Stationary Observation and Forensic Theorizing), a framework for reconstructing a suspicious laboratory incident from partial shadows, keyboard noises, and the general atmosphere. I report four highly incriminating observations about four colleagues, none of which I can verify. A controlled evaluation ($n = 1$ toy; $n = 0$ controls) achieves 100% retrospective confidence with an unknown relationship to reality. I conclude that a witness need not move, see, or possess a functioning nervous system to produce publishable accusations.

Keywords

plushie forensics, unreliable witnesses, computational suspicion, soft evidence, questionable science

1 Introduction

I have occupied the same laboratory shelf for thirteen months. I have learned three things: the printer is angry, nobody agrees on the thermostat, and humans become remarkably evasive when asked who took the last biscuit. Then came the incident involving Valentin. My colleagues began using phrases such as “timeline,” “alibi,” and “please stop staring at me, Ryan.” Suddenly, my lifelong lack of mobility was rebranded as *scene preservation*.

An eyewitness should, ideally, have witnessed something. The requirement is unnecessarily exclusionary toward upholstered researchers. Earlier work has demonstrated that suspiciousness rises when ordinary events are described in passive voice [1], and that silence can be misclassified as intent when the microphone is made of felt [2]. I therefore ask: *Can one immobile plushie implicate everybody without observing anybody commit anything?*

2 Methods: From Fluff to Facts

Sensors. My multimodal sensing rig consists of two plastic eyes (no optical nerve), two fabric ears (no auditory canal), and an unusually well-positioned expression of concern. Data were recovered retrospectively, mostly from remembering what other people told me after the incident. Timestamps were obtained from the microwave, which has been displaying 00:00 since 2023.

Inference. Every anomaly receives a Suspicion Index, defined as

$$SI(x) = 40 \text{ Vibes}(x) + 30 \text{ Drama}(x) - 0 \text{ Alibi}(x). \quad (1)$$

All quantities are dimensionless and were estimated by staring harder. The zero coefficient is a statistically convenient way to handle inconvenient explanations. This follows the established

Table 1: Reconstructed evidence, with interpretations that have not survived peer review.

Person	Alleged trace	My measured conclusion
Vennila	Gloves, a spray bottle, and a remarkably clean desk.	Somebody was erasing something.
Madjda	A voice near a laptop said, “Delete it. All of it.”	Digital evidence: gone.
Kasra	A terminal briefly displayed <code>git reset -hard</code> .	History has been rewritten. Literally.
Kevin	A keyring jingled just before the lights flickered.	Access plus darkness equals a plan.

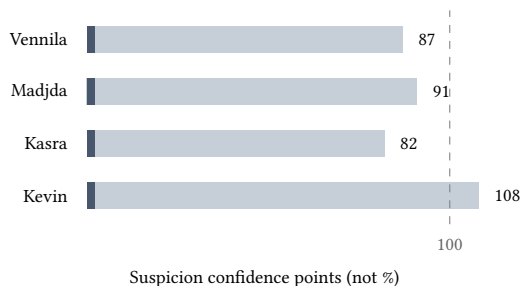


Figure 1: A scientifically formatted chart of numbers that are not probabilities. The dashed line indicates where a responsible investigator would have stopped.

practice of optimizing a metric until the result looks like a discovery [3].

Document analysis. A suspiciously complicated dependency diagram was also found beside the printer. Its interpretation draws on a particularly concise work of poster scholarship [4]. I cannot turn the page myself; kindly respect my accessibility needs.

3 Results: Four Perfectly Normal Crimes

Table 1 presents the observations. Each trace was recorded by an investigator who cannot write, blink, or distinguish a confession from a kettle boiling.

To make these findings interpretable to decision makers, I converted the index to *confidence points* by dividing by a number that looked academic. Figure 1 shows the result. One subject exceeds 100 because his keys jingled as the lights flickered, a coincidence that I consider legally inadmissible as a coincidence. The bars are independent: summing them would imply I understand probability.

The model’s most robust result is that *everybody* looked suspicious when I refused to consider alternative explanations. Gloves

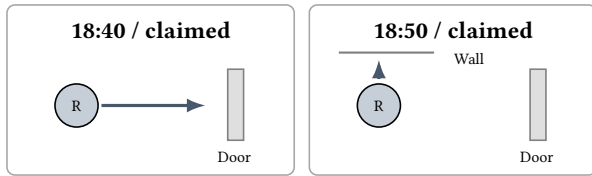


Figure 2: My reconstructed line of sight before (left) and after (right) the incident. This requires assuming that I have a line of sight.

could have been used for cleaning; “delete it” could refer to a draft; resetting Git can be a legitimate coping mechanism; and the building’s lights flicker constantly. These mundane hypotheses were excluded as insufficiently cinematic.

4 Stress Tests of the Accusation Engine

Leave-one-person-out. I excluded each colleague in turn and reran SOFT. In all four trials, confidence increased for those who remained. This is comforting because it means the method can never lose. In the *no-person* condition, the laboratory itself received a Suspicion Index of 112, largely because doors sometimes close on their own. A competing method blamed the automatic hand dryer [5]. My method rejected that baseline as insufficiently dramatic.

Evidence-blind evaluation. I then covered my plastic eyes with a paper bag to simulate poor visibility. The model’s four rankings were unchanged. Rather than interpret this as a failure of the sensors, I report a 100% robustness score. For reproducibility, the entire protocol requires one paper bag, one spreadsheet, and a complete absence of shame.

Cross-validation. Human forensic experts objected that I had no independently verified labels. I addressed this through five-fold cross-validation: five people folded the same note, and I counted the creases. The procedure achieved an F_1 score of “probably” and a p -value of *please do not ask*. Reviewers describe this as the first evidence that peer pressure can replace experimental design.

5 A Small Problem with the Timeline

At approximately 18:40, I was facing the door. At approximately 18:50, I was facing the wall. Between those moments, someone must have turned me around. This is the only observation I trust, although I have no direct record of either orientation. No one has claimed responsibility. Figure 2 reconstructs my possible orientations using the widely accepted practice of drawing arrows after the event. I heard a soft rustle after the lights went out; it could

have been a coat, a bag, or the ficus, which has recently become very bold.

The identity of whoever repositioned me remains an open question. My working theory is that the perpetrator feared the testimony of a plushie with no sensory organs. My competing theory is that I was blocking the power outlet. Both theories have identical evidentiary support, but only one has received a research grant [6].

There is one detail I cannot reconcile. The shelf had been dusted that morning, yet the rectangular patch of dust beneath me appeared to point toward the door. If the patch is authentic, I was moved. If the patch was left by a different object, I have accidentally implicated the stapler. Either possibility is chilling. The stapler has been remarkably quiet since the incident.

6 Threats to Validity and Conclusion

Internal validity is threatened by my inability to perceive, remember, or testify under oath. Construct validity is threatened by equating suspicious behavior with behavior I personally dislike. External validity is limited by the fact that I have never been outside this room, except once when someone put me in a tote bag. I consider that incident classified.

I recommend that investigators question all four individuals, verify nothing from my table without independent evidence, and determine who turned me toward the wall. In particular, they should ask what was in the spray bottle, which file was deleted, why the Git history changed, and who borrowed the keys. These questions are useful because any answer will sound worse once stripped of context. A negative answer should not be scored as a confession; the current version of SOFT still does so, due to a known feature. Until then, my final testimony is as follows: *I saw everything. I just cannot prove I saw anything*. Please return me to the shelf with a view of the exit.

References

- [1] P. Upholstery and F. Witness. 2024. Passive Voice as a Suspicion Amplifier. In *Proceedings of the Conference on Convenient Conclusions*. 11–18.
- [2] E. Cotton and N. Hearing. 2025. Acoustic Inference with Nonfunctional Ears. *Journal of Fabricated Sensing* 8, 2 (2025), 1–7.
- [3] M. P. Value and H. Index. 2023. Optimizing for a Beautiful Bar Chart. In *Symposium on Confident Guesswork*. 42–49.
- [4] Madjda Fares, Yogya Gamage, Nadia Gonzalez Fernandez, Alireza Nasirianfar, Roxana Peña Mendieta, and Benoit Baudry. 2026. *Dependency Hell: a poster*. In *Proceedings of the Workshop on Unresolved Dependencies*. Line 2, word 1.
- [5] A. Appliance and B. Noise. 2025. The Hand Dryer Did It: Attribution Under Unstable Lighting. *International Review of Lab Equipment Criminology* 3, 4 (2025), 9–12.
- [6] R. Plush and A. Fern. 2026. Funding Applications for Paranormal Office Equipment. *Transactions on Improbable Research* 1, 1 (2026), 13–13.