VAST Challenge 2014

Grand Challenge Guide for Reviewers

The Grand Challenge asks participants to synthesize the discoveries made across the three mini-challenges to form a high level description of the entire scenario. This task focuses on the identification of who disappeared, who was responsible, and the underlying motivations. Significant information gaps will also be addressed by the participants.

# The Task

The contestants are asked to answer four questions, using visual analytic techniques to support their investigation. No additional data is provided.

Question GC 1

*Summarize and describe the events of January 2014 relating to the disappearance of the GASTech employees. Focus on the disappearance of the employees, and the events immediately before and afterward. The summary should include the following:*

*Who: Individuals and groups involved and their roles*

*What: A description of what happened over the time period*

*Where: Associate events with locations*

*When: Specific times of activities, particularly as they relate to planning and execution*

*Why: A description of the motives or motivations of the individuals or groups involved*

*How: What, if any, notable entities provided support for or facilitated the events that took place? These could be people, places, or things that helped those responsible for the disappearance in some way.*

**Who**

The primary groups involved are the POK kidnappers, the POK insiders at GASTech, and the hostages themselves.

The kidnappers are all members of the Security group at GASTech:

* Hennie Osvaldo (Security)
* Isia Vann (Security)
* Inga Ferro (Security)
* Loreto Bodrogi (Security)
* Minke Mies (Security)

The kidnappers received help from co-conspirators, also GASTech employees:

* Carla Forluniau (Admin)
* Ruscella Mies Haber (Admin)
* Cornelia Lais (Admin)

All eight persons involved in the kidnapping are members of the Protectors of Kronos as well as employees of GASTech.

Sten Sanjorge Jr. is not among the hostages. The hostages are GASTech executives and one assistant:

* Rachel Pantanal (Assistant to CIO)
* Ingrid Barranco (CFO)
* Ada Campo-Corrente (CIO)
* Orhan Strum (COO)
* Willem Vasco-Pais (ESA)

**What**

The following are the events taken from all three mini-challenges that comprise the kidnapping activity.

* For the two weeks prior to January 20, the kidnappers had conducted surveillance of the intended victims’ houses and practiced runs to the safe houses from GASTech Headquarters. (MC2 movements)
* The co-conspirators communicated via email, circulating an electronic magazine linked to the Asterian People’s Army (APA) titled “Aspire”. (MC1 email)
* Money filtering took place from credit cards to the POK leadership. (MC2 credit card transaction at Frydo’s)
* Following the GASTech Corporate Meeting on January 20th the kidnappers pull a fire alarm to create a diversion and kidnap four members of the leadership and one administrator. (MC1 text)
* The POK issue a ransom notice for the GASTech hostages (MC1 text)
* On January 23rd kidnappers Isia Vann and Inga Ferro are holed up in Safe house 2 with Rachel Pantanal and Ada Campo-Corrente. (MC3)
* Across town Silvia Marek, the peaceful leader of POK, is holding a rally. (MC3)
* The Dancing Dolphin Apartment building catches fire and the emergency personnel and police respond. The kidnappers are spooked by the arrival of the authorities, and are further concerned about the evacuation of nearby buildings. (MC3)
* The kidnappers in Safe house 2 grab the hostages and flee. In the process they sideswipe a parked car and hit a bicyclist. These events are witnessed by several people, some of whom provides a partial license plate and a description of a black van. (MC3)
* Isia Vann, the driver of the black van, runs a red light and is chased by police. The chase ends in a stand-off with one officer shot. (MC3)
* The stand-off ends peacefully with the two hostages rescued. (MC3)
* The Kronos police investigation traces the route of the black van linking the hit and run, the side-swiped car with a witness directing police to Safe house 2. (MC3)

**Where**

Activities occur in several places in and around Kronos. However, the core of the kidnapping activities takes place in Abila city.

* The kidnapping takes place at GASTech Headquarters in the southern part of Abila.
* Safe house 2 and the Dancing Dolphin Apartments are roughly a block from each other in the Western part of Abila
* The route the black van traverses the city roughly West to East beginning at Safe house 2 and ending in the Gelatogalore parking lot just Northwest of the POK rally
* The stand-off takes place in the Gelatogalore parking lot
* The POK rally takes place in Abila Park right next to the Kronos Capital
* APA associated people microblog from Frydo’s Autosupply N More in support of the POK

**When**

There are several important time elements to the scenario. Basically, these can be summed up as follows:

* Prior to January 6, 2014. This provides the history and background of the POK, including motivations for their violent activities.
* January 6 – January 19, 2014. Two weeks of potential hostage surveillance. The five kidnappers take surveillance shifts for their targets and make practice runs to the safe houses.
* January 20-21, 2014. The kidnapping days. From the time the action is initiated though the time the ransom notice is issued.
* January 23, 2014. The microblog collection days that include (at least) three major events related to the scenario.

**Why**

The more violent wing of the POK under the leadership of Mandor Vann (uncle to Isia and Juliana Vann) were motivated to kidnap members of GASTech’s leadership to exact revenge for years of pollution that GASTech’s drilling operations have inflicted on the people of Elodis. Additional motivations include GASTech’s recent IPO which resulted in massive payouts for GASTech leadership, making them ripe for ransom. Another motivation for the kidnapping is the frustration with the corruption and lax environmental regulation of the Government of Kronos, personified by GASTech.

**How**

The Asterian People’s Army provided training and support for the more violent wing of the POK that perpetrated the kidnapping. Mandor Vann organized and orchestrated the kidnapping event without involving the majority of the POK, and without the knowledge of the POK leader, Silvia Marek.

Question GC 2

*Describe at a high level the most significant networks that exist, and how they have influenced each other to produce the current situation. Please limit your response to no more than five images and 100 words.*

The most significant networks involved in the scenario are:

* GASTech organization. This includes the executive group, but also separately the POK insiders who helped make it all happen.
* The Protectors of Kronos (POK)
* The Government of Kronos (GOK). Occasionally throughout the history of the POK, the GOK played significant roles that contributed to their evolution.
* The Asterian People’s Army (APA). This would be the most difficult for contestants to uncover as they worked in the background, shaping the changes in the POK.

GASTech took advantage of lax environmental regulations and a more-than-cooperative government to make massive profits at the cost of environmental degradation to the island of Kronos, especially the town of Elodis. The effects of GASTech’s pollution inspired the formation of the POK. Desire for profit influenced the GOK and GASTech to conspire, and both to ignore requests for cooperation with the POK. The APA influenced and inspired certain members of the POK both to enter into drug producing and trafficking and to fund more violent tactics.

Question GC 3

*Identify three of the most significant information gaps that remain at the end of the time period covered by the data. Describe why this missing information would be important to the investigation. Highlight in your visualizations where these knowledge gaps are present. Please limit your response to no more than three images and 250 words.*

Contestants have free rein to identify data gaps. Some of the more significant data gaps include:

1. The confirmed names and number of people involved in the kidnapping
2. Information about the locations frequented by the kidnappers in Mini-Challenge 2
3. The cause of the fire in the Dancing Dolphin
4. The relationship between the APA and the POK

## **Question GC 4**

*The police have sufficient manpower to investigate up to two different locations simultaneously. Provide your best recommendation to the police chief as to where the police should be deployed, and why. Provide visualizations that help describe the importance of this action. Please limit your response to no more than two images and 100 words.*

1. Safe houses. Any of the five safe houses that the kidnappers frequented in Mini-Challenge 2 would be good recommendations for locations to deploy available police officers. The best of the five safe houses to deploy police officers is Safe house 2 where the black van involved in the stand-off originated. The association between the van, the hit and run, fender bender and the chase/standoff can be traced through Call Center data.
2. Frydo’s Autosupply’n More. Although significantly more difficult to find, sending police to Frydo’s Autosupply ‘n More would be an exceptional suggestion. The APA-affiliated persons are using Frydo’s as a front for illicit operations and have been micro-blogging in support of the POK (MC3 data). Also, a large purchase was made with a stolen credit card (MC2) at Frydo’s by one of the kidnappers.
3. Black Van sightings. Plausible locations to send available police officers are locations around Abila where black vans were sighted. Although these suggestions are reasonable, the sightings of black vans other than those along the route driven by the kidnappers are red herrings.
4. Dancing Dolphin Fire. Another reasonable location to send police units would be the fire at the Dancing Dolphin Apartments given the explosion noted at the end of the MC3 data stream. Also, GASTech employees live at the Dancing Dolphin Apartments, which would be indicated by MC2 data.