

The Groom Lake Desert Rat

"The Naked Truth from Open Sources."

AREA 51/NELLIS RANGE/TTR/NTS/S-4?/WEIRD STUFF/DESERT LORE

An on-line newsletter. Written, published, [copyrighted](#) and totally disavowed by [Psychospy](#). Direct from the "UFO Capital," Rachel, Nevada.

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Psychospy Goes To Washington

...And Bonds With The NSA In A Traditional Ceremony

In a brief visit to Our Nation's Capital last weekend, Psychospy was ignored by the CIA and FBI, tolerated by the Pentagon but warmly received by the semi-nonexistent National Security Agency.

On a whirlwind tour of the wicked East Coast, we arranged a 30 hour stopover in D.C. for the purposes of consulting with our political allies (none in dimly lit parking garages) and looking into the intelligence agencies that might be looking into us. First we drove around the perimeter of CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. We saw nothing much of interest in this pleasantly wooded campus, just some parking lots and office buildings surrounded by a double row of fencing. We considered driving up to the gate to ask if we might be given a tour, but thought better of it when we saw no visitors center or ticket booth. We snapped a few pix from the road and pressed on.

Next, we drove around the perimeter of FBI headquarters on Pennsylvania Avenue wondering how we could get a date with Agent Scully of *The X-Files*. Fearing rejection, we dared not even stop. The FBI does offer public tours on weekdays, but the possibility of running into Scully, gagging on our chewing gum and having not a thing to say was more than we could bear. We got away from there fast.

We did take the public tour of the [Pentagon](#), however. It was mostly a static review of war memorials and commemorative paintings lining the endless corridors. We were disappointed not to visit the War Room to see the "Big Board" or meet Dr. Strangelove and General Turgidson, but the tour did pass by the offices of Air Force Secretary Sheila Widnall and Secretary of Defense What's-His-Name. Fearing the icy glare of our uniformed tour guide, we chose not to drop in.



Finally, we used our confidential contacts and secret intel to locate the headquarters of the hyper-secret National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Maryland. This big government entity is concerned with radio signal processing and the making and breaking of secret codes. Not long ago it was as nonexistent as Groom: the initials "NSA" were said to signify "No Such Agency." Now, clever spies can find its headquarters by taking the "NSA" exit on the Baltimore-Washington Parkway. No public tours are offered of the facility, but there is a public museum. According to recent news reports, the National Cryptologic Museum is a memorial to coding devices and codebreaking triumphs of the past.

Just off the freeway exit, we found ourselves in front of what looked like a high-tech research park: a collection of routine steel-and-glass office buildings with only a few discreet satellite dishes on the roof. We found the museum

nearby, occupying a former motel on the frontage road facing the busy freeway. Rumor has it the NSA purchased this property because Soviet spooks were using it as an in-your-face observation base for the spy palace next door. The property is now surrounded by a chain-link fence. The museum occupies the motel office while the rest of the compound looks like it is being used as a maintenance depot. [[A reader provides more info.](#)]

Being a Sunday, the museum was closed, so we just drove by it on the frontage road. Posted on the fence immediately in front of the museum, facing the freeway, was a Restricted Area sign with lots of fine print. Such signs hold for us a certain seductive, "come hither" quality. We stopped the car, walked up to the sign and snapped a single picture of it with our trusty Canon.

Lights flashed, sirens wailed. It happens that at the moment we snapped the picture, a security patrol was passing by us on the frontage road. As we attempted to escape in our rental car, they pulled us over, and soon we were surrounded by three squad cars with flashing lights and "Department of Defense" emblems on the door. An officer demanded our driver's license, and as he was radioing in our ID, we turned on our own surveillance devices to catch the freq. The marked security patrols broadcast on 408.35 MHz, and, as expected from America's coding agency, the transmission was encrypted.

A plainclothes officer arrived in a fourth vehicle and told us he would have to confiscate our film. Warm and nostalgic feelings drifted over us as we politely told the officer to go to hell. We gave him our business card for "Secrecy Oversight Council" and said that we had some experience with this kind of demand. We asked him the authority by which he was taking our film. He said that since we were on the property of Fort Meade, we were subject to search and seizure without warrant. We expressed our doubts about whether the frontage road beside the freeway was the property of Fort Meade. We then pointed to the cars passing on the freeway a few feet away and tried to explain the logical inconsistencies. On the other side of the freeway, there was also a tall office tower in what appeared to be a private business park. Couldn't motorists or workers in the tower take all the pictures they wanted?

The officer was unmoved. He escorted us back to the sign we had just photographed so we could read it. We read the whole thing aloud to him in our best theatrical voice. Sure enough, about the third item on the list of don'ts was a prohibition against photography. Already holding the world's record for politically charged seizures of technically worthless film, Psychospy knew the drill better than anything. Like a previous photographer reported in the Rat, we hemmed and hawed, put on our best show of defiance, then broke down under the unbearable pressure of NSA Security. In front of the officer, we unloaded our camera and turned over our film for "processing."

The officer gave us a receipt--signed, no less. He was Scott N. Jacoby of the NSA, Section SSOC. He said the film would be developed and returned to us if no illegal photos were found. We asked for double prints, but Mr. Jacoby was not receptive. With our film now exchanged for a piece of paper, the ceremony was complete, and we were free to go. We completed our survey of the Fort Meade area, snapped a whole roll of the main NSA complex from the stoplight out front, then took off down the highway.

So what pictures were on that lost roll of film? While waiting in the car for the plainclothes officer to arrive, Psychospy would have had plenty of time to switch rolls in the camera, but that would have been dishonest. Psychospy might have had to--gasp!-- lie to the officer when he turned over a blank roll. Lying is something the government does all the time, especially around these well-publicized secret facilities, but Psychospy will not stoop to that level. The film turned over contained our distant photos of the CIA headquarters, some snaps of the Pentagon, shots of Georgetown University and that single photo of the Restricted Area sign in front of the Cryptologic Museum. We hesitate to say the film was worthless. For the record, those shots of the university were the most precious and artistic we have ever taken, and we will not surrender our legal title to them without a fight.

Some readers may protest that we should not have given in so easily. Hold out 'til they draw guns, they would say. While in principle we agree with this attitude, we felt that this case was a subtle ceremonial event that needed to be handled delicately. In exchanging our film for their piece of paper, we were "bonding" with the NSA. The two of us have now entered into a lasting symbiotic relationship, like Yin and Yang, flower and bee, parasite and host. As it stands now, a super-secret, non-accountable government agency has our film, and we want it back. We suspect that they won't give it back because it shows their Restricted Area sign and a little bit of their museum. We'll protest and

express our outrage to the media. We'll file FOIAs and contemplate legal action. We'll get nowhere, of course, so when our mission at Groom is complete, we could be forced to come back to Fort Meade to write the "NSA Viewer's Guide."

We don't think of it as losing our film, but gaining a partner.

Aftermath Of ABC Seizure

As reported in [DR#7](#), ABC News lost their equipment and video tape to the Lincoln County Sheriff after visiting Freedom Ridge on April 8. The equipment was then immediately turned over to the anonymous Cammo Dudes, beyond the boundaries of civilian law. Everything taken was returned by the Sheriff six days later. No apologies were offered, but an Air Force spokesman did confirm that their Office of Special Investigations ([OSI](#)) had reviewed the tape. The report finally aired on *ABC World News Tonight* on April 19 [[Transcript](#)], and its drama was greatly enhanced by shots of the ABC producer being frisked and the correspondent emptying his pockets.

The video tape was returned in its entirety with no evidence of alteration. None would have been tolerated by the network, since they did not photograph the secret base. However, certain equipment taken from Psychospy was tampered with. In addition to seizing every single piece of the crew's equipment, the authorities also took Psychospy's scanners and radio equipment as well as a two-way radio we were holding for a friend. The keyboard of this radio had been "locked" when turned over to the authorities but was unlocked when returned. Unlocking the keyboard required a special key sequence that could not have happened by accident. This action suggests a deliberate and knowledgeable attempt to read the frequencies stored inside, and it implies that the frequencies stored in our unprotected scanners were also "compromised."

They now know what we know, and since we know they know what we know, why shouldn't everyone know? Groom Lake perimeter security patrols (Cammo Dudes) broadcast primarily on 418.05, 142.2 and 170.5 MHz. We obtained these frequencies by sneaking up close to the patrols with our trusty frequency counter. For many months the transmissions were mostly unencrypted, and we enjoyed endless hours of amusement listening to the Dudes talk about us. Psychospy was referred to as "the Friend," "the Editor," or "Our Mr. Campbell." The Friend shared many intimate moments with the Dudes, recording their dreams, frustrations and colorful sexual and scatological references. (Boys will be boys.) Alas, our capabilities eventually became too widely known, and the none-too- swift Dudes started scrambling their transmissions in March. The encryption sounds like static preceded by a blip. It is apparently unbreakable, but the transmission itself can yield information about the position and distance of a hidden patrol. The Dudes may also be forced to broadcast "in the clear" in remote locations where the signal is obscured by hills.

Other frequencies may be published in future Rats. The decision of which to publish and which to withhold is the kind of spy-vs.- spy chess game we do so enjoy playing. Not all of our frequencies and techniques were compromised in the ABC seizure, and the more we publish about our knowledge, the greater opportunity there will be for countermeasures by the "opposition." In other words, they still don't know what we know they don't know, how much we know about what they know we know or what we will do now that we know what they know we know. No? On the other hand, we hate keeping secrets for very long, as it is inconsistent with our mission.

There are many unresolved issues in the ABC equipment seizure. What was the probable cause upon which the warrant was based? The crew never pointed their camera at the base, and the Cammo Dudes were watching us through their Super Mega Spy Cam with hairs-on-a- gnat's-ass resolution. Nonetheless, some anonymous Dude evidently testified to the Sheriff that we shot the base. Because of the government-protected anonymity of this witness, he and his organization are immune to any legal repercussions for their testimony. A warrant can serve a lot of purposes apart from the obtaining of evidence. It could be used as a means of harassment, as a "fishing expedition" for intelligence information or simply as a way to seize equipment. How do we know, for example, that the Dudes did not concoct their testimony just to get their hands on our scanners?

The only document the Sheriff has made available to the suspects is the warrant itself--and only after a two-week delay. We were mystified by the broad demands of the warrant. It authorized the seizure not just of video tape but of all video, sound and radio equipment. Sound and radio equipment can't take pictures, so what is its relevance? Was this a bona-

fide effort to prove the photography case or an attempt to gather intel, intimidate civilians and neutralize equipment? A warrant implies that you intend to file charges if any incriminating evidence is found. If the Groom base had shown up on the video tape, would the federal authorities have the political will to prosecute such a hot-potato case? Judging from the response to press inquiries, nobody is rushing to the aid of the AF: not the County D.A., FBI or Justice Dept. Prosecution of this espionage charge would be a felony case handled by a serious federal court, not by the Alamo Justice of the Peace. There it would garner national attention; the defense lawyers would be accorded the full rights of discovery, and the absurdities of a non-existent base could be richly dramatized for the public. We think it would be laughed out of court along with the credibility of the prosecuting agency.

We propose that the only reason ABC News got its equipment back is because it was ABC News--a big media organization with plenty of legal and P.R. muscle. If this was your average Joe with a videocam, the equipment might have been gone forever. Remember, a secret base doesn't have to obey the law. Somewhere inside, there is already an impressive cache of film and equipment withheld from visitors without due process. Thinking themselves innocent of any wrongdoing, Psychospy and countless others have turned over their film and videotape to the Sheriff for "processing" and never seen it again. Once the film enters the non-existent base, it is lost even to the Sheriff. Logically, it is the legal obligation of the authorities either to return the film or charge the offenders under the espionage statute. What happens, instead, is no response at all.

The warrant released by the Sheriff did not provide any information about who made the complaint or what the probable cause was. The Sheriff, D.A. and Justice Court have declined to release that information on the grounds that the case is still "under investigation." Does that mean that ABC is still under suspicion of photographing the base? When their report aired, the nonexistent base was nowhere to be seen except for a brief shot of the satellite image found in the Testors XR-7 model kit. We suspect that the "under investigation" claim is simply convenient excuse for withholding the probable cause.

Intel Bitties

DUDES GET A THRILL. The Cammo Dudes' already elevated testosterone levels got an additional boost on Saturday when two nude sunbathers--male and female--soaked up the rays at their campsite near the base of White Sides. Other members of their party, who were climbing the hill to view the base, reported getting ALMOST NO ATTENTION AT ALL from the Dudes, who were preoccupied with positioning their Cherokees for the best view of the campsite. Since the sunbathers were visible only to the Dudes, not the climbers, it is unclear at this writing whether they engaged in any acts other than sunbathing. They later reported to the climbers only that they gave the Dudes "a good show."

FEELING OH SO GAUCHE. In [DR#7](#), we reported that the anonymous Cammo Dudes wear six-color, not three- color, desert camouflage fatigues. As soon as we reported this, the Dudes started showing up in THREE-COLOR DESERT CAMMO, obviously in an attempt to embarrass and infuriate Psychospy. We hear that all the major military services are now phasing out six- color cammo, providing further proof that THE GENERALS READ THIS NEWSLETTER. They will pass up no opportunity to humiliate us, but we will not be broken. Six-color is definitely more stylish, and by wearing it we assert our INDIVIDUALITY, a quality sadly lacking in the military.

DESERT RAT DIRECT CIRCULATION has reached 750 copies. This is the number we send out by email and US mail. We have no idea how many more copies are downloaded from bulletin boards or redistributed by others. (We hear that the Rat is all the rage in Europe.)

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