

❖ City of ~~Farmington~~ New Mexico ❖



**VOLUNTARY STATEMENT – TRANSCRIPTED INTERVIEW**

Lopez, Aguilar

Sergeant

~~124 73 6986~~

Name

Rank/Rate

Social Security Number

Police and Fire Services

**RHD**

Command

Division

231

598-2254

Section

Phone

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby make the following statement:

It started when a peculiar job application came across my desk. We were just a bit player in the auto game at that point. Tesla had the market cornered as early as 2019, and the German manufacturers weren't far behind with "corrective auto-assist steering" systems that would help folks dodge pedestrians when they absolutely had to check their inbox during the drive to work.

Now there are dozens of 3<sup>rd</sup> party contractors cleaning up the aftermarket autopilot game. Some people would install our systems because they couldn't afford a Tesla (and who can, really?). Mostly, they trusted the machines more than themselves. They calculate 50,000 lives are saved annually, when compared to the human-driver oriented twenty teens.

In any case, ~~Manuel Sanders~~ didn't fit our profile.

The first red flag was that fresh Stanford diploma. Once we had gotten to know each other, he would occasionally describe his time in college to me, and how he had graduated, early, from some new institute focused on the intersection of biodiversity and mental health. He didn't need grad school, the way they are hiring programmers these days, although I've no doubt he could have added the letters PhD to his name after three or four years at an Ivy back East.

Here, at Modular AutoSystems, we employ technicians exclusively. These guys can disassemble your steering wheel column and attach our patented multi-axis correction actuator (and actuator power supply) in 35 minutes on a good, non-hungover day. But they didn't graduate from Princeton though, or Yale, or Brown, and a few of them haven't been outside the state. Personally, travel has always been something to look forward to, but I'm also a Lobo – University of New Mexico. Fun fact: New Mexico, as a state, has both the greatest number of PhDs and the most high school dropouts.

That's why I love it here.

Of course I gave ~~Sanders~~ the job. We needed a software developer to model incoming lane sensor data, and he could script for multiple platforms and the web. So, he was a technician too. At least when he started working for us, towards the beginning of May. We never came close to suspecting he was supplementing our code base though.

Essentially, he was generating micro-centrifuges in our client's brains, at least during a set of pre-determined routes. Certain destinations – mostly points in the city connected by high-speed curves -would trigger ~~Sanders~~'s actuator control instructions, causing the client to spin out of control at about 50mph. This could never happen at Tesla. Their security protocols are strict and multiple developers review each line of code.

But the spin-out routes ~~Sanders~~ injected weren't even hidden (he knew our team wasn't going to bother auditing his code), and I finally noticed when we started getting richer clients.

One young woman – a park ranger at the lake, originally – singlehandedly identified a rich deposit of shale oil in the mesa region northwest of the city. Apparently she had located a seep after wandering off the highway while waiting on a tow

truck. There has been talk of oil in this county before, but it was mostly country folks who saw it or knew how to find it. They also claim to hear Comanche war drums out there – the people out between mesas off Route 104 – and I don't really take those stories seriously either. Anyway, the newly minted “exploration specialist”, who made a bunch of normal people rich, was one of our first customers after ~~Sandoval~~ was hired.

Next came the chess player, who still competes internationally. Turns out, he was only a decent chess player (ELO ranking of just about 2000) before we sold him a multi sub-unit from the “Trust” line of products. That's what no one has put together – you don't drive far to get work done on your car. It was just too minor a detail. Installations are common these days, and our client's successes were seemingly unrelated.

The problem is, he didn't think how dark such experiences could be, or how troubles – seen side-by-side – rarely remain consistent across troublemakers. Or, put another way, people's brains are just too varied for ~~Sandoval~~'s spin-out technique. The centripetal energy, applied to the pituitary gland in a powerful enough motor vehicle executing a specifically calculated maneuver, was enough to release moderate amounts of the endogenous hallucinogen known as DMT. It was as he predicted, but the ultimate impact on the driver was more or less random.

I've never done Dimethyltryptamine, for the record, but supposedly it's pretty nuts. The night crew got some a while back, in smokeable form, and they mentioned it had revealed certain “abilities”. Once again, this may be country bullshit, but one dude caught me looking at him from across the shop floor while his back was turned. Then again, ~~Jeremiah~~ (the night crewperson in question) has taken so many post-installation test drivers that he probably has what they all had.

I didn't used to think it was a bad thing, given all the wealth and prosperity it brought to the City of Farmington, but there's no accounting for black ice. That's my theory anyways. Black ice isn't easily tracked by our Taiwanese sensor arrays. We can monitor ground temperature and feed that visualized data back to the driver, but their lightfield contact lenses will only ever let them see as far as the sensor: 6-9 feet. At 50mph, black ice comes up quick.

They say he's a genius with the crime scene, right? That there's never any usable evidence? No local network traffic – no satellite imagery linking him to the crimes? What a coincidence. When Sandoval quit, after folks stopped driving route 104 altogether, that's when it all clicked. “Police Officer MIA”. That's why I'm here, talking to you guys, because there will almost certainly be an eighth victim.

The unit we installed in Officer ~~Cunningham~~'s cruiser was flawless. QC signed off on it the 23<sup>rd</sup> of July. It was likely a dip in the road, filled with black ice, where the intended effect of ~~Sandoval~~'s malware was modified by a loss of left front wheel traction. ~~Cunningham~~ veered to the left, instead of spinning out to the right, as our fugitive programmer intended. Nevertheless, the chemical was still released, and he's still out there.

It turned him, literally and figuratively. It's not his fault; you have to understand. He was made that way – trained, in a roundabout way, to kill and hide his tracks. ~~Sandoval~~ generated angular velocities previously unattainable by members of the primate kingdom, up to now. Instant psycho, I'm telling you. It happened with all of our clients, in one way or another, they all experienced something that changed them fundamentally.

This was the first killer I've noticed though.

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I swear (or affirm) that the information in the statement above and on the \_\_\_ attached page(s) is true to the best of my knowledge or belief.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Witness' Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Time

Sworn to and subscribed before me on this date.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Investigator's Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Time