

In the world of forensic study, it is almost an anomaly to look at a particular source and know the exact meaning and connection to the rest of the case, if there is even a connection to be found. June 23rd our team came across a piece of evidence, interpreted its meaning, and made a major connection to our case in a matter of 30 seconds. Included in our sets of multiple documents from the 23rd's investigation was a statement released by the White House Press Secretary that stated they had hard evidence and were positive of the fact that the terrorist organization ISIS was behind the hijacking of the TI Oceania. At the time it was hijacked, the Oceania had a cargo load of over 3,000,000 barrels of oil. This gargantuan amount of oil on the ship would bring forth great revenue for those who possessed it. This particular scenario was so simple to grasp due to the well known stereotype that ISIS performing villainous deeds for personal monetary gain and to get publicity and spread awareness about their organization and their cause. When this background information was combined with the statement from the White House, it became blatantly obvious that ISIS was the culprit.

As stated previously, it is rare in an investigation to observe one piece of data and create a conclusion based off of a single fact. When searching through different sources one teammate discovered an additional article from the Associated Press that stated the claims to the hijacking made by the Islamic State were deemed inauthentic because of timeline errors and language anomalies. We just accepted this fact and moved on. It did make us steer away from making generalizations which may have been our ultimate downfall. This was not a misconception, this was not a false interpretation, it was a misreading and miscommunication of data by our teammate. We did not question our word on the article until later when we realized we came to a dead end with our evidence on the hijacking. We then reread the article our problem originated from and found that it said *previous* evidence was repudiated, but newfound evidence was true.

As shown by our team's misjudgement in the interpretation and factual meaning of the information, and the simplistic way we accepted what we read to be accurate in the articles listed above, it is obvious we trusted our instinct-fueled perception before even considering logically interpreting the source and scrutinizing it closely. This slip-up cost us approximately an hour of incredibly precious time and misdirected us toward what was supposed to be a very short path, instead, leading us down the proverbial rabbit hole. All of this supports the fact that interpretation, although it consumes more time than perception initially does, is indeed a far more useful and lucrative investigative tool than perception.