

ANOMALY RESEARCH
PROJECT
BLACK ROCK CITY, GBW

If found, please return to
Dr. Anna Mariella Zevallos
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Apr 1, 2110

I've started this hand-written journal because I don't know what kind of connectivity I will have on my fieldwork.. (if it is approved!) Not just because I am going to a relatively remote spot in the GBW, but I don't know what effect the phenomena surrounding the station will have, if any, on my devices. And if some of what I have read is accurate, I will have zero connectivity if I am able to experience the phenomena first hand.

Prof. Haviland says I am committing academic career suicide pursuing what he thinks of as urban (rural?) myth. He suggested I look for Bigfoot or the Moth man instead... While my fieldwork may be a bust from a physical science research standpoint, I figure it will at least be anthropologically interesting. Who doesn't enjoy chasing after bigfoot! And if you don't find Bigfoot, at least you can chase after people who chase after Bigfoot.

Apr 2, 2010

But seriously, not only have some semi-reputable researchers made interesting observations (crossing fingers), collective/social mythmaking and storytelling is an interesting phenomena in itself.

Dr. Haviland puts too much emphasis on specialization anyway and frowns at my multidisciplinary jousting at windmills. That's fine. I didn't pick him as advisor because he was a pushover. Despite all that, Dr. Haviland is still willing to sign off on my fieldwork and sponsor and champion my IRB, though neither of us knows until my research shapes up if it will be necessary.

my abuela lived in Northern Nevada before the collapse and survived it mostly because they were already used to scratching out a survival in extreme conditions. My mother remembers very little of their time there. Most of her memories are of the cool moist forests of the PBR.

My Abuela turned 70 this year. She lives in an elder co-op and is chair of the youthcare provider group, working on the co-ops farm. The youthcare kids in her group call the elders 'De Antes' or "from before." Raising tomatoes and working with parent groups is a pretty far cry from the desert ranch where she was raised.

I found a space in her busy schedule to visit and ask her about the condition in the GBW. She was my first oral history

on the project. I still need to transcribe and index the interview, but here are a few excerpts that I liked:

" An interesting story that my dad always told and he didn't always, he was very, very humble, and very, very quiet but sometimes he would tell us stories. I think there was always a meaning to the stories, and I'm sure that that's not just true in the hispanic culture, but many cultures, is that when they tell a story or the Elders take time to tell a story, it's because there's a meaning or a message behind it, and then somewhere in some time when you're supposed to get the story, aha! the message is delivered.

But my dad had worked with, side by side with my grand father, and he was about twelve years old and they went out on their ranch on horseback, and they went out to round up their cattle.

They weren't rich, but they had some livestock and they went out to gather it, when a snake passed by my grandfather's horse and spooked it. My grandfather fell off his saddle, but as he was falling, his stirrup caught on the saddle by the spur, and he was dragged to death.

And so then my dad picked him up and brought him home. And later on, you know, I saw my dad as this big old hero. And then as I got older, the message really, the reason for him telling us the story really wasn't - not that it was because he was the hero, but that you need to stand ready at all times to be able to help and do, stand up and do whatever is the right thing to do. And for him at that point in time was to pick up my grandfather from the ground,

toss him over the horse, and bring him home to my grandmother so he could be put to rest. And so it's taken a while I think, for life experiences to kind of click, you know, the message, so I've always taught my own children that we have to, whether it hurts or not, you have to stand up for what you have to do. "

Apr 14 2110

The first I heard about the phenomena was in an article in the popular press from the late 21st that mentioned it off-hand. In a list of scientifically unexplained natural phenomena.

things like the Taos hum, feelings of Deja-vu, the Patom crater in Siberia, dark matter mysteries, ball lightning, and on and on. Barely mentioned it.

Titled something like "the time traveling Train Station" and talked about a rural train station in what was the Nevada desert, that was rumored to have an interior that had come unmoored in time, visiting various moments from the past 200 years going back into the wild west era of the American West. I'm missing the reference for that original article, but that's the first I heard of it.

Apr 16, 2110

Working on my dissertation, work at the intersection of modern myth-making and physical sciences, turned up another reference years later. This time from an actual researcher, though this was pretty old.

"Temporal shifts caused by oxidation of nanoparticle networks from localized micro-magnetic variations"

by K. Abrahamson &

J Lowke, 2028

[doi:10.1038/3500525]

Certainly less sensational, but far more informative.

Here's part of the abstract that I found extremely intriguing.

Observations of temporal shifts have been reported periodically over the last 100 years, but the origin of this phenomenon remains an enigma. The temporal shift phenomena studied appear to affect a consistent geo-location of relatively small, roughly spherical volume ($1-36\text{ m}^3$) recurring on a period of 100ms to 3 days, having a lifetime of about 10ms to 30s, and resulting in the temporal and spatial displacement of the space by 1-255 years! It appears unaffected by time-of-day, by season, or by weather^{1,2} though the

relative position of the Earth around the sun is always identical after the temporal shift. Several energy sources have been proposed to explain the temporal shift, but none of these models has succeeded in explaining all of the observed characteristics. Here we report a model that potentially accounts for all of those properties, and which has some experimental support. Commonalities have been found in the chemical composition of the alluvial soils in the few places where this phenomenon has been observed. We explore the possibility of chemical energy stored in nanoparticles of Si, SiO or SiC, which are.

ejected into the air as a filamentary network. We investigated this process by exposing soil samples to a highly localized magnetic discharge, which produced chain aggregates of nanoparticles: these particles decay at a rate appropriate for explaining the lifetime of the time shifts.

sadly, despite the robust methods used in the experiments upon which the report is based, ultimately the researchers consider the link between their science and the phenomena as inclusive. that is, good science as far as it goes, but it doesn't explain the phenomena.

Apr 17, 2110

However, despite being inconclusive as to scientific cause and mechanism, Abrahamson and Lowke make many careful observations of the phenomena, with my fieldwork site in the GBW as one of the observation sites. About my fieldwork site (crossing fingers!) in the desert, A+L made numerous observations, as this was one of the more accessible sites (!), occurred with extreme regularity, had an easily observable period (measured in minutes rather than ms), and had a $\sim 30s$ duration.

BRC Train Station
Approx. dia: 6 m
(27 m³ vol)

Period: ~ 104 min

Duration: approx 30 s

Temporal displacement:
40-255 yrs

Slip pattern: Restricted
to specific temporal nodes,
but seemingly random
order

Years not specified by
Abrahamson and Lowke

Apr 19, 2110

There are a few other research papers I've found that do a better job helping understand the science, but none so full of great observations.

other refs:

- Experimental research on temporal shift, H Ofurton, YH Ohtsuki 2090 [doi: 10.1007/BF02507968]
- Relativistic - microwave theory of temporal shift, HC Wu, 2041 [doi: 10.1038/srep28263]
- Time-shift: What Nature is Trying to tell the Temporal Research Community, JR Roth, 2101 [doi: 10.13182/FST95-A30388]

~ a dozen more on PNexis and LSTOR.
But these are the best.

Apr 20, 2110

I have to work on other projects
for Dr. Haviland and for
the department, but I will get
back to this ..

May 2, 2110

Dr Haviland invited me into his office. He had a grim expression and I thought it was bad news. But after some pleasantries, he got around to his point. My fieldwork and IRB were approved with no additional concerns or qualifications! Why was Dr Haviland unhappy? In short, he was worried about me! He is convinced that everyone in the GBW are Wild West survivalists. Like the Collapse never ended for the people of the Great Basin. All guns and cowboys and tribalism and belief in private property.

That's not consistent with what I've read, but I will proceed with appropriate caution. But not to bury the lede ...

My FIELDWORK WAS APPROVED!

I'M GOING TO THE GBW!

So much work still..

May 20, 2110

So.. reading more about my
fieldwork location ..

Black Rock Station

properly Western Pacific Train

Depot at Black Rock City

outskirts of Black Rock City

Black Rock Desert, GBW

The Black Rock Station serves the small community of Black Rock City at the northwestern edge of the Great Basin Watershed Zone, previously home of the Numu or Paiute people. According to Lib, the Black Rock Desert is a semi-arid region of lava beds and playa, or alkali flats, in the Great Basin shrub-steppe eco-region. The desert is a silt playa 160 km north of what was Reno, Nevada that encompasses more than 1214 sq km of land. It is in the Truckee/Pyramid Watershed Subzone of the GBW and is the dry remnant of Pleistocene Lake Lahontan.

There are large communities of Paiute people living out there around Cui-ui Pah (formerly Pyramid Lake) about 90km south of the Black Rock Desert. They largely live as fisherfolk on Cui-ui and the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (and why they were referred to as Cui-ui eaters by their neighbors).

It's a dry, harsh and unforgiving environment so I'm taking careful preparation. Preparing for both extreme heat and extreme cold. During the winters what little rain that falls can turn the dry lakebed into impassibly muddy silt. Happily not likely in late summer. Wind and storms can come up in summer very suddenly.

I'm a little nervous about the environment, but I think I'll be fine, Dr. Haviland's worries notwithstanding.

May 22, 2010

PACK LIST :

canteens

large pack

small day pack

solar charger for tablet

notebooks / pens

~~digital notebook~~

reference books (plant ID, animal ID
regional info)

printed maps

~~SAT phone~~

geo locator

dried food

solar electric stove

sleep sack

warm jacket

shade tent

sleep tent

clothes (layers)

headlamp

DAR ⁴/_{backups} (test mics before
departure)

store in one large pack!

Jun 1 2110

I think I have everything I'll need.
But naturally, I will remember something
I've forgotten, soon as I get there.
Hopefully I can find whatever I need
in BRC or the nearby community of
Gerlach.

Jun 18, 2110

Western Pacific
California Zephyr
stops in Gerlach and BRC
(notify conductor)
departs Jack London Sq. 7:05am

Prob better to arrange room in
Gerlach as conditions in BRC
can be oh unpredictable!

Jun 20 2110

tomorrow I go to the Great Basin Watershed Zone and visit the station.

I've made the trip east from the Pac. Basin numerous times, mainly for conferences and research (and occasionally to visit friends) but never northeast over the mountains. Like most people traveling east-west, I've always taken either the southern or northern Hyperloops that make up the trip in no time, stopping at only large or medium population centers

WINDOWS! so much scenery
field after field, occasional
orchard, more field

workers picking food/fruit!
foothills, climbing mountains.

Train going in other direction!
...west bound zephyr?

suddenly desert! picking up speed
scrub, small playas, saw
jackrabbits
coyote?

June 21, 2110

It was interesting taking one of the old routes on such a long journey via slow trains that service all the small communities in the interior.

It took almost 12 hours just to loop through the mountains and cross into the GBW. In the same interval, I could already be in NYC on a fast train. The advantage of the slow train cannot be exaggerated.

For one, WINDOWS! From the windows of the train, you can see the country as it goes by. The scenery is amazing! I could have skipped the long slog through the endless agricultural fields of the Sacramento Watershed Region, but a lot of the area has returned to wetlands.

The huge flocks of birds were beautiful! I'd forgotten how dramatic the mountains and the GBW desert are.

I de-trained in Gerlach pretty late
where, as arranged, I took a room
in town. Even a small town like
this maintains guest rooms for travelers.

Despite the wild west feel of the town,
the room was clean and tidy.

Tomorrow I'll catch a local to the
station.

Jun 22, 2110

Decided to take a day in Gerlach and head to BRC tomorrow. I'm not sure Gerlach has changed much in the 100 years. Old wooden buildings like an old western movie, but with a 22nd ce. twist, all decked out in solar arrays to take advantage of the plentiful sun (280 days/yr!)

In the 20th ce work here was mostly found in mining and ranching. Now the people I've met are focused on subsistence farming, local community work, and desert sustainability research.

No doubt the more idiosyncratic influences of nearby Black Rock City have rubbed off on this little town.

There are more than a few artists living here as evidenced by the plentiful colorful sculptures in front of modest bungalows.

Many made from found materials and waste from the previous century. Bottles, old car parts, electric appliances, plastic, and weathered wood.

I found a church on an obscure side street dedicated to a character named Saint Flash who is a legend in these parts. The church is faded mint green with white trim. As I went up the steps, I flecked off the peeling paint with a crackling sound. Other saints honored there include St. Danger, St. Crimson, and St. John (apparently not the biblical St. John). From the very unsainthly quotes and text at the site, it felt like this canonization was more than a little bit tongue-in-cheek.

A young woman who could not have been more than 12 stopped by the guest house to invite me to a barbecue. Nearby ranchers were roasting beef they had raised on an outdoor grill. They were serving to all-comers to the delight of locals. It quickly turned into a potluck as neighbors brought cucumber and tomato salad, coleslaws, and pies.

Traci Pearson

Lived in Gerlach since teen years

Formerly from Reno

Ran away to "join the 'Circus'"

Clarity?

Age - 28

Maintains guest house

Artist - "mixed media" (laughs)

Mostly sculpture with found objects
and 'dino tech'

Spends a lot of time walking in
desert and picking up stuff

Parents?

Helped create guest house, current

Former guest house was 'gnar'
(in old motel)

Community effort

Converted old unused building from
the early 20th c

Community work highly valued

People think the desert is full of cowboys and propertarians (esp folks from the coast)

Visitors come to learn about high-desert sustainability practices

Also works at sustainability Center.
Visits BRC to share art and on festival days.

Locals know about the temporal phenom. (called the Time Slip[™])

Met people who claimed to have traveled to other times

No 1 traveled herself.

Person from the 1980's(?)

Lives in town (Sam?)

Visited out of curiosity and ended up staying.

Gerlach used to be Wild West town well into the 20th c.

occasional shootings and stabbing in the bars.

Bruno was local warlord during
Collapse

When he died his daughters had
different ideas.

I interviewed Traci, lives in Gerlach
and takes care of the guest house
and helps around town. She told me
about the High Desert Sustainability
Center at Fly Ranch. I would like
to go visit and talk to folks there.
Interesting to hear about Gerlach history.
Sounds like a wild place back in the
day. Still feels like the Wild West,
and has an individualistic streak,
but also focused on collectivity.

Traci told me about an enby named
Sam who claimed they traveled
from the 1980's who lives in town.
Apparently, they were miserable in
their own time, and came to stay
here. I asked around and people

told me they live in a cabin in the foothills nearby. I wasn't able to meet them and I plan to go to BRC tomorrow. Perhaps later I can come back to Gerlach.

- 6 AM local
Departs Gerlach to BRC
same platform
I arrived at. Also
a few people a day
usually going out
there
For now will take
the local.

Jun 23, 2110

Local train to BRC (the "local")
Small electric train, two cars, mostly
empty at this time of day

- mom with 2 kids (who insist
on sitting in the other car from mom)
- young male presenting newspaper
deliverer
- 2 travelers with big backpacks
(female, ebony)

About 25 km

curves west out of Gerlach

Runs along west side of playa for 20 km

Near "12 mile entrance" crosses the playa

Station is at NE edge of BRC

Continues across the playa to the small
community of Trego Hot Springs

Station is a classic Western Pacific
rural train depot

Yellow with brown trim (weathered)

sizeable platform

grade crossing, ding ding ding,

Bridge with signals.



Jeremiah
Dispatcher
Veteran

I arrived at the station and the other passengers detrained with me, except for the newspaperman who dropped off a bundle of papers to the dispatcher and got back on to continue to Trego.

The station is incredibly picturesque. A classic train depot straight out of an old Western photograph. It glowed yellow gold in the sunrise with gleaming tracks disappearing into the distance in two directions. The platform was weathered wood. A couple sat on a bench and seemed to be awaiting the arrival of a train, but just watched it come and depart, a decent place to enjoy the sunrise. They nodded a friendly hello.

The dispatcher greeted me warmly and, seeing my pack, asked if I was new to Black Rock City. I told him I was new to the city. He gave me a map of BRC

and proceeded to point out all of the best bars, clubs, and most-stand-out art. He asked me if I had sunscreen (I did) and a good hat (I didn't). He seemed genuinely concerned about me. He went back and came out with a straw hat that he said had been left at the station. I don't think whoever lost this wouldn't mind my gifting it to you.

Now I'm sporting a cute straw hat and ready to explore the city.

The dispatcher, whose name is Jeremiah, told me he had worked at the station since he got out of the service. He's a veteran of the Water Wars and came to BRC to "get away from the madness" "I wanted somewhere I could go and serve people working to make the world a better place. I spent too much time of my life dealing with conflict. Here, people focus on art and music and dancing."

I'd like to formally interview him if I can.

While we were talking on the platform, the announcement speakers crackled to life buzzing and humming. Jeremiah said, "Might be good to stay out of the station for a minute if you want to stay here and now." I asked him what he meant, and he sighed and said, "It's kind of difficult to explain, and I have to clear the next through train coming through in a few minutes."

He excused himself and wished me a good stay in BRC.

A few minutes later, the crossing signals came on, "Bing bing bing bing" and a freight train rumbled past without stopping. Jeremiah came out of the office for a second and said, "I forgot to tell you, there are yellow bikes outside here, feel free to ride one into town."

And with that, he went back inside.

I decided to ride into town and return to the station later.

Biking into BRC on yellow bike

from map, city laid out in a
crescent moon

with open side facing the sunrise

Inside of crescent (and beyond
out to where the station sits on
the edge of the city)

dotted with art and more elaborate
structures both big and small -

many art pieces tended toward
the absurd or juxtaposed or
geometric or occasionally figurative

Some subtle comments on state of
things.



Temple

Passed by large elaborate structure
swooping lines, intricate filigree texture
a look of being under construction
told by the single person there basking
in the sunrise that it was this year's "temple"
still being built.

Dedicated this year to "acceptance"
(both in acceptance of difference and
acceptance of what is)

but (as they explained) always about
commemorating loss and transition
I walked around the huge empty post
and beam structure

Swooping staircases within
already dotted with dedications
and memorials

Photos and objects in nooks and
out of the way spaces

On the open playa, passed and stopped at little tea house staffed by young man

low tent of short legs/platform - survives wet season?

not unlike yurt (if designed by Bedouins)

colorful cloth hanging and pillows

A simple sign outside said "Café" and the same in Arabic (I asked)

offered cup of Turkish coffee in tiny cups (accepted) and shisha in tall hookah (declined)

Coffee tasty & sweet, grounds at bottom
person who served it -

sat down and asked me a lot of questions ← role reversal

while a steady stream of visitors

All greeted with a smile and some with "Salaam" or "Salaam alaykum" and response: "Baikun-Salaam"

A surprising find in the remote BBW —

comfortable and welcoming -
pillows and low tables, light wafts
of incense.

Omar served me, part of a small
collective of friends that runs cafe -
popular with locals

Originally from Delaware River Basin
near New York

Lived here and at Fly Hot Springs
for 6 years.

Orig came for High Desert Sustainability
Center (HDSC)

great grandparents orig from Palestine

Hard to get my questions in because
Omar wanted to know about my
travels

He often meets people from other times
(or "other nows" as they say)

↑ not clear if metaphorically or
literally, learning that BRC people
often blur the two..

Visitors were various, from a
rugged desert rats to very
playfully and artistically dressed
people.



Sign and cafe

Riding the "streets" of BRC

streets are dirt and marked by occasional signs

BRC looks like a cross between a classic eco village and a temporary encampment

Some structures like cafe on short legs

Also tents and less permanent structures

Solar harvesting (again 280 days/yr sun)

Mud and cob houses

Large water catchment systems

all dotted with art and welcoming artistic spaces

Human waste from composting toilets used for organic gardens

A couple called out to me from an open-air bar, invited to drinks - a little early for me, but wanted to honor hospitality.

Bloody marys with fresh celery pickled green bean and shrimp!

Where did these things come from in middle of desert??

Couple are Estelle and Connie they have raised garden beds and grow own veggies

Distilling own vodka from homegrown potatoes

Supplies shipped in or from Gerlach

- Riding around the city

Lots of art and friendly people

Lunch at a popular noodle bar

Host: "Hot soup helps you sweat.

Sweating is good! Evaporative cooling keeps you cool."

Heating up as sun reaches Zenith.



Elaborate
Bloody Mary

Took post-lunch nap in plush tent full of pillows and cooling fans

more drinks at random bars

Many bike riders in afternoon

Lots of friendly conversations

Drinking, socializing and play are seeming pastime in BRC

But also saw lots of people hard at work

Refilled water bottle at bars a couple times

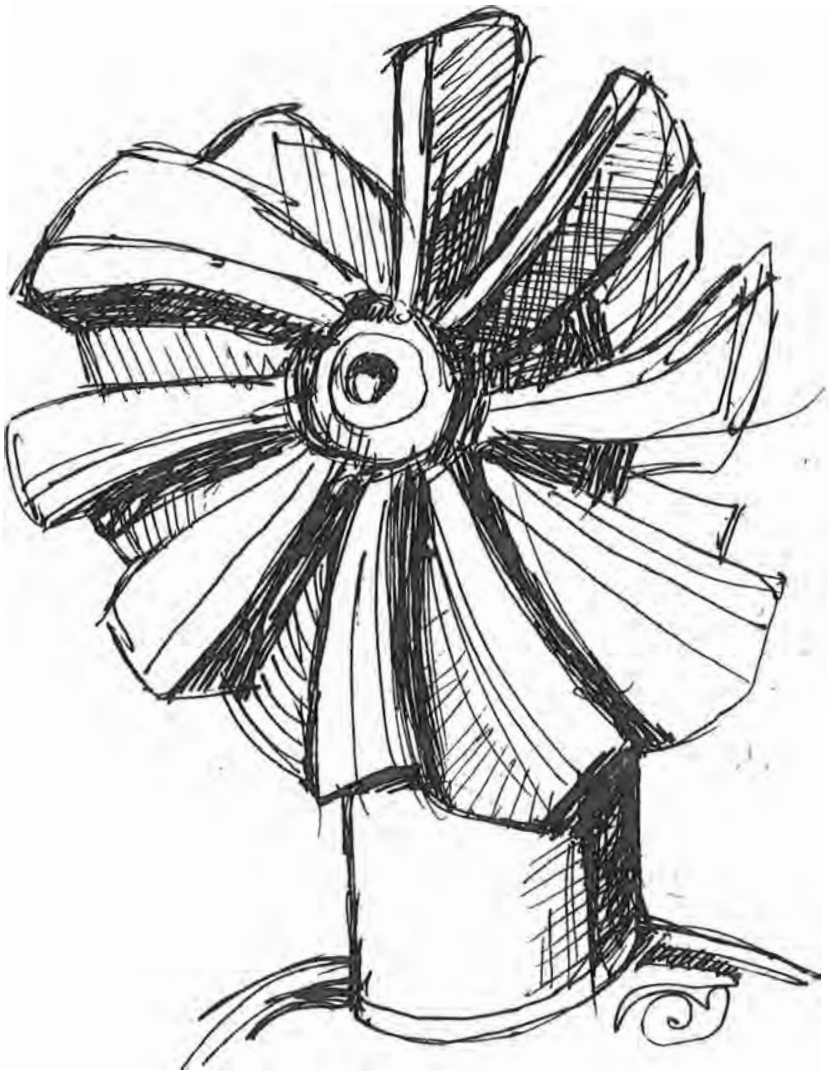
Also spontaneously helped erect large art piece

A functional wind turbine of scrap metal

stores power for nighttime lighting at nearby dance club

Didn't catch name of artist ..

Notes a little fuzzy after numerous drinks!



artistic wind turbine
of scrap metal

met Dusty at Irish Bar and talked for
long time about life in BRC until
nearly sunset

Indicated several guest houses in BRC
on maps

Had to catch last local to Gerlach

June 24 2/10

Caught the morning local

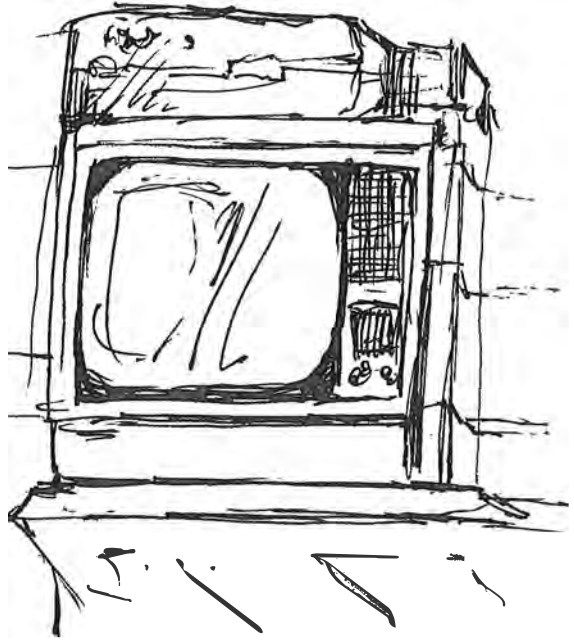
took pack to prep for stay in BRC

Found Traci to thank her for
stay at guest house in Gerlach

got off local at BRC

this time no dispatcher - alone
at station

looked inside station



old tv
in station

The inside of the station is like stepping into a time machine. Impressions: old wood, peeling paint, an ancient television broadcasting something in Chinese, a train schedule and map of the Western Pacific route, and magazines that must be a century old at least. Looking into the empty office there was an old radio playing quietly in the corner, an ancient computer and a telephone, a calendar hanging on the wall from 1982.

I wanted to settle into a guest house so I grabbed a yellow bike and rode into town. After a little searching I found one marked on my map nearest the station. The guest house was actually a series of small elevated corrugated metal shacks.

comfortable inside with a thin layer of fine dust on everything. I didn't find anyone there, but signs guided me to sign in and make myself at home. A small communal kitchen allowed me to prepare a small breakfast. I left my pack in my room and rode off into the city.

I intended to go back to the station but was distracted on my journey. There was a brisk breeze and I saw a handful of people wrestling with a big circus tent they were erecting. As the wind fought to yank the tent out of their hands, neighbors ran over to help. I stayed there for most of the morning helping erect the large tent, several shade structures, and an array of solar panels.

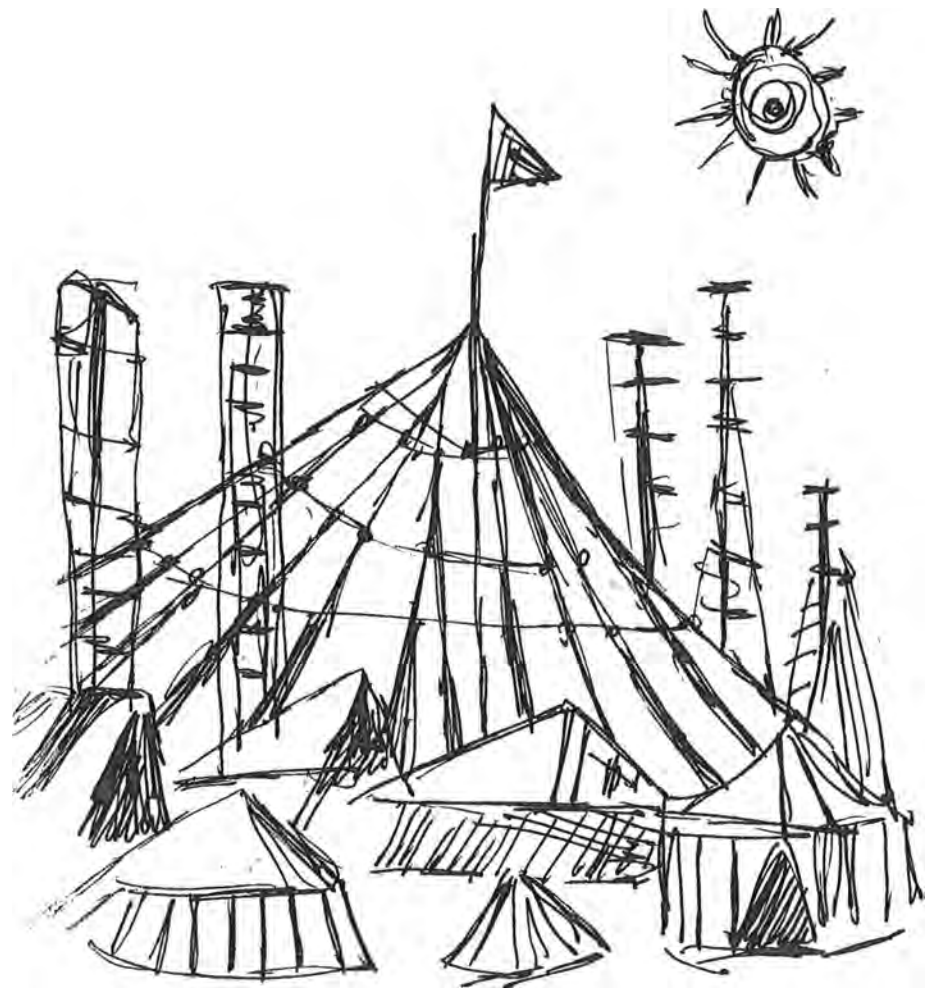
The camp was a group of traveling performers who generally spent their summers in Black Rock City, and winters in the Mississippi River Delta. They insisted I stay for lunch and then drinks afterward.

My new friend Dusty wandered by and we talked for a while before he had to go to a bar shift at one of BRC's many bars. He was very familiar with the station and offered to give me a tour of the full experience tomorrow. We agreed to meet in the a.m.

My circus friends insisted I stay for dinner, despite my protests.

It was a special dinner they told me, a tradition of a big Southern dinner of gumbo, jambalaya, fried fish, hush puppies, cheesy grits, black eyed peas, collards, fried chicken, and buttery sweet cornbread. I helped with dinner and ate until I couldn't move.

All the neighbors were invited, many of whom anticipated the celebration dinner as soon as they saw the circus tent go up.



striped canvas tent
surrounded by
smaller tents and
a solar array.

After everyone pitched in to clean up, it was dark. A group of the circus crew, Roxanne, Trevor, Kendra, Angelina, and many names I've forgotten, insisted on dragging me out to go dancing. Drunk and happy and comatose from amazing food, I was unable to resist.

We went to an open-air club that was playing bass-heavy electronic tribal music. We danced until the crescent moon was directly overhead and then a few of us stumbled back to camp. Kendra invited me to crash on a couch in the main tent, which I gladly accepted.

Jun 25, 2110

I woke up on the couch looking up at the tall poles of the striped tent and was briefly disoriented.

I thought for a moment that I'd run away and joined the circus. No one was up yet, so I left a thank you note and went back to my hostel and cleaned up. I'd agreed to meet Dusty at the cafe Jordan (as its named here to differentiate it from the other nameless cafes).

I tracked down a yellow bike and rode out to the cafe.

Dusty wasn't there yet. Omar had coffee for me and more questions. He was particularly curious about my life in the Pacific Basin. My answers satisfied him for the moment and I was able to catch up on my journaling.

- what signals the timeshift?
- Does anyone regularly use it to deliberately travel?
- what is the interval between temporal shifts?
- What is the duration of the temporal disturbance?
- Are the intervals and duration stable?
- Do the interval and duration vary in different temporal locations?
- What is the full range of temporal locations?
- During the temporal disturbance can one exit the station?
- Is the temporal relocation linear?
asymptotic?
- How does one go about establishing their temporal location?
- Does anything inside the station change with the timeshift?

I'd like to interview Dusty and I'm happy to accept his offer of serving as guide. I'll focus on questions about the station first. As I write this, he arrives and gets a Turkish coffee

Here's what Dusty says. He's only traveled to two different times, sometime in the late 19th ce and here. Most of what he knows comes from local lore.

It can take some time to get back to your original temporal location because where the station arrives after each shift is unpredictable. That's also why no one does it on a regular basis.

"No time commuters!" Dusty says.

The shift happens on regular intervals, but not the same in different locations. It seems to happen at a larger interval at the ends of the range. The interval at this temporal location is 104 minutes.

Duration of shift is usually less than a minute. People have exited the station during the shift, but not been heard from again. So its considered a no-no, a jump into the complete unknown.

People have reported visits as far back as 1855, but nothing beyond our time.

Apparently no travel to the future for me.

It commonly arrives in a handful of specific temporal locations. Dusty called these "nodes" (a term from Ofuraton and Ohtsuki, I suspect). O + O counted 8 nodes. Interestingly they are not evenly spaced.

Dusty finished his coffee and stood up.

"lets go find out for ourselves!" We get on our bikes and head on out.

We rode out to the station. It was a clear morning with no breeze and riding fast on the infinite playa was exhilarating. We talked about BRC the whole way. We stopped for a moment at the temple where the crew was hard at work on the upper stories. A version of the temple is burnt annually in the fall. BRC residents and visitors leave memorials to those who have gone on before. I left a little note to honor my bisabuela. We had to resist the urge to help build the temple, though Dusty briefly helped lift some heavy timbers.

At the station was no dispatcher and no waiting passengers. We went inside and waited. I started thinking about how long it would take to return to your original temporal location.

We could make some assumptions:

- the interval was uniform in each location
- the shift duration is short compared to the interval.
- our era is 104 min between timeslips.

- 1982 near the middle of the range interval is 26 minutes (from Ofuruton and Ohtsuki)
 - 2014 is 52 min (ibid)
- increases toward end of range
all multiples of 26?

Let's say the 8 node intervals are 104, 78, 52, 26, 26, 52, 78, 104
(a lot of assumptions there)

For an average of 65 min interval

The probability of 'success' is

$1/p$ for a geometric distribution of probability p as per

$$m = (1)(p) + (1+m)(1-p)$$

Where m is the average number of trials before the event occurs

Solving for m :

$$m = 1/p$$

and substituting our probability of $1/n$ where n is the number of nodes we get simply

$$m = n$$

So, if each shift takes an average interval \bar{i} , the average wait to get to a particular time (such as our orig temporal location) is

$$t_m = n\bar{i} = (8)(65) = 520 \text{ min} = 8.66 \text{ hrs}$$

Yikes. And that's average. So it could take much longer or much shorter. I can see why there are no "time-commuters."

If I travel today, there's no guarantee I'll get back today. But we'll see.

Dusty is curious about my equations and what they mean. He's excited that I can quantify the average return time. I assured him that I made a lot of assumptions, so it's still a crap shoot.

while we were waiting, a fast freight train went by shaking the station.

I perused the magazines in the waiting room. There was an odd combination of periodicals spanning from the 22nd ce to the 20th ce.

A Newsweek from the 1980's advertised an article about "The Collapse of America" on its cover. A little on the nose, that.

Then the lights in the station flickered, and I looked at Dusty who nodded. The waiting room TV flickered and buzzed for about a minute and then stopped. The TV, which earlier had been showing PSA's, was now playing what looked like the old black and white series "I Love Lucy." The office radio was playing some old crooner. Outside, everything looked the same. Same bright sun. Same endless desert. Same train tracks disappearing into the distance.

I looked at Dusty again and he was smiling. We headed for the door to step out into a new world, or at least an old world new to us.

Jun 25, 1959 (?)

The first difference I noticed was a prominent water tower alongside the tracks just west of the station. Dusty's guess was the late 1950's. Letting my eyes adjust to the light outside, it seemed Black Rock City had crept closer to the station. In our time, it was a substantial ride from the station "into town", while here, within an easy walk of the station, I could see at least a score of permanent buildings. I could make out a couple saloons, an old theater, a hotel, what might be a general store, and assorted other buildings including some simple homes. Several cars were parked along the stretch of bare desert that served as a main street.

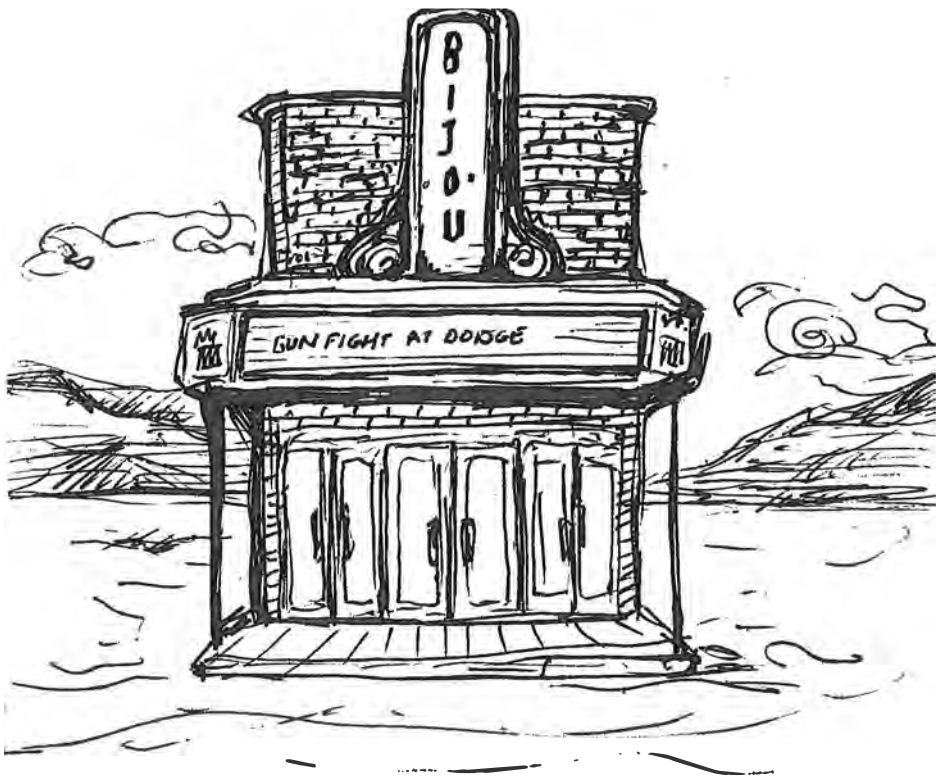
There were a few people out in the midday sun, but we saw one - there was a man on a ladder holding a pole, changing the letters on a marquee of what the sign said was the Bijou Theater. We watched him finish up:

Face of Fugitive

Gunfight at Dodge

Gidget

He came down from the ladder and bid us good day. We asked him about the movies. He introduced himself as Sam who managed the Bijou. He immediately apologized for shortening the titles to fit the marquee. The second film, he explained, was *Gunfight at Dodge City*. But residents here knew because the popular film had already been held back for several weeks already.



The Black Rock Bijou Theater, c 1959

Sam asked knowingly if we were travelers from the station. Dusty told him we were from 2110 and Sam seemed impressed. It seems the phenomenon is known in whatever time it happens. Sam welcomed us to 1959! He told us he had done a little traveling himself, going to the late 19c and late 20th.

We asked if we were interrupting his work, but he said people in BRC take it pretty easy midday. Plus his theater didn't open until dusk so he had "all the time in the world."

A native of the area (in this time, I was taken to understand), Sam told us that regardless of where you go, Black Rock City doesn't change too much. Since Black Rock City residents are used to varied customs we have little to worry about on our travels. He gestured to Dusty's dark skin to make his meaning clear.

"Though I'd exercise some caution if you visit Gelach and Empire," he said.
"A little rough around the edges," he shrugged.

Sam told us the station shifts "every half hour" or so. He suggested we visit Danger's if we wanted to get a cold beverage and meet people taking refuge from the midday sun. Dusty and I decided to follow his advice.

I took a few minutes to make a sketch while Dusty talked to Sam.



Danger's Saloon c 1959

We walked past two other taverns, Hardly's and the Y-Knot. Danger's was a classic Western saloon, a simple place, elegantly appointed, an anachronism even in the mid 20th century. There were a few patrons at the bar, a half dozen empty tables. The man behind the bar was a white haired lanky fellow who looked like a cowboy. This was Danger, the proprietor.

He smiled and welcomed us in and asked if he could get us a cold beer. It was a little early in the day for me, but I accepted to be gracious. It was only after the beer was in front of me that I thought about the need for money in the 20th century. I looked at Dusty and he looked as embarrassed as I felt. I tried to explain, "We're uh, from the train station..." I started haltingly. "Where from?" He asked. I told him.

Danger laughed, he understood, being from the early 21st ce himself.

"This one is on the house," he said,
"to welcome you here."

An older woman at the bar, overhearing the conversation, was immediately curious. This was Mary. "Tell me about where you're from," she asked, "What are things like? What's Black Rock City like? Is it a huge metropolis? Are there robots everywhere? Are there flying cars?"

I told her that it was a lot like this. BRC was a sleepy little town. No robots. Fewer cars perhaps. Smaller, tighter communities. More people doing what they are passionate about, growing food, making art, learning what they are curious about.

"Sounds like I'd like it just fine," she said.
"It sounds a lot like what we got here," she laughed with the other bar patrons.

After I finished my beer, I looked at my watch and realized an hour and a quarter had passed since we arrived. Discussing it with Dusty, if we wanted to catch the

next time shift, we probably should get a move on. We thanked Danger and said goodbye to Mary and the others. We made our way from the dark saloon into the bright sunlight. The heat was oppressive, but a gentle breeze made it manageable.

After I made some notes, we walked back to the station. I resolved to come back and explore the rest of this little mid-century town.

On the walk back, I was incredibly excited and wanted to jump and skip around! The 1950s! This ^{is} ~~was~~ well before the collapse. I couldn't help recounting every detail of what we'd just experienced, ordinary as it was. Dusty was amused watching me. "Welcome to the Anomaly," he said smiling.

We entered the depot and I took some time to read the notices and fliers and scrawled notes on the community board. They appeared to be from a wide range of temporal locations. Dusty sat serenely on the long bench.

We waited no more than 5 minutes before experiencing the now familiar time shift. This time I could observe what happened around me and to me. Nothing seemed to change outside the station. Same endless playa but it appeared as if a sudden wind has stirred up the dust. The lights flickered and the radio and TV changed to static. I couldn't feel anything unusual in my body during the process, except the excitement I was feeling. I looked at my watch as the timeshift started and ended, and concluded it could not have taken more than a half minute or so. When it ended, it wasn't clear at all that we had gone anywhere. The air was still outside and the dust cleared. Dusty rose and held the door inviting me to step outside.

Jun 25, 2060 (?)

There were subtle differences, but I had a hard time pinpointing what was different about the station. I resolved to take some time to sketch the depot itself.

The radio in the dispatcher's office was playing what sounded like a pirate broadcast.

The old television was alternately showing static and emergency broadcast instructions.

Looking out toward town, where there had been a few dozen buildings, there was nothing but ruins. The Bijou was a burnt out ruin of brick and burnt timbers, with only two brick walls left standing.

The rest was heaps of mortared brick.

Where there had been the rest of town, there were only some concrete foundations and debris piles. I turned to Dusty shocked.

"What happened?" I started to ask. And then realized I probably knew more about this time than he did. We'd arrived sometime during the dark times. I said to Dusty,

"This is the time of the Collapse."

I sat down heavily on the bench on the station platform.

I explained to Dusty what I knew. Sudden sea level rise with the collapse of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets. Inundation of coastal cities. Shifts in the Atlantic conveyor. Massive changes in weather patterns. Desertification of some areas, an increase in hurricanes and typhoons in others. Climate refugees everywhere. A spate of civil and national wars. Breakdown of many national governments along with an interruption of global supply chains.

It wasn't until the 2070's that larger communities began to reorganize in a significant way, starting with local communities coming together around watershed issues. These small self-reliant communities federated with adjacent watersheds. My home is in the PBW, The Pacific Basin Watershed Bio-region, not a single watershed, but a federation of communities reliant on waterways that reach the Pacific Ocean. This area is known to us as the GBW, or Great Basin Watershed. This part he already knew. This is history I was taught in youthcare by Elder DeAntes.

We explored the ruins, finding little beyond burnt timbers and old brick.

It had clearly been picked over thoroughly. Interestingly, the tracks were still in workable condition, though in rough shape.

What we thought was only ruins, hid some surprises. As we picked around, an older woman stepped out from behind a pile of debris, which was actually a well camouflaged living space. She held what appeared to be a rifle. "Can I help you young folk?" said in a way clearly threatening.

"We're just travelers," Dusty said holding up his arms. "We're not a threat and we are unarmed."

"Well, you may just as well keep on traveling then," she said lifting the rifle a few centimeters and pointing back the way we had come.

I stepped in, "We mean you no harm, nor disrespect," I said carefully. "I'm travelling to find out more about the people who uh," I faltered.

"You came from the Station. I saw you. You came to pick over what's left here? A time tourist?" she said with obvious disgust. "Not much here now."

"No," I said hastily, "I'm a researcher.
from 2110. I'm a historian, an ethnographer.
I just want to ask a few questions. I'm
here to learn. Here to listen."

"Well, what you got to ask?" she said,
relaxing a tiny bit.

EV / Evelyn

born 2000 (Y2K she said)

never married

one daughter, unk. fate

Lived on "East coast" (Atlantic seaboard
bio region?)

last contact ^{before} 12055

didn't get along

had partner here but killed by
"land pirates"

pirates burnt down home

EV escaped because she knows
the hills around.

Spends time in surrounding valleys
and hot springs

Camps in the hills

comes to depot when needs supply

Her name was Ev, short for Evelyn. She lived alone. It was convenient because she could use the station to get occasional supplies. There used to be more people here, but they had slowly drifted off headed to other times where survival was less bleak. She liked it here though because she enjoyed the solitude.

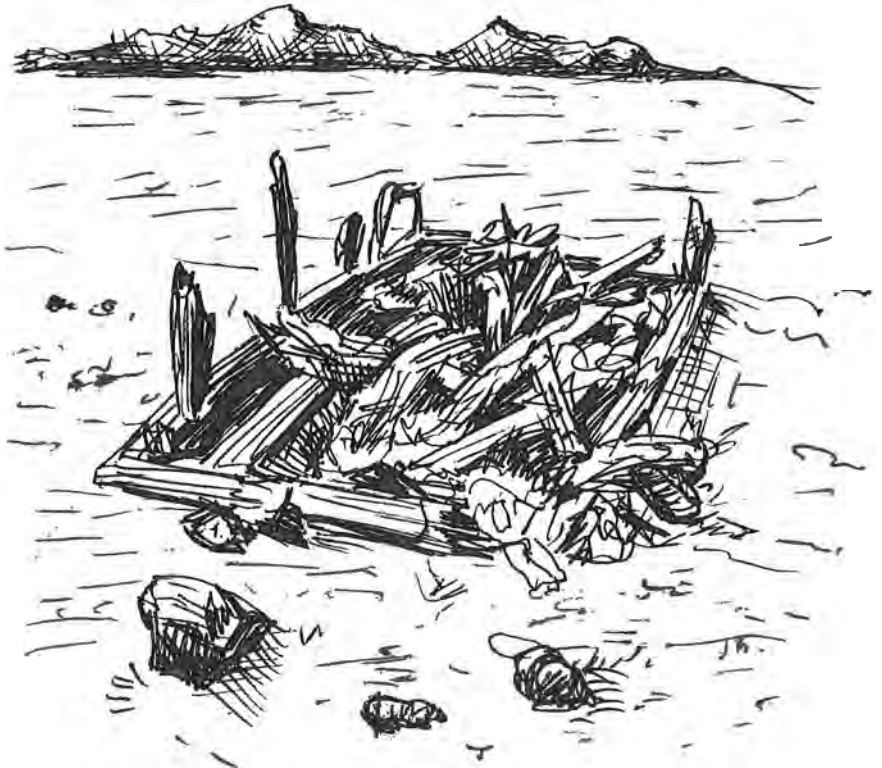
Ev consented to a short interview, but made it clear she wanted to be done with us as soon as possible. We wished her well and headed back to the station. Dusty said, "That was bleak. I'd heard stories but never seen it myself."

Our talk was interrupted by a distant motor. Keeping in mind Ev's stories about "land pirates," we chose caution and hid behind nearby rubble.

Soon enough we could see movement down the tracks. It wasn't a train, but a homemade speeder. It looked like it had been cobbled together from salvaged parts. Three figures rode it - as they got closer it looked like two men and a woman though had to tell. They did indeed look like land pirates.



Rail speeder c. 2060



Debris of BRC c.2060

As the land pirates approached the station, they slowed a bit, scanning the area. Dusty and I kept our heads down and to our relief, they passed the station and sped on.

We waited until they were well out of sight before returning to the station.

This time, when the station exited the time slip, we were in familiar territory. "Hey," said Dusty.
"We're home!"

Jun 25 2110

We were back in 2110 and we could see the familiar tents, domes, and gardens of Black Rock City.

I put my pen down and returned with Dusty to one of BRC's many cafes. We will continue our explorations tomorrow.

Most of what I've observed confirms ofuruton and Ohtsuki

2110 ← There's no place like home 🏠🏠

2066(?) during Great Collapse
land pirates!
Ev

2014 According to O&O

1982(?) Gerlach Sam origin
Traci: "from somewhere in the 1980's"

1959 Bijou Sam and Danger

1938 O&O

1888(?) O&O and Dusty
exact year uncertain

1858 O&O

haven't met anyone who's
been here. less common?
unequal probability?

I mentioned to Dusty that we should try to go back to 19th ce since he's been there before. Then I wondered about how safe he'd be there. He said he wasn't excited to visit antebellum America, but that in the late 19th century, the cowboy era, a majority of cowboys - despite the movies - were black and brown. Mexicans and former enslaved Africans.



Dusty as a cowboy

Tomorrow's another festival day in BRC.
Dusty and I and Estelle are in charge of
putting up new composting shutters (glamorous!)
for an influx of visitors. Friend from the
circus troupe, Roxanne, came by with
drinks and to invite us to dinner.
I guess I've quickly gotten absorbed into
life here.



passenger waiting at Black Rock Station
c. 1959

