

Introduction

This will primarily cover canon Light Yagami's (anime + manga + supplementary stuff). I write this primarily in response to what I believe the heavy downplay he's been getting since really the series premier, like the people who claim that canon L low diffs him or the idea that Near vs Light is close. I hope to establish that Light is not just #1 in-verse of canon Death Note, but also to hopefully buff his other qualities for crossverse matchups. This contains analysis of his feats, explanations of his losses, and an analysis of his narrative, which I haven't seen anyone done before.
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FSIQ
EQ
Reasoning
Strategy
Foresight
AC
Sensory

Endgame Strategy

Soichiro Yagami is dead. With few resources left, Mello briefly joins forces with Near, disclosing that the rule in the notebook about the owner having to kill within 13 days is fake. This plants the seeds of doubt into the task force, and Near furthers this by lying to them that Kira killed Mogi. Since the taskforce and the SPK were the only ones who knew about Mogi being there, and since Mogi could potentially disclose information on L, this almost certainly points to Kira being a member of the task force. Near then says that if anyone has any suspicions of Kira being on the task force, they ought to contact him. This works. Aizawa meets with Near and tells him about the confinement of the new L and the second Kira.With this information and Soichiro's words during the stunt to test if Kira/Kira 2 would kill him in the car - "I'll kill Kira, and then kill myself," Near deduces that Light Yagami is L.

Light identifies Misa as a weak point. Their investigation would lead to her, but he can't kill her since it would be suspicious if she died. So Light needs to continue Kira's reign from even more of a distance, originally from him directly, to Misa, and now to someone else. So Light searches for a proxy. While watching Sakura, Light finds a successor in a serious looking man, Teru Mikami. Reading him as someone loyal and devoted enough, Light pulls up his personal info and a short questionnaire he answered to see if he can act as Kira, and Light coldreads him as someone with very similar thinking to himself, someone who can act without constantly being fed information unlike Misa. Ryuk arrives with the notebook for Mikami. In the anime, they have a slightly longer conversation where Ryuk states that "God" "singled out" and "chose" Mikami, knowing all of his personality and history. This was likely indirect manipulation at Light's behest since Ryuk doesn't ordinarily speak like that. As explained in Mikami's backstory, he had a strong sense of justice and a fatalistic outlook on life, believing that her mother and bullies' death was because of divine intervention. People Mikami wished would die soon even before Kira's reign. When Kira came about, Mikami felt vindicated, believing God had truly been looking out for him. Light likely instructed Ryuk to appeal to Mikami's sense of delusions of grandeur by having him address Kira as God and choosing language that would fluff his ego and keep him loyal - i.e. Mikami wasn't just chosen out of convenience or a pawn, but personally selected after "God" had assessed his life and personality. As for how Light could've known about this, it's never stated, but we can assume it's either intuition/EU/cold reading, or he used his resources to gather info on Mikami and profile him, which would still require EU but less so As predicted, Aizawa begins investigating Misa and has the task force keep them under close watch, but Misa's already scheduled several criminals to die and passed her notebook to Mikami, who kills the greedy spokesperson Demegawa, much to Light's approval. However, Light knows he can't let him freely kill for too long as even a slight gap in their ideals would inevitably show. He has to make contact sooner or later for course correction. Mikami awaits Kira's orders for 3 days before moving on his own to coincidentally pick Light's ex-gf Takada as spokesperson for Kira. Light knows that investigation into her would inevitably link back to him,

but he also knows that if he was Kira, it'd be too obvious to pick his ex-girlfriend as spokesperson. He turns the coincidence to his advantage, coming clean about his past with her and convincing the task force to investigate the new spokesperson, allowing him to control Mikami through Takada. Light knows that he must be careful in seducing a powerful, prideful woman like Takada. He chooses his words carefully, pretending to be smitten, and meets with her under the pretense of the police secretly being Kira supporters awaiting orders. The next meeting, Takada has fallen for Light and Mikami, as Kira, coincidentally calls, which Light takes advantage of He discreetly reveals that he is Mikami's God, and that he's under bugs and wires. For the task force, Light pretends that "Kira" has told him to get Takada's pro-Kira bodyguards to search the room for wires, so Light has no choice but to remove them. This allows Light to reveal to Takada that he is Kira and establish a communication system: Light will write notes to Takada during their meetings, Takada will call Mikami. Furthermore, now he has direct control over Kira's spokesperson in advancing his ideology; this prevents any further deviations such as Mikami targeting unproductive people. Some time afterwards, he has Mikami send pages of the Death Note to Takada, making sure that Mikami disguises them as fanmail.

Takada and Light meet up regularly, ostensibly pushing the investigation forward. Due to Near's meddlings, the task force has grown suspicious of Light, so Light has given them this red herring to keep them under his heel and to facilitate communication with Mikami (X-Kira). Even with Hal Lidner having infiltrated Takada's inner circle, this allows Light to control the narrative and move his plan forward right under her nose. Near all but knows Kira is L/Light Yagami, having had the 13-day rule debunked by Mello

Near's own deduction of X-Kira is very impressive. See it here. Near later questions he had to this - why Light and X-Kira don't communicate using the shinigami of the notebook X-Kira has. Either, the shinigami in question can be seen by the task force members or the shinigami is uncooperative. This leads Near to focus his efforts on Mikami, and he wants his men to monitor Mikami for an opportunity to touch the notebook and confirm if X-Kira has a shinigami. If there is no shinigami, Near has his notebook swap plan Gevanni tails him and sees Mikami covertly writing names in the (fake) notebook, with criminals dying accordingly, Mikami also seems to whisper to himself that there's no shinigami possessing him, and he identifies a weak point in Mikami's schedule when he goes to the gym, further focusing Near onto Mikami. In a later conversation with Aizawa, Near elaborates that since the world is largely on Kira's side, Near personally has to defeat him, not just prove he's Kira. Near tells him that while they're not a threat to Kira, the task force is significant in keeping an eye on him. The actual conversation was over Aizawa discovering that Light was passing notes to Takada in their meetings, but Near didn't give a shit. Light also understood this, since, as mentioned, he has a very good understanding of how intelligent he is; Near has already figured out X-Kira, Takada, and Light being L/Kira, as Light wanted, so that is of no significance.

Near kidnaps Misa and Mogi, informing Light that he's done so to be on the safe side. Regardless, Light knows he's safe since Misa doesn't remember anything He plays along: "I should still go along with Near to move his plan forward… Well, both of our plans forward." This

shows that Light has already traced out exactly what Near is planning, and incorporated it into his own. He even later states he had Mikami do his part in the plan (the fake notebook)

Mello kidnaps Takada, Takada kills Mello with scrap of that notebook that Light had given her having anticipated that Takada might find herself in such an occasion , and she contacts Light with a phone. In the front of the task force, Light covertly assesses her situation, with both speaking in double entendres, and Takada follows through with the instructions Light had given her for this possible event of a kidnapping that he'd anticipated. That is, Light had instructed her to stay put and kill as many criminals as she could if she were ever to find herself in a position where help couldn't arrive for days with the scraps. She calls Mikami and asks for as many criminals' names as he has on hand, and Mikami deduces that Takada has been captured but killed her captor. Mikami gives her two days' worth of names and faces. Of course, this is just deception on Light's part. In such a situation, he has no care for Takada beyond not letting any evidence of her being a Kira spill beyond him, and the order to kill criminals serves two purposes: it serves as a tell for Mikami, who Light had (unfortunately in error) anticipated that Mikami would write her name in the fake notebook to make it seem legit, and it also buys time for Light and Mikami. If Takada died without killing days' worth of criminals, the killing pattern would obviously break coincidentally with her death. Near would notice that and see that and see through Light's red herring strategy involving Mikami, compromising the whole plan, so criminals continuing to die buys enough time until the meeting for Mikami to stay put without having to go retrieve his notebook from the bank to act as Kira to keep up that pattern.

Light writes her name in the scrap at 2:32, January 26 forcing her to destroy all evidence of her working as Kira lest Near use it against him. The SPK, The task force, Light, and Near meet up at the warehouse, both parties enacting their grand plan. Near forces everyone to wait an extra hour to make sure that no one is under the notebook's control. Near then elaborates that he's waiting for X-Kira, who will write all of their names in his notebook. X-Kira has been filling one page a day, so Near just counted the days ahead to the day of the meeting and replaced that page and subsequent pages. Light's counter was the plan outlined below. Near further countered that after Mello's intervention. When Takada was kidnapped, Mikami figured that Kira couldn't act or make any moves and knew Takada had to be killed, so he used the real notebook to kill her, exposing Light's plan when Gevanni tailed him. The two groups proceed to the warehouse, Light is exposed and freaks out, bluffs (or he might've been telling the truth) that the notebook the task force had may've been switched, before getting gunned down by Matsuda while trying to go for the scrap hidden in his watch.

So, Light's endgame strategy can be summed up as:

- Set up the proxy, X-Kira, to continue his judgement as Kira to counter Near subtly turning the task force's attention inwards
- Figure out Near will discover X-Kira

- Continually deceive the task force with “progress” of the investigation. Since Takada is a spokesperson for Kira, the prospect of gaining info from her is too attractive, even with their suspicions of Light, so this facilitates communication with Mikami
- Feed Near fake information to bait him into focusing on Mikami as the Kira killing people (confirming a shinigami doesn’t possess Mikami, Mikami “killing” people in public with the fake notebook, the names and dates on Mikami’s notebook lining up with dead criminals so it can hold up under data analysis, having Mikami state that there’s no shinigami trailing him so that Near feels confident), inducing him into creating a logical plan to expose Light
- Knowing how Near thinks (his desire to personally defeat Kira, his need as a lawman to prove without doubt that Light = Kira, his low willingness to act), create a fake notebook and keep Ryuk away from Mikami to instill him with confidence when he swaps it out
- Give Mikami instructions to “confirm it” with Takada over phone when Near does the swap, having him inspect the notebook every night to recognize it
- All the while, have Takada do all the killings
- Play along with Near’s plan. Instruct Mikami the date that Near wants to reveal Light is Kira, and have him use the real notebook, which he’d kept hidden, on that day to kill everyone
- Include various countermeasures here and there (the confirmation email, Takada knowing what to say in the event that she gets captured, the other notebook swap (?), etc.)

This strategy has the effect of:

1. Furthering the spread of Kira’s ideology through Takada
2. Continuing his creation of the New World as criminals keep dying
3. Countering his own task force’s growing suspicion, using them as an alibi while the killings continue
4. Facilitating covert lines of communication between Light, X-Kira, and Takada by using the task force’s drive to catch Kira against them
5. Casting suspicion off Light by giving him a constant alibi under task force surveillance to the SPK
6. Logically and psychologically manipulating Near into thinking he’s figured out Light’s scheme and come up with his own, which will make him confident enough to come out of hiding
7. Misleading the task force
8. Putting Light in position to kill every last one of his opponents in one fell swoop with a counter plan

And it lasts roughly 3 months from November (Soihiro’s death) to January (Light’s death).

(**Concealment**, **Indirect Manipulation, Logical Manipulation, Psychological Manipulation, Mass Manipulation, Misdirection, Fabrication, Strategy Aim, Strategy Length, Strategy Complexity, Strategy Fortitude, Strategic Deception, Strategy Effectiveness, Strategy**

Efficiency Strategic Foresight, Strategy Shielding, Strategy Building, Strategy Alignment, Strategy Adaptability, Planning Coverage, Planning Versatility, Scapegoating Emotional Understanding Cold Reading, Prediction, Anticipation Information Control, Unpredictability, Counteraction)

It's Light's best strategy, essentially the L isolation of giving information to lure in his target on steroids, and perhaps only overlooked because of its disastrous ending born from a minor slip up, which I will elaborate on later.

M@D Analysis

I wanna quickly cover some, but not all, manipulation/deception involved here.

Acting Skills/Verbal/Non-Verbal During those meetings with Takada, Light operates on several layers of deception:

1. Light pretends to be an investigator pretending to be in love with Takada to, in the task force's eyes, fool Takada
2. Light pretends to be Kira, pretending to be an investigator pretending to be in love with Takada as a mark, in love with Takada as an equal - e.g. Goddess of the New World
3. Light actually has no intention of aiding in the investigation or being with Takada; he plans on killing both parties

And he has to keep up the facades while multi tasking and passing notes to her seamlessly

Emotional - Seducing Takada, taking advantage of her love for him, and convincing her that he values her as an equal, a partner in creating a new world. Taking advantage of the task force's passion for catching Kira to lead them onto Takada.

Logical- Creating a situation where Near is logically induced to conclude Mikami is the Kira doing the killings, and then further induced into creating a plan that Light has already predicted and thought of a counter for. To see how insane this is, consider Near's logical reasoning process (which Light reverse engineered) that he had to go through to form his plan below.

Psychological - The manipulation of Mikami takes advantage of his martyr complex that's grown with him from childhood, The strategy is tailored around manipulating Near by taking advantage of his extremely logical psyche, his desire to personally defeat Kira, his unwillingness to kill, and his thought patterns failing to consider the possibility of a fake notebook. To a more minor extent, his seduction of Takada also had him consider her ego now that she was a big shot spokesperson.

Mass Manipulation/Deception - Light personally strings along the task force and Takada, but he also moves Near and the SPK like pawns through Mikami,

Indirect - All of this is done indirectly through his proxy Takada and his proxy for her proxy Mikami. Mikami himself was manipulated by Light through Ryuk.

Fabrication - The fake notebook. Mikami “killing” criminals in public.

Information Control - Making sure to maintain a consistent killing pattern (via correcting Mikami through Takada or having Takada kill several criminals before dying). Allowing Mikami to be discovered and tailed, and taking advantage of Near taking advantage of a gap in his schedule where he goes to the gym. Keeping Ryuk away from Mikami. Throughout his guidance of the task force, he uses the cell-phone sharing system he invented to keep track of the information they have access to.

Misdirection - Misleading Near into focusing his investigation on Mikami. Leading the task force to Takada.

“Light underestimated Near”

This is a common myth that gets thrown around by everyone from scd members to casual fans: Light lost because he got cocky, complacent, and he underestimated Near. In fact, the exact opposite is true. Light, despite never having met Near until their final showdown, has a perfect understanding of Near’s character. Near has Hal Lidner become a candidate for being Takada’s bodyguard. This is a trap, since the other members of the task force know that Hal is with the SPK, so if she dies, while posing as a Kira worshipper bodyguard, then Light is implicated as he ostensibly shouldn’t know that Hal is with the SPK. Light instantly sees through this, reasoning that Near undoubtedly did not reveal his whereabouts to Hal, in case Light used the book to control her, and that Near made it obvious so Light would single her out.

While conversing with Takada after Misa was kidnapped, Takada states how Kira answers her addresses to him on TV through emails that also contain kill lists. Light states he could figure out Kira’s age, the characteristics of the region he’s in, and his mental state. Of course, this is a fake conversation, but Light is stating what he, as an experienced investigator, can ostensibly do. Matsuda confirms this based off his help during the Yotsuba arc. This is a bit of an aside, but this just shows how good Light is at reading people. Light passes a note to Takada instructing her to text him, “I want to see you,” when T (X-Kira) tells her “I’ve confirmed it.” Light states that everything is moving as he has foreseen it. It’s a message that could easily pass as a lover’s to a beloved, but it’s in fact a signal informing Light when X-Kira’s fake notebook has been altered by Near. Near begins putting his plan into action, but first waiting over 3 weeks after Gevanni first touched Mikami’s (fake) notebook to make sure he wasn’t being controlled. Gevanni’s safe, Near proceeds, and Light gets the text. He states that he knew from the very beginning what Near’s plan would be and awaits Near.

He knew Near would deduce the existence of X-Kira, and he knew would narrow it down to Mikami. Given how convoluted the reasoning process was, it is actually very impressive that Light gauged his intelligence like that. This can also buff Light's reasoning abilities as well. He states that he "assumed" Near would find Mikami, but he also states that he "assumed" Near's plan before going into his logical thought process behind it that predicted Near's reasoning. It's likely Light also deduced how Near would find Mikami as well. To see how impressive this is, see Lloy's more in-depth explanation here He probably uses the word assume since he simply has no explicit proof. Supporting this is that in Chapter 89, Light correctly thinks that Near must have figured out that Light is L from when Takada was chosen.

Near's plan was also deduced by Light before Near ever thought of it. Light knew Near would want proof beyond reasonable doubt (he gloats in the manga the reason for your defeat was your **obsession** with beating me by uncovering solid proof rather than just trying to bring an end to the Kira case" and his "**pride**"). Therefore, Near would need to get a confession from Light (unlikely) or catch him red-handed with the "smoking gun." Thus, Near must go after the death note. One is in task force HQ, the other one is in Mikami's possession. Near would have to go for Mikami's. Ostensibly, Mikami is an unknown, but Light knew Near would find him and exploit his busy schedule. Given how we see his thought process against L and Near's swap plan, it's safe to assume that Light also reasoned out how Mikami would be found too. He can't have the names actually be written on the death note, nor can he not have the death note in play at all, so he must engineer a situation where the suspect does attempt murder with the death note, hence a need for a swap. Light allowed all this to happen because he knows Near is, unlike L, "soft" and less likely to take risks. He has to allow Mikami to be found, the fake notebook to be discovered and swapped, to instill Near with certainty in his plan so that Near will be drawn out of hiding since Near is extremely cautious; Light first notices this in Chapter 78 where Near grills Light and heavily implies he's Kira. Light knows he could get a lot of information by communicating directly in person or sending someone, but Near "doesn't have the guts To do that swap, Near himself would have to instill Light with false confidence in what he thinks is Light's plan - to play along with Near long enough to draw him and the SPK out, and then have Mikami slaughter them with the notebook - which Light countered, before Near himself countered the counter with Mello's sacrifice.
Light thus reverse engineered Near's entire thinking process before he even thought it, showing his immense degree of reasoning, emotional perception, and emotional understanding.

Most importantly, he in fact estimated Near perfectly. Near states that up until Mello's intervention, everyone was completely deceived by Light. And, as Light says, Near, unlike L if he was alive, never considered the possibility of a fake notebook. This is telling since Near is extremely cautious in dealing with Light. Light knew he'd consider the possibility of Gevanni being under control, Near waited an hour and wore a mask in the final encounter to make sure no one was under the notebook's influence, so Light had an extremely good read on his thought patterns even going beyond just reasoning abilities. This also shows that Light was holding back. He knew Near on his own wouldn't consider the idea of a fake notebook, so he didn't fortify that area of his strategy since it would be overkill against someone of Near's caliber. He

even states that Near was “too easy” to defeat on his own (without Mello’s interference), showing this elaborate strategy was low effort for him.

Summary:
Light’s EP/EU Having never met Near, only having conversed through a distorted communication system, Light perfectly understood just how smart he was, his pride, his obsession, his caution, and the method he would use to catch Light months before he even created that method. Light’s reasoning abilities are also superior to Near not just because he made the same deductions as Near did with the swap plan, but he also had to engage in theory of mind to do so. Even more so if you think he similarly reverse engineered the X-Kira deduction.

Light’s Theory of Mind Feat Analysis

Light’s entire final gambit relies on him knowing exactly what Near would do. What is that exactly? After finding Mikami, apparently the Kira doing the killings, **Near planned to incriminate Light by baiting Light into a situation that would present the prime opportunity for him to finish everyone off with Mikami damningly leaving Light out in the massacre, but Near would swap the pages of the planned date of that meeting and all subsequent pages to keep everyone safe.** To figure that out, Light engaged in very heavy theory of mind (hence the title), assessing what Near knew, what Near wanted, and how Near thought, to deduce what Near would do.

This will consider only the information Light had access to in order to form his premises and is based primarily on stuff Light says in his internal monologue with some gaps reasonably and necessarily filled here and there to account for the preciseness with which he figured out Near’s plan.

The feat

Near wants to personally defeat Kira with hard proof (a confession or catching Kira in the act)
Near is unwilling to simply kill Kira
Light would never confess
So Near plans to catch Kira red-handed with the murder weapon

-> Near will find Mikami, who also has a notebook
The situation where Kira uses the notebook mustn’t harm anyone
Since the task force has one, and Mikami has the other, Near will target Mikami as the easiest one to go for (Abductive)
With knowledge of the notebook, there can only be a situation where Light or Mikami attempt murder via writing names in the notebook
Light has no access to the notebook as it’s under task force watch
So Near will engineer a situation using the notebook so that Mikami will be implicated for attempted murder, but without any threat to the would-be victims

The simplest way to do this would be to switch the lethal page corresponding to the day (a -right sided page) of the meeting and all subsequent pages with fake ones (Abductive)
However, Mikami is intelligent and ascetic
So if Near just switches the pages, it's likely Mikami would spot the switch (Abductive)

Near would anticipate and likely try and counter this (Abductive)
So Near will probably go the extra mile and not just switch out the pages (Abductive)
The simplest route would be to forge the handwriting of his previous kills somehow (Abductive)

But even if Mikami attempts murder in that situation, that does not cast suspicion on Light. To do so, he has to leave one person out.
Mikami's killing patterns as Kira were different because of his slightly different ideals and his shinigami eyes
Near, again, would likely spot this since he's intelligent and, with existing knowledge on the case, would know about the shinigami eyes (Abductive)
So Near's plan hinges on Light being incriminated when his name is left out in Mikami's attempted massacre that can only occur if the Kira that attempts it has shinigami eyes

Syllogism Set 1: Near's Objective

1. **Premise 1:** Near wants to defeat Kira with hard proof, such as a confession or catching him in the act.

2. **Premise 2:** Light will never confess.

3. **Conclusion:** Therefore, Near must catch Kira in the act to obtain hard proof.

Syllogism Set 2: Near's Constraints

1. **Premise 1:** Near is unwilling to simply kill Kira.

2. **Premise 2:** The only alternative is capturing Kira in a way that produces incontrovertible proof.

3. **Conclusion:** Therefore, Near seeks a scenario where Kira exposes himself without harming anyone.

Syllogism Set 3: The Notebook Strategy

1. **Premise 1:** Mikami possesses a Death Note.
2. **Premise 2:** The task force possesses the other notebook.
3. **Premise 3:** Near needs to set a trap that avoids harm but catches Kira acting.
4. **Conclusion:** Therefore, Near will target Mikami as the more accessible suspect to bait a trap involving the notebook.

Syllogism Set 4: The Setup

1. **Premise 1:** The Death Note only works when a name is written inside.
2. **Premise 2:** Light has no access to the notebook.
3. **Conclusion:** Therefore, if a name is written, it must be Mikami who wrote it.

Syllogism Set 5: Engineering a Harmless Attempt

1. **Premise 1:** Near needs an attempted murder that does not result in death.
2. **Premise 2:** Switching the relevant Death Note pages with fake ones is the simplest way to prevent harm.
3. **Conclusion:** Therefore, Near must engineer a notebook swap that renders the notebook ineffective without Mikami realizing.

Syllogism Set 6: Anticipating Mikami's Intelligence

1. **Premise 1:** Mikami is intelligent and disciplined
2. **Premise 2:** An obvious switch of notebook pages would be noticed by Mikami.
3. **Conclusion:** Therefore, Near must disguise the fake pages convincingly. *(Abductive)*

Syllogism Set 7: Forging the Pages

1. **Premise 1:** A convincing forgery must imitate Mikami's past entries.

2. **Premise 2:** The best way to disguise the switch is to mimic Mikami's handwriting and patterns.

3. **Conclusion:** Therefore, Near will likely forge the fake pages with Mikami's handwriting.

Syllogism Set 8: Linking Mikami's Actions to Light

Premise 1: Mikami's killings differ from Light's in pattern (being able to kill criminals without names broadcasted) and ideology.

Premise 2: Mikami possesses shinigami eyes; Light does not.

Premise 3: Near knows about the shinigami eyes.

Conclusion: Therefore, Near will take advantage of Mikami's shinigami eyes..

Syllogism Set 9: The Final Incrimination

Premise 1: If Light's name is missing from a mass execution list, it is suspicious

Premise 2: Mikami would only exclude Light if he believed Light was Kira.

Conclusion: Therefore, the exclusion of Light's name in a failed kill list implicates him as Kira.

Abductive:

- **Mikami could only reasonably do this if he was concealed, otherwise he'd get shot**
- **The location of the meeting would therefore need to be an isolated place with as few windows and doors as possible**

***To give a brief explanation of this last one, Near anticipated that Light's plan would need this, and Light anticipated that Near would anticipate this, taking into account what he thought Near would Light's plan would, so the Yellow Box warehouse being chosen was a clue for Light that Near was falling for his trap. It can also be considered its own separate abductive feat that Light was able to deduce that Near had fallen for his trap - a layered abductive reasoning feat. See the Vol. 13 scan below.**

Light's overall deduction: **Near's plan is to swap out the pages of the notebook with forgeries in a meeting where Mikami will attempt to kill everyone except Light Yagami, thereby incriminating the two in an area with no windows and one entrance**

That's the holistic 31-step outline of Light's deduction, but it's also must be said that Light deduced other finer details that don't quite fit into the step-by-step deduction above. He predicted Near wouldn't test the notebook once he discovered it. After Mikami confirmed the switch on the 21st of January, Near made contact with Light on the 25th, which Light deduces is because Near waited three days until the 24th to see that Mikami didn't change his writing method the day prior. After swapping the pages, the right-sided dates were the 26th and 28th, and Near chose the 28th since the 26th would be suspiciously soon. The 28th date's page and all subsequent dates were therefore swapped and that day was set as the meeting (Abductive).

Light knew that when Near got his hands on the notebook, he'd be so careful as to wait and see if the person who got their hands on the notebook was trapped under the notebook's spell or if a shinigami was following him.

*Note: Mikami sparing him still wouldn't incriminate Light in any court of law, but it would be very suspicious given everything else the task force and SPK know

(Cold Reading, Emotional Perception, Emotional Understanding, Prediction, Logical Manipulation Deductive Reasoning Associative Thinking, Abductive Reasoning Logical Thinking, Linear Thinking, Non Linear Thinking, Holistic Thinking, Systematic Thinking, Convergent Thinking, Analytical Thinking, Critical Thinking, Connecting the Dots)

L Mind Reading

With Light and Misa exonerated, a depressed L explained that he had no choice but to conclude Light was innocent, having merely been under Kira's control and forced to make himself seem like Kira. But that would also mean that when Light turned himself in, he was a Kira. And when the powers passed onto someone else, he lost his memories - all under the real Kira's control.

Much later, after making breakthroughs in catching the new Kira thanks to Light, L offers Light the position of being L should he die, attempting to manipulate him. Light quickly sees through this. One, they had previously made a vow (mostly Light), that as long as they were chained, they would die together. If Kira killed L, he would certainly kill Light as well. Next, He explains that L has assumed two possibilities: Light is still Kira, but faking otherwise; or that Light (and this is L's vague piecing together of the memory loss plan) had set things up such that someone else would be Kira, exonerating Light, until eventually the notebook returned to the memory-wiped Light somehow. In either case, Light knew L never even entertained the

possibility that he was innocent, despite all evidence to the contrary. He further accurately identifies why L would even offer Light the position of L - that is, because it would be the ultimate power move. Light would be incredibly incentivized to accept that seemingly innocent offer, and his success with Yotsuba even gave him the cover to accept it without coming off as suspicious, which L took advantage of. “To gain the position of L and be able to freely control the police around the world while being Kira behind the scenes. That would be the ultimate position.” This all impresses even L, who thinks “Amazing to know what I’m thinking that accurately.”

L had previously stated he wanted Light to be Kira, he even made sure to keep Light chained to even after offering to solve the case alone to the rest of the task force, and L had even subtly trolled him at points such as pointing out that Light’s computer hacking skills would allow him to access the police’s database. Thus Light knew that that offer could in no way be genuine. L was simply too prideful and obsessive to consider that he was fully wrong and it simply wouldn’t logically make sense to offer that given their physical situation of being cuffed together ensuring that Kira would have to kill them both. It had to be a trap, with the successes against Yotsuba providing a plausible excuse, which Light explained the framework thereof.

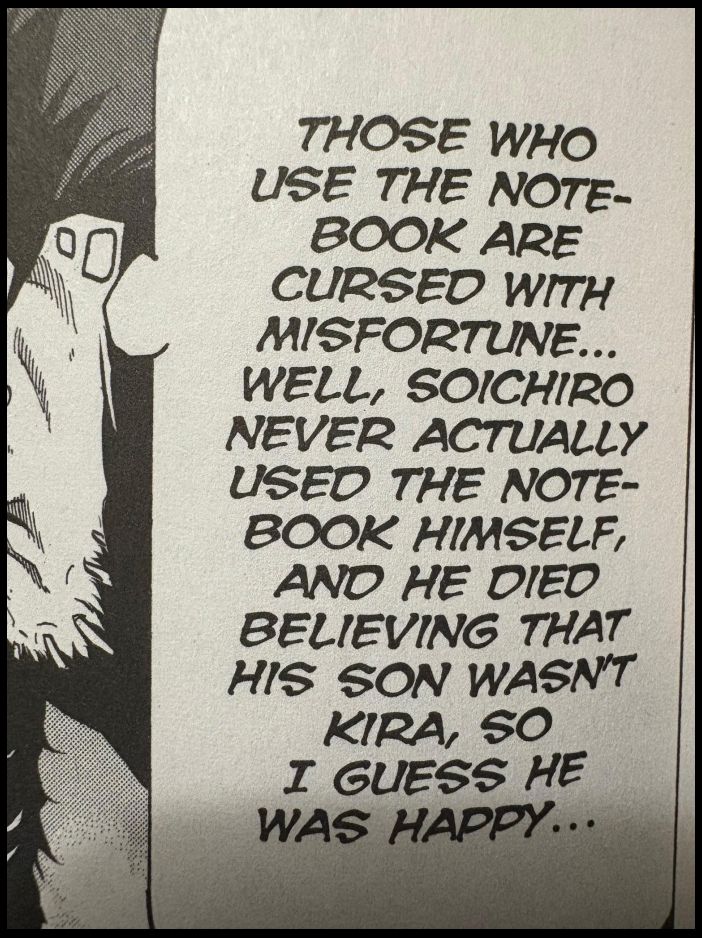
Emotional Understanding, Seeing Through People, Hot Reading, Trap Evasion, Abductive Reasoning, Associative Thinking)

Why Light Lost

It’s a well known cope now, but Light lost because of Mikami and bad luck. On January 26th, Mikami wrote down Takada’s name at 2:31, Light 2:32. A one minute difference. An astronomical coincidence. In Near’s own words: “Because you killed her too, the announcement of Takada’s death was reported on the news quickly, and since Mikami also knew of her death, you wouldn’t have assumed that Mikami made a move on his own.” This means if Light wrote her name first, Mikami would’ve known to stay put; If Mikami wrote sooner, Light would’ve figured that Mikami had messed up the plan by using the death note. One could say Mikami was simply doing as Light had always praised him for doing, thinking similarly and being able to act on his own, such as when he killed Demegawa. But Light specifically instructed Mikami to not make any unnecessary moves until that final day in the warehouse, even instructing him not to take the notebook out. In fact, he anticipated Mikami would be smart enough to write Takada’s name in the fake notebook instead to keep up the facade. You could say that the timing doesn’t really matter, that Light was fucked as soon as Near got his hands on the real notebook whether he knew it or not. But that’s not true. Light could still have found a way to communicate with Mikami, perhaps by manipulating someone with the scrap in his watch. He could’ve gone along

with Near's plan, predicting that Near would incriminate Light by showing the task force the names written on the notebook, but not gloating. He'd have enough plausible deniability to walk out of the warehouse, or at least not get arrested by the SPK completely without leverage. Then he could use the scrap to kill everyone. (Yes, there is enough space on it. He wrote a whole paragraph with room to spare to kill Takada.) He could perhaps even've used his influence as L to craft some scheme. This is Light we're talking about. There's no way he couldn't come up with something given a scrap of the Death Note and L's influence. The timing truly had to be incredibly precise so that Light was defeated.

Ultimately, his biggest failure here, if you could call it that, was failing to spell it out to Mikami that he wasn't completely helpless and had scraps of the notebook for emergencies. If you don't believe me that this was bad luck, Ryuk outright states that the wielder of the Death Note is cursed with misfortune. When you consider some of his other blunders throughout the story - the FBI agent he kills just happens to be married to the gifted detective Naomi who previously worked with L, Sidoh returning for his notebook, L getting the Lind L. Taylor broadcast in the right region at the right time, the psychopathic and criminally incompetent Misa Amane getting a notebook, falling in love, and forcing herself into Light's life - then it's quite amazing that Light got as far as he did.



And, of course, Mello. Sure, they weren't explicitly cooperating, but Hal Lidner relayed that Near planned to have his name written in the (fake) notebook to prove Light was Kira. Mello hatched his own plan, with it being heavily implied he knew it was a sacrifice play, and Light's plan was disrupted. With Mello's help, Near states that they "surpassed" L, which I'll elaborate on down below. He also had Sidoh, who saved him during a raid and revealed important details about the notebook.

I won't scrutinize too heavily their respective allies. Light had Mikami and Takada, and even Misa helped against Mello with her eyes, to kill for him with their supernatural notebook (scraps for Takada). He also had the influence of the task force, which proved very useful against Mello. Near had the superhuman Gevanni and Hal, who could apparently perfectly replicate a guy's handwriting so well that the forgery couldn't be discerned under a microscope, and Hal herself made a valuable contribution by acting as a link between Mello and Near. The SPK in general were pretty useful to Near.

Light's Nerfs

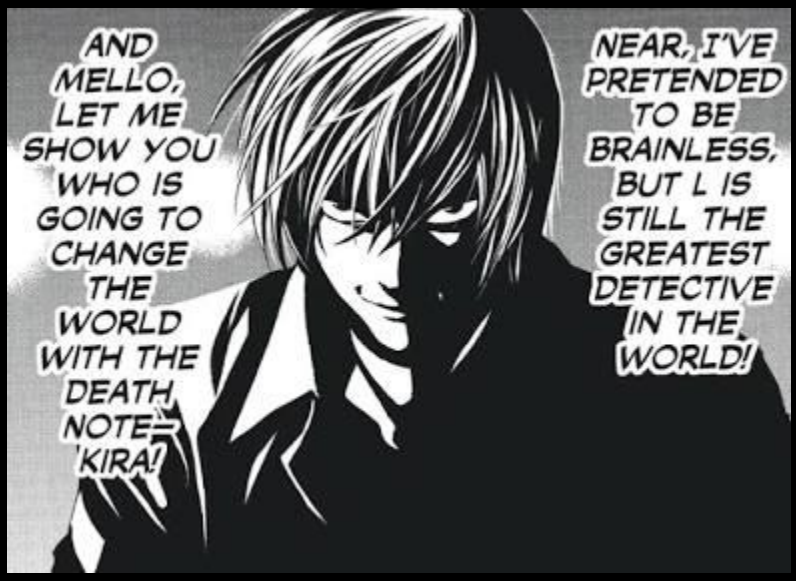
The 13-Day Rule. This fake rule states that any owner of the notebook who doesn't write a name for 13 days will die. It was made for his battle against L to exonerate himself and Misa. Mello (after blindsiding Light with prep, kidnapping Sayu, and forcing the notebook exchange) was able to debunk it. With this, Near all but knew Light was Kira, and he was able to manipulate much of the task force into distrusting Light.

The task force: One could argue they're an advantage. They provide an extra set of eyes and ears, and did provide manpower against Mello. However, they overall hinder Light far more than they help him. It's because of their existence that Light is forced to use such a contrived communication scheme and can't even be Kira directly.

Bad luck: Shown in the scan above.

Light was holding back: Explained above. Light knew that an easy way to foil his counter-plan was to just test the fake notebook with an evil person, which L would've done due to him being more willing to take risks, but knew Near would never do that, implying Light could've and would've fortified that area of his strategy or come up with a better one if he was facing a smarter opponent.

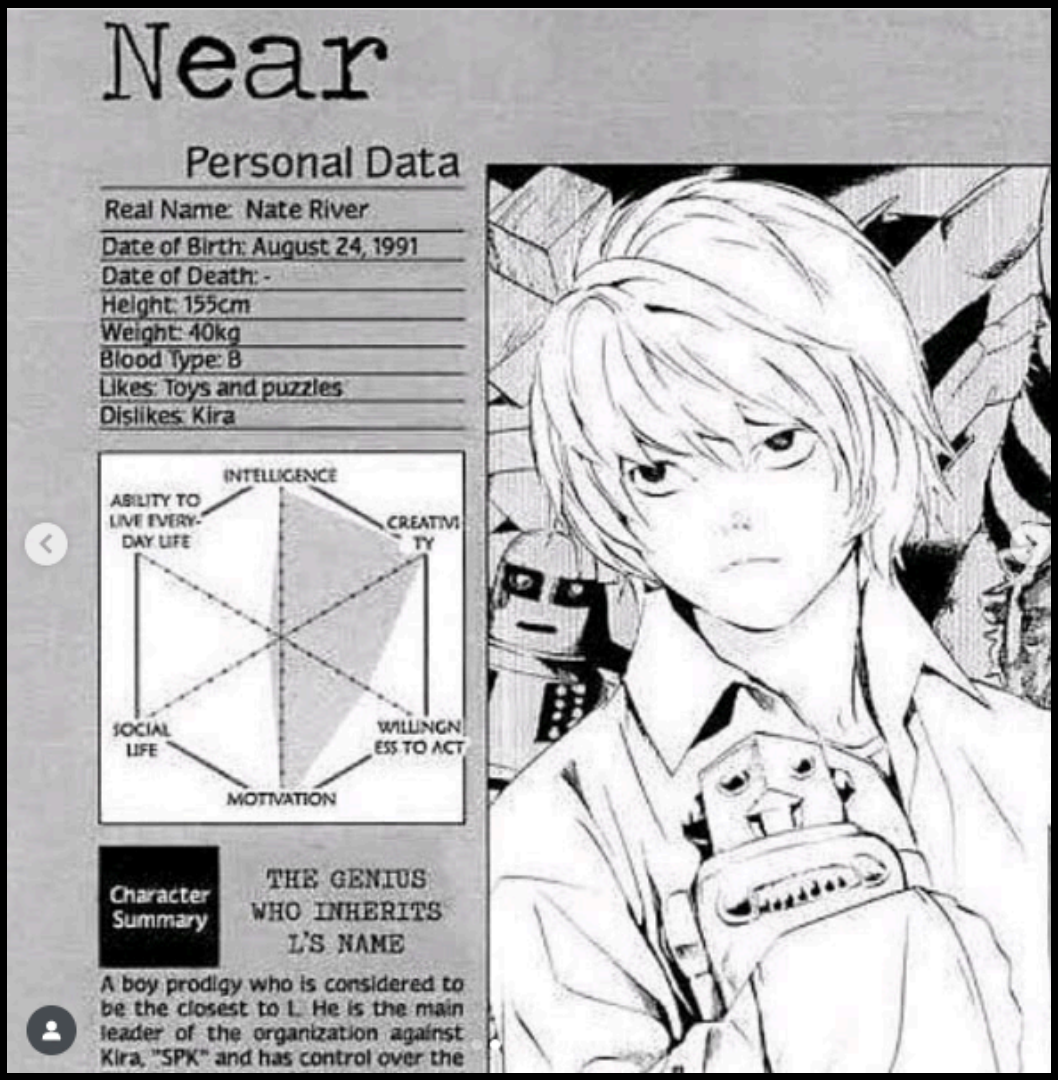
Second move disadvantage: Both Near and Mello's existence were unknown to Light. Near had plenty of time to study Kira, "L," and make his move. Mello just straight up kidnapped Light's sister and had an airtight plan prepared, inflicting perhaps Light's most humiliating 1v1 in the series, where he's just completely flaccid as Mello gets what he wants in the exchange. Though Light was holding back heavily, laying the groundwork against Near even before focusing on him, showing his strategic thinking

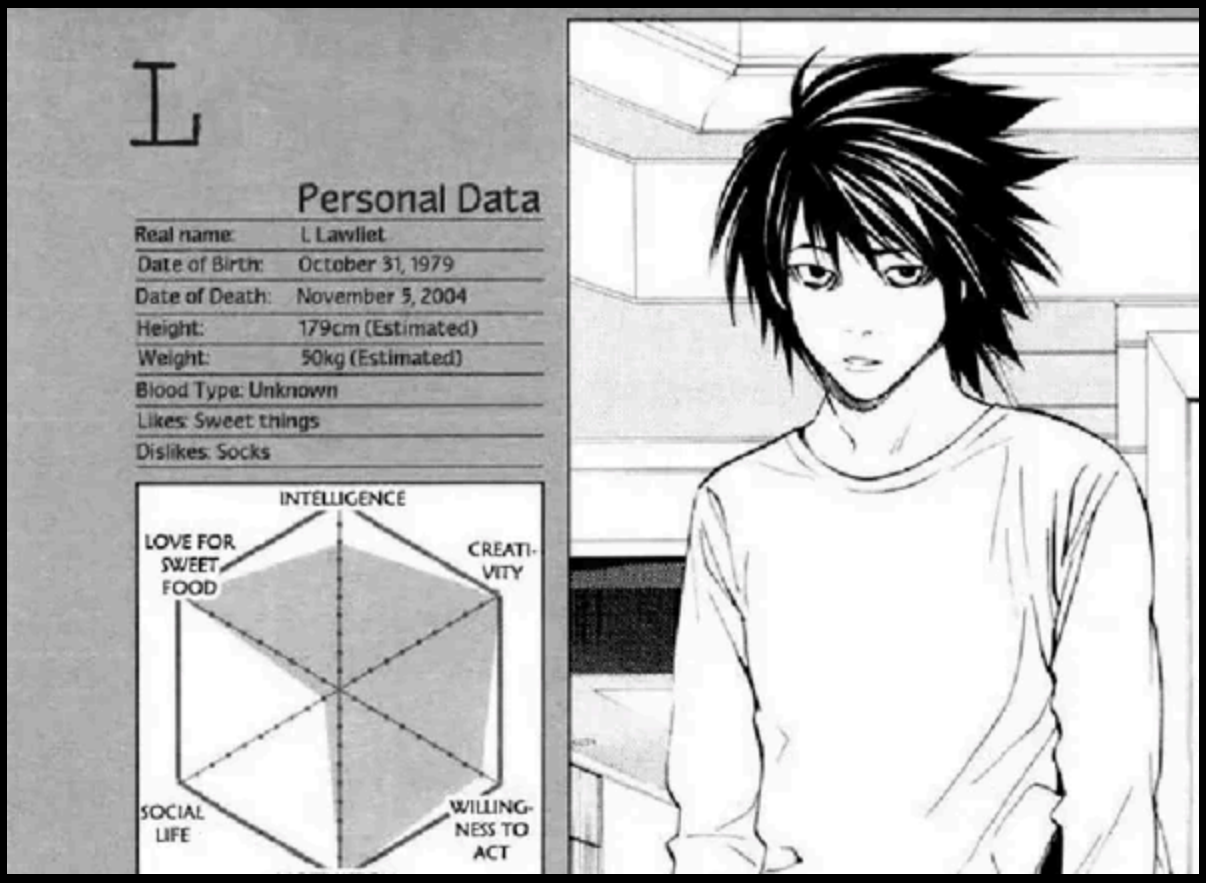

AND MELLO, LET ME SHOW YOU WHO IS GOING TO CHANGE THE WORLD WITH THE DEATH NOTE— KIRA!
NEAR, I'VE PRETENDED TO BE BRAINLESS, BUT L IS STILL THE GREATEST DETECTIVE IN THE WORLD!

Near + Mello > L

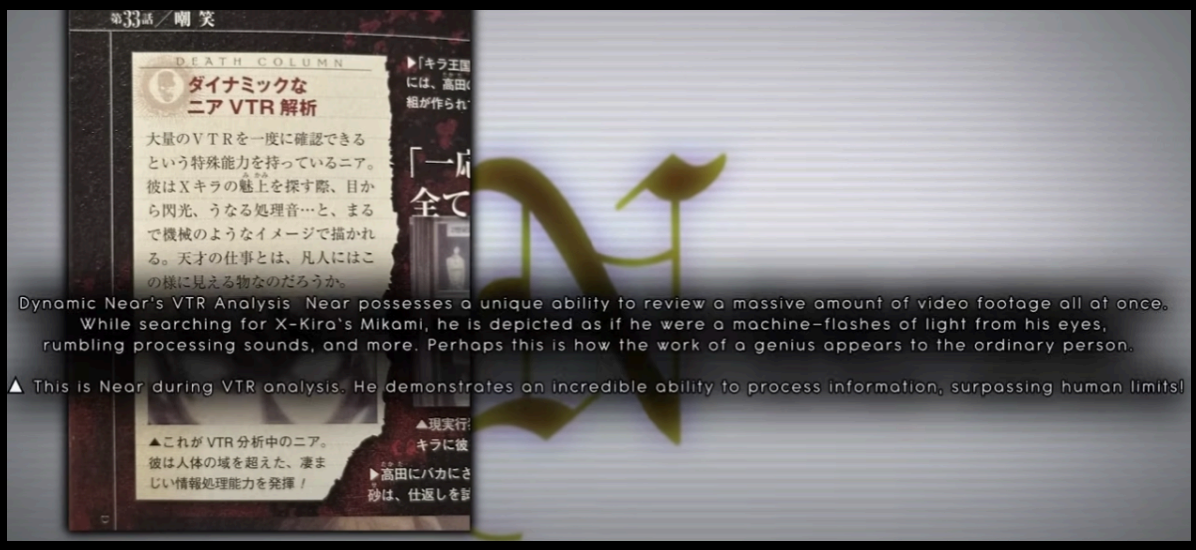
This comes primarily from Near stating in the anime and manga that together they could surpass L. Near also has various stuff that support his relativity to L:

A databook states that he has more “intelligence” than L (more elaboration on this below)

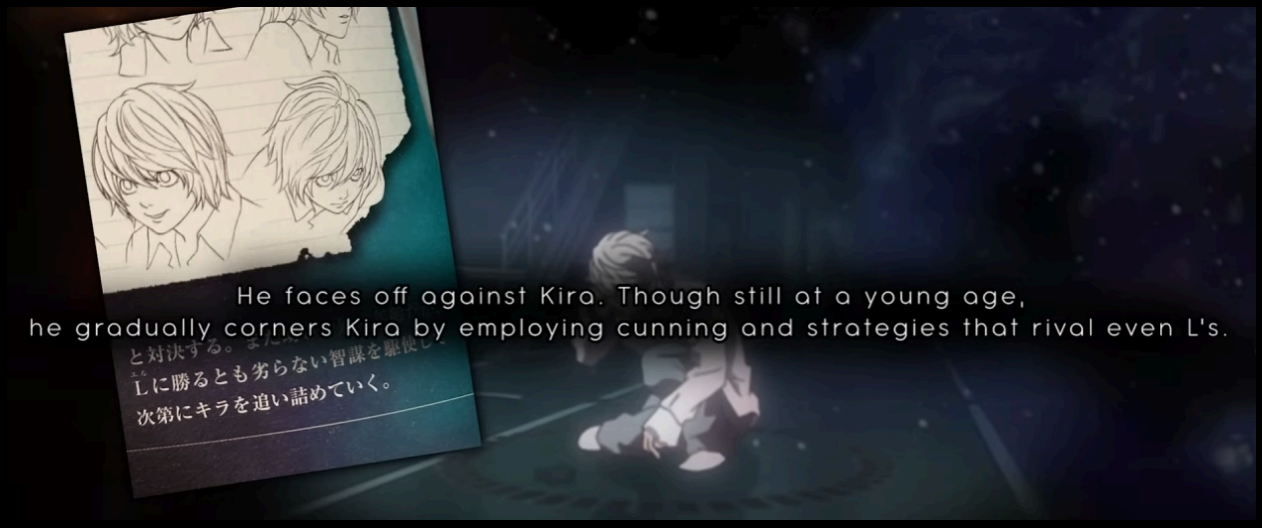




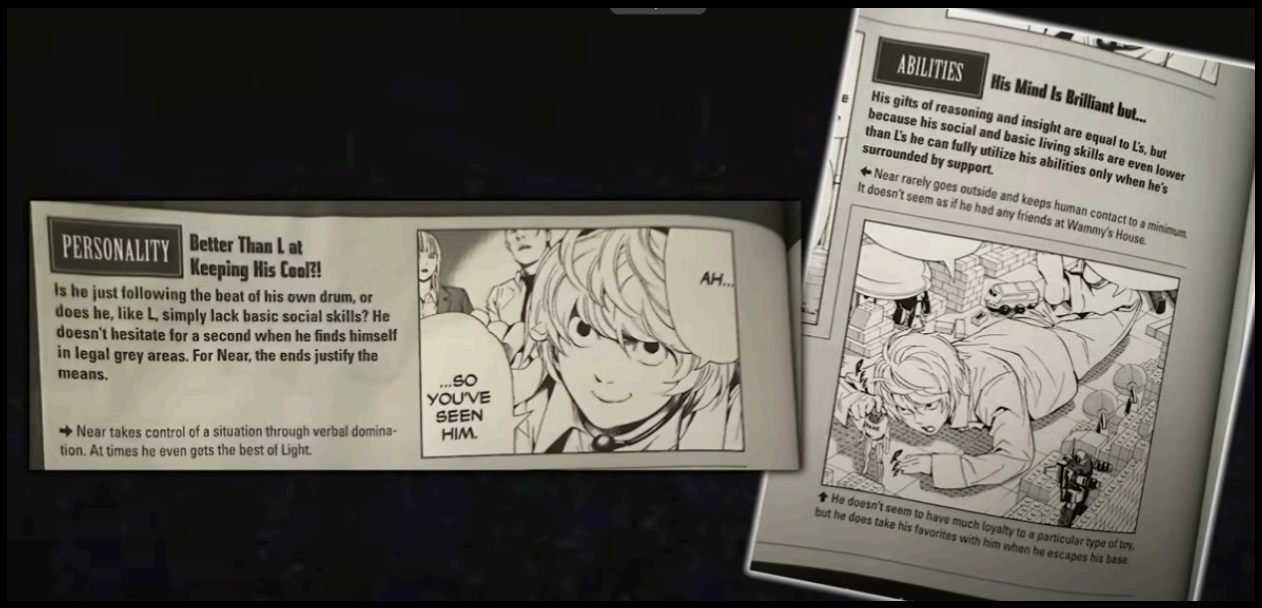
Near's ability to process loads is called superhuman. And L is stated to be able to do something similar.



It’s stated Near’s strategies rival L such that he was able to corner Kira.



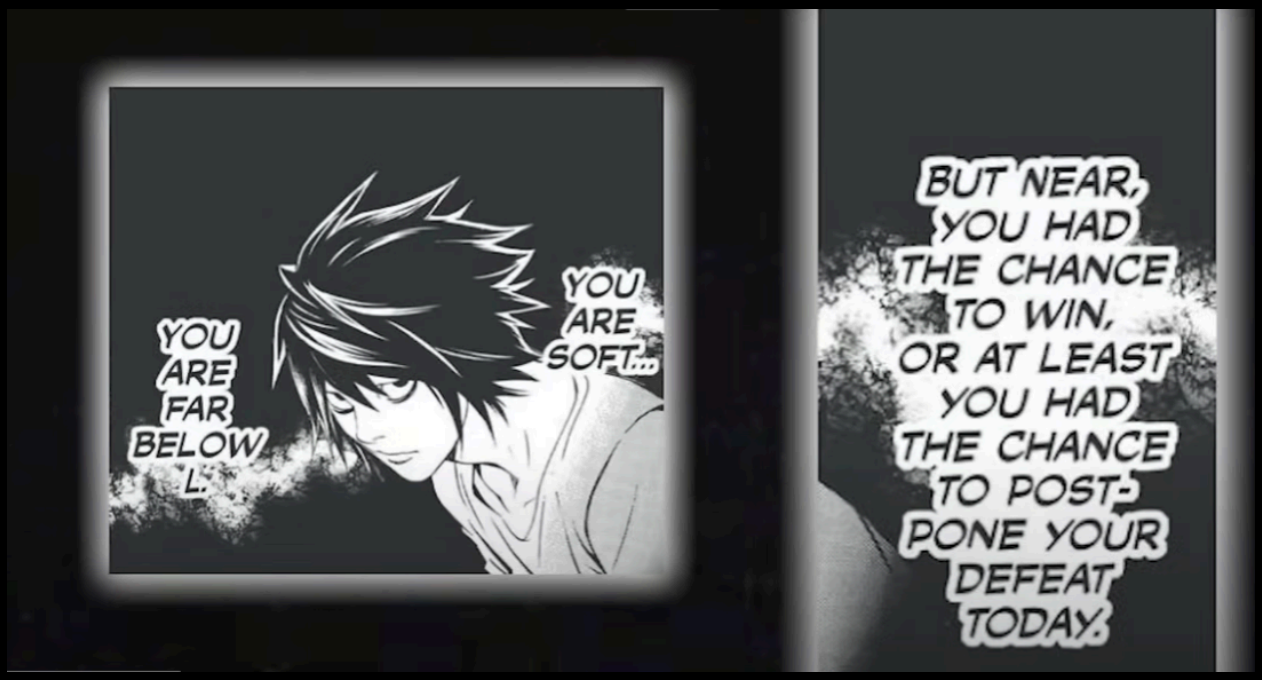
Death Note: How to Read further states that Near’s insight and reasoning is equal to L (but only when he is comfy), and he perhaps has better emotional regulation and verbal dominance than L.



Near himself implies that he’s not intellectually inferior but just lacks the willingness to act, which L excels in, and that Mello makes up for this. The statements above support this. Light backs this up, calling Near “soft”

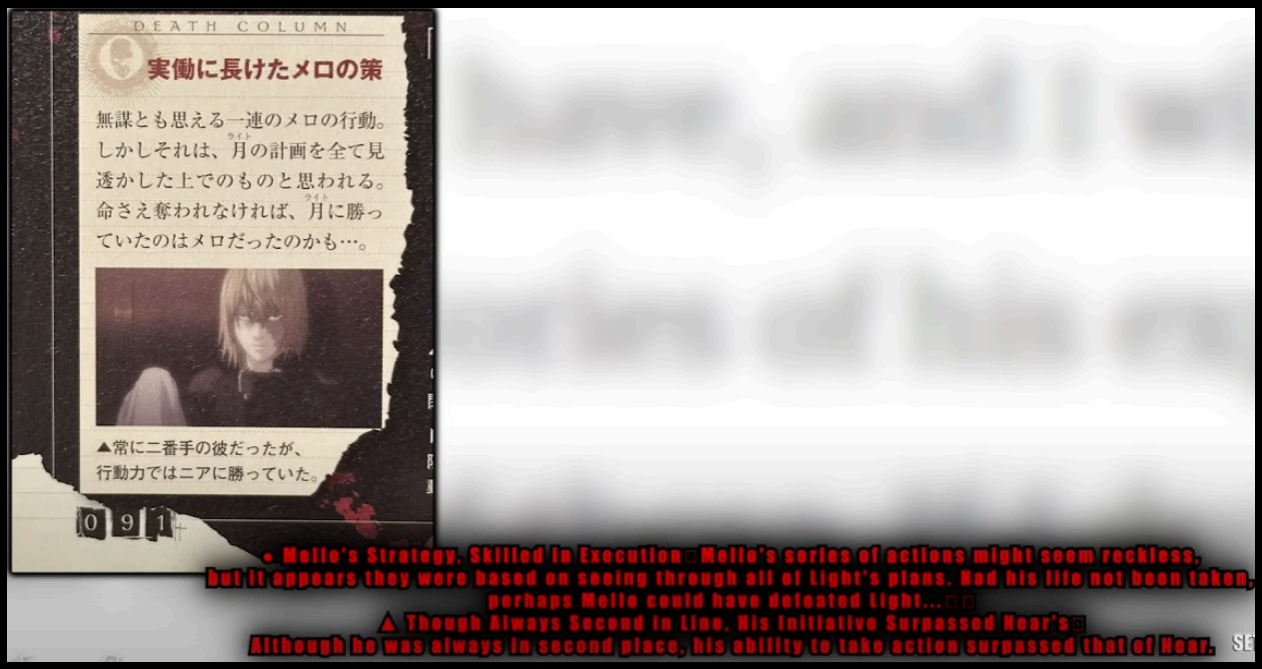
No scan for the Near statement, but quoted:
“But I always knew that I would never be able to surpass L. It could be that I lacked the

action and he lacked the calm…”

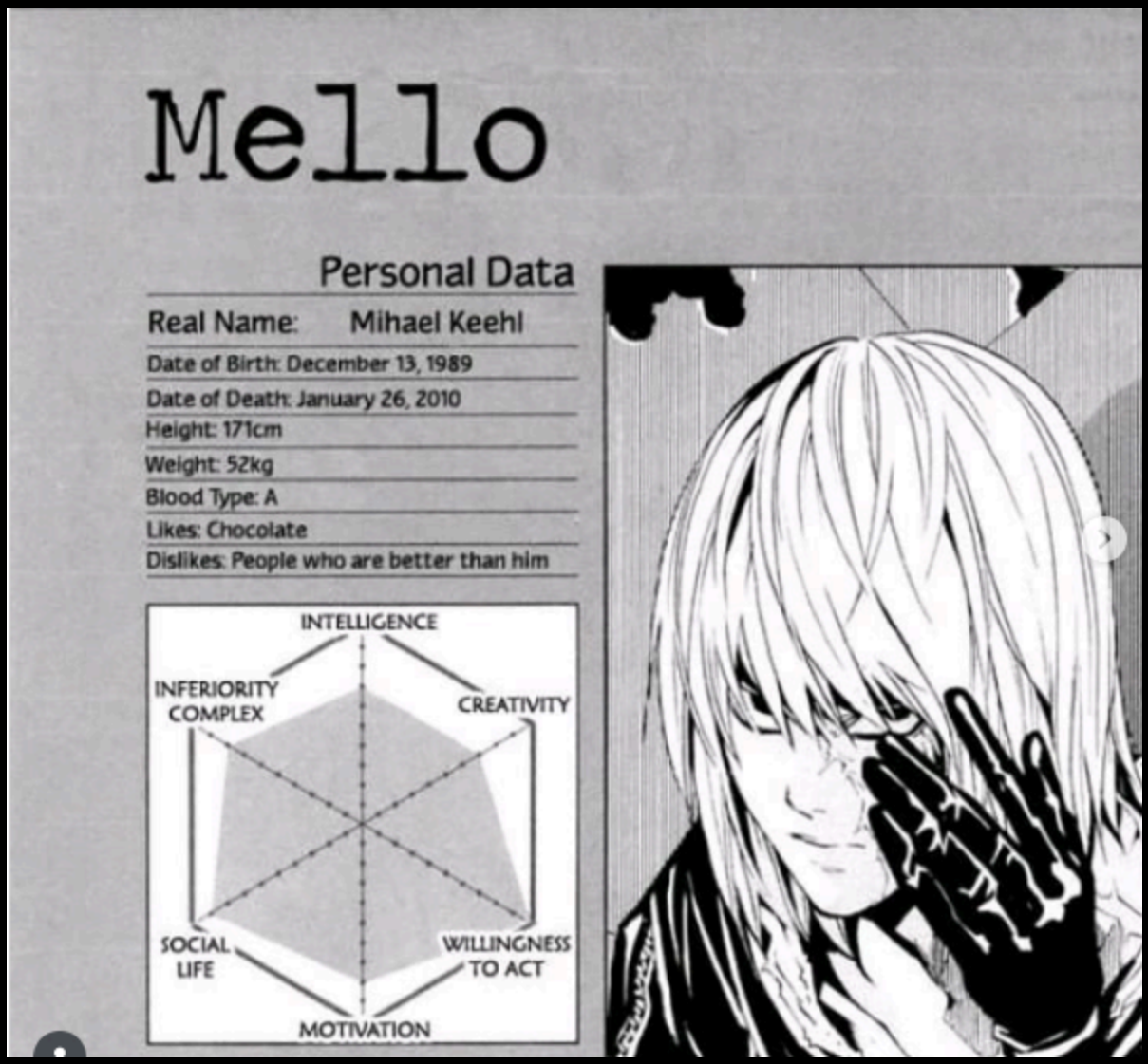


So, it’s clear they’re actually very close or equal in several scd categories like reasoning, strategies, cunning, and insight. L is more willing to act, has better social skills, and has more experience.

Mello is no slouch either. He should actually be pretty relative to Near. It’s stated that Mello can see through Light’s plans, which Near couldn’t do, and even



greater willingness to act than L.



Holistically, the narrative is that Near and L both surpass L in certain ways. Near perhaps has greater “intelligence” and equal reasoning, but he’s a recluse even compared to L and is too indecisive. As Light states, part of his strategy was even making sure Near felt confident enough to put forth his plan in motion. Mello isn’t as smart as L, but he’s bolder and has a greater command over people. Both mediocre on their own compared to L, but superior when put together.

Credit to Seth the Programmer for many scans.

Narrative Light

So, with everything in consideration, Light Yagami entered his war against Near and Mello heavily nerfed. He could hardly act on his own, and the existence of the 13-day rule made it significantly easier to deduce Light = Kira. Near's victory was narrow. Near himself states how Light almost won multiple times, and it took Mello's death with incredible luck in Mikami both acting OOC (disobeying a strict order from his God), and killing Takada one minute apart from Light, to seal the deal. So:

Near + Mello (with incredible luck) > Light Yagami (holding back + heavily nerfed)
Near + Mello > L

Under such conditions, Light barely losing to two geniuses whose combined brilliance surpasses L in a two-front war should prove that he has far surpassed L by the end of the series. In my opinion, if we consider Near and Mello's war against Light an extreme diff fight (Mello died, Near nearly lost, and his plan only worked due to Mikami acting OOC and killing Takada at the same time)

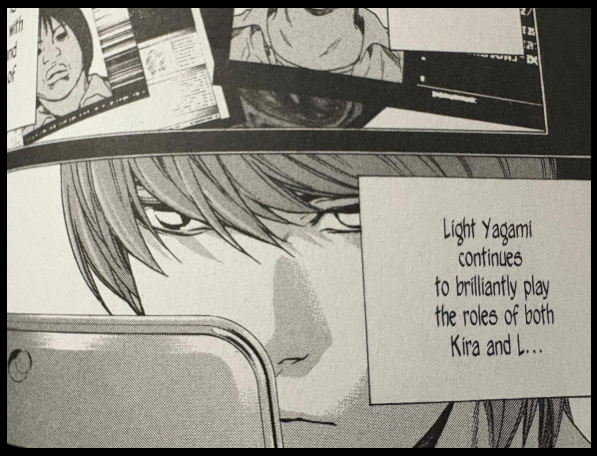
EoS Light > L solidly

That is at least by narrative with the statements. This doesn't necessarily mean that Near and Mello are better than L if you compare them feat for feat, but they were meant to be. But I believe that even if you disregard that, EoS Light's final strategy buffs several important categories so that Light certainly beats L if it was close before, namely his strategy, counteraction, eq, reasoning, logical manipulation, and foresight.

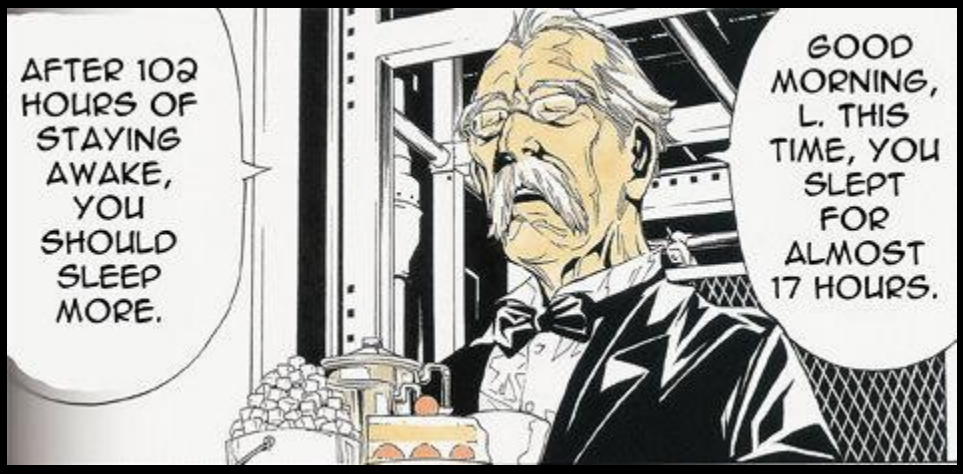
With that said, it should be no surprise to say that:

EoS Light (and BoS tbqh) > BB no diff or neg diff

Narratively speaking, BB was a mildly intriguing opponent for L, one mysterious enough that L investigated the case despite the low body count and lack of a hefty ransom. Light was an opponent that cost him his life, and one who nearly destroyed his successors as well. You could say Light had the advantage of the Death Note, but L also fought Light with everything he had - the police, the FBI, the media, etc, using several genius tactics from the Lind L. Taylor trap to the fake execution stunt. BB was someone he sent Naomi after. He was so inferior that L did little beyond this. He solved the killing pattern with information given by Naomi and investigated "Ryuzaki," but L didn't even bother to employ any strategies or set traps for BB, leaving Naomi to defeat him herself. Even worse, L grows smarter over time, so BB was this trivial for a dumber L than the one that Light defeated. You don't have to think that Light stomps L or that he even beats him, but if he's even close to him when they fought, then BB is fodder.



Supporting this is the above scan from the time-skip. Light is noted to “brilliantly” play the role of both L and Kira, which couldn’t be the case if he was substantially worse than L at solving cases. Making this more impressive is that Light has a normal sleep schedule unlike L, who is noted to go days without sleeping by Watari, so Light was solving a similar caseload as L with less time while also tending to other areas of his life. He even later remarks that Near and Mello were making things “exciting again,” so being L in addition to his other responsibilities was easy



Moving away from the in-verse with the topic of BB to the least intelligent smart person in the verse - Naomi Misora, While L may be contentious, I don’t think anyone would disagree that Light should scale above Naomi Misora. Naomi was able, with guidance from BB, to solve BB’s killing pattern. BB used heavy abstract reasoning to design his intricate murder spree. It’d take quite a while to detail the whole case, but I’ll give examples of the connections necessary:

- Lashes made on the first victim roughly look like Roman numerals - 16, 59, 1423, 159, 13, 7, 582, 724, 1001, 40, 51, and 31
- BB had replaced two books that together totalled 376 pages with *Insufficient Relaxation*. If you take Insufficient Relaxation, go to the matches in accordance with the numbers

above, and take the first letter ot the first word on each page, then you'll get ""Q-U-T-R-T-E-A-E-T-E-E-N." But since the pages corresponding to numerals higher than the # of pages in the book require laps, if you adjust for the laps accordingly (if the letter requires two laps to get, you take the second word of that page), then you're able to get the second victim's name - Quarter Queen, which Naomi was quickly able to solve.

- Backyard Bottomslash's body was discovered lying on its back with its left arm and right leg missing. When Naomi goes to the bathroom, she gets an idea: Believe Bridesmaid was on his back, Quarter Queen her front, and Backyard Bottomslash his back - an alternating pattern like the 9 to 4 days between each killing.
- Connecting this to the initials of the victims thus far: BB, QQ, BB, QQ seemingly doesn't fit the pattern until you account for her being "bb" if you take her name as lower-case and mirror it. BB obfuscates by pointing out that initials are always capitalized, but Naomi points out that her being a child is symbolic of the lower-case and her being found lying down is a clue to take qq upside down to get bb.
- The victim was discovered wearing glasses, which means the killer put them on her since she normally wore contacts. This is a clue to the third victim's location, which was in West L.A., near Glass Station.
- Naomi figures out the next murder will happen on August 22nd mostly on her own, taking into account the reason why the dates were chosen and the time gap between each one. The dates of all victims' deaths thus far all connect to the letter B. August 13 - 13 looks like a B; July 31st, reverse the order and it gives 13; August 4th, the 4 is made by 1+3; and with a similar principle, if you take one from the tens place of August 22nd and add it to the ones place, you get 13.
- The victim had been dismembered thoroughly to steal his watch. The watch is the clue, so BB had taken his limbs as misdirection. The victim was dismembered to form a crude clock, with its limbs mutilated at different lengths to point to the time values in the room. BB points out that you could any sort of number with that without considering the room as the clock as well, so she quickly deduces that the "numbers" are given by the stuffed animals at the walls of the room and Wara Ningyo, giving 6:15 and fifty seconds.

All of this should buff Light's abstract reasoning via superiority to Naomi, a category he is otherwise featless in.

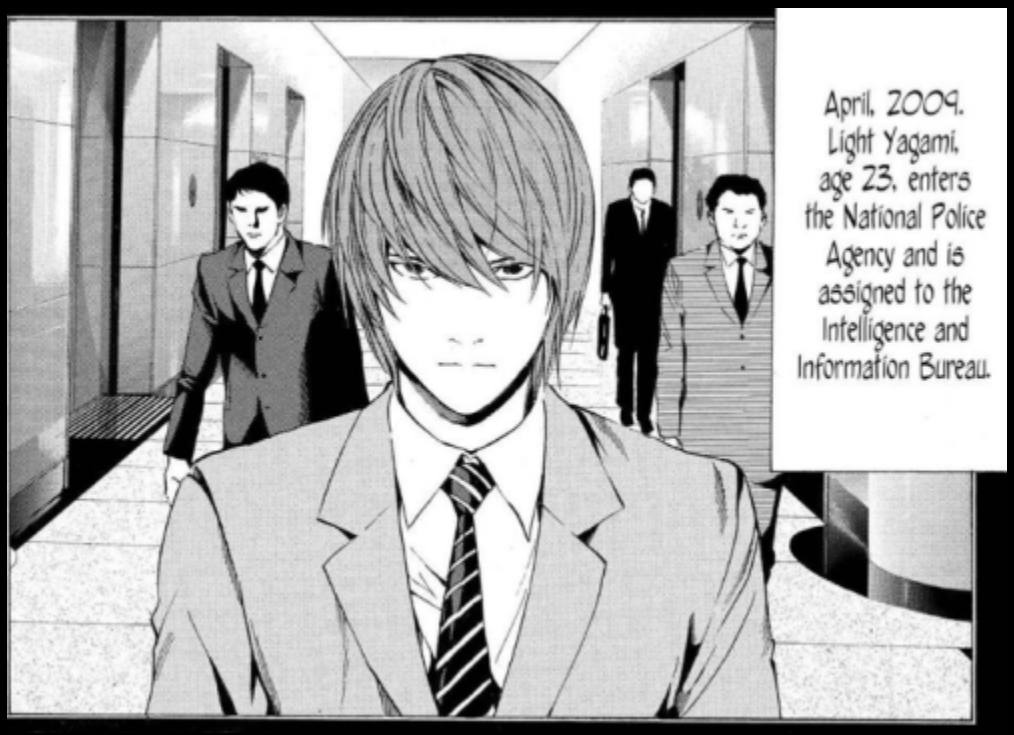
And finally, back to BB, Light did kill Beyond Birthday on January 21st, 2004. If you're thinking it was Misa with the eyes, Misa's parents were killed weeks after Birthday's death on February 2nd. And Misa only acquired the Death Note nearly two months later on March 20th. Why is this impressive? No one at Wammy's House knew his name and even L couldn't figure it out, considering the search near impossible. Light didn't even have L's resources at the time, so this means a 17-year old Light Yagami was able to outperform Wammy's House and L having only news reports and his own computer to go off of. This was also a little less than 1 month after meeting Naomi around the 31st of December, implying that Light took notice of BB after looking into Naomi, perhaps to make sure she wouldn't have any family members that could prove troublesome like Raye Penber did. Scans below:

dead copy. The current head of Wammy's House had told Quillish Wammy/Watari, who had told L about B's disappearance in May, and ever since L had been looking for him even as he solved his other cases. Wammy's House only knew him as B—they did not know his real name, Beyond Birthday, so this search was near impossible, but L at last picked up his trail when the murders

And a few years after his arrest, on January 21, 2004, serving a life sentence in a California prison, Beyond Birthday died of a mysterious heart attack.

Why? In-universe, his growth in acumen could be due to his age. Light is 23 in the second half of the story. He fought L when he was 17. The frontal lobe, the area of the brain associated with executive processes such as logic, reasoning, and judgment, doesn't stop developing until 25. L himself was 25. So Light fought L when he was still fresh and L was in his prime. L's own dramatic growth in intelligence, shown below with a scan from *Another Note*, below supports this. It could also be explained as his experience. EoS Light simply had more experience from his battles with L and presumably from his offscreen job in law enforcement and acting as L. Light probably learned from his mistakes with L. It's shown that he never really moved on from L, finding life boring until Near and Mello gave him that same competitive joy that L did, so he likely went over his battles with L in his head and thought up areas he could've improved on and mistakes to avoid. The scans below show Light reflecting on his past mistake of being emotional against L and his offscreen job in the NPA, which he held simultaneously while being L and solving cases, leading the task force, and also being Kira, which also shows his high adaptability.





Light's Learning Ability

While working alongside L as his innocent self, Light has an impressive feat of data analysis. Using a new system, Light begins combing through Japan's public and media data, going forward with the assumption that Kira is Japanese, especially after cross referencing Kira's victims with criminals shown on Japan's news networks.. He considers the possibility that since Kira kills by heart attacks, then some victims might die unnoticed, further considering the possibility that non-criminals (those not officially prosecuted under Japanese law) were killed. Light began analyzing every heart attack death over the last five month period but quickly narrowed his focus after noticing three suspicious deaths - 3 businessmen in 3 important corporations: Sekimaru, Aoi, and Yotsuba. Roppei Tamiya on June 27th, Kouji on July 2nd nearly a week later, and Takeyoshi Moriya on July 30th four weeks later. Only Yotsuba had benefitted from the deaths. Now Light wasn't initially focused on corporations; he just knew that men were in important positions - a VP of Sekimaru, an ex-VP of Yotsuba, and a Director of Aoi's Integrated Systems - from seeing their names on the list of the dead, implying Light has deep knowledge of businesses, such that he knew board members of random corporations. As he explains, two powerful people dying of heart attacks could be coincidence, but three is too suspicious. He sees that of the three related companies, only Yotsuba's stocks have risen as a result. But that in itself is by no means causation; it could've been a business rival that Kira apparently was supporting, and Yotsuba only benefitted incidentally. Regardless, Light continues with his focus on deaths of people in the business world.

This should comprise Japan and its biggest trading partners (China and U.S.) since Light is now working with the idea that Kira is killing to benefit Yotsuba corporation. In a comprehensive survey done in Japan, it was found that 354.7 out of 10,000 laborers in Japan worked at the executive level. It's labor force also was 67 million. At this rate, that's **2,376,490** at the executive level. In 2023, the BLS estimated that the U.S. had **9,638,000** working in business and financial occupations. Data on China is much harder to come by. Going back to the U.S. data, the 70,274,000 professionals were 44% of the total labor force, which, with some simple algebra, is 159,713,636.364; and 0.06% of that would be in those business and financial positions. Using that rate with China's labor force of 733.5 M, that would be **44,010,000**; giving us a total labor pool of **56,024,490**.

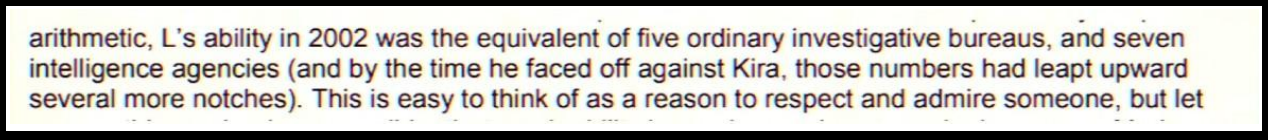
America's CDR is about 9.5 per 1,000 people, which, when applied to their professional labor pool, gives **91,561** deaths. Japan's has been around 9 = **21,388**. China around 8 - **352,080.** Total equals 465,029. Since Light only considered a five month period, 5/12 times that is **193,762 deaths to analyze**. Now that's quite a lot, even for Light, so let's say he restricts it to the upper echelons of business, say, at 1% - 1,938 deaths to analyze in comparison with how they affect Yotsuba's stocks. Regardless, this is still a massive amount of data for Light to compare with Yotsuba stocks. He has to account for a LOT of noise on the stock market to pinpoint which of these were committed by Kira: unrelated deaths raising Yotsuba's stocks, broad macroeconomic trends, companies situated similarly to Yotsuba benefitting from Kira's murders, random events that raise Yotsuba's stocks and coincide with some person dying, a non-Kira deaths that benefit other companies, a dip in another company's stock causing a rise in Yotsuba's, Higuchi's usage of the notebook masking the negative effects of the stock market, such as when he forced two people to cheat and get indicted before killing them, and delayed causal effects due to some of Kira's victims not being immediately reported, or reported at all; there's even the timing of corporations reporting their quarterly earnings to consider - after all, Light is analyzing Yotsuba's stocks in hindsight, so this would be extremely important to consider. Even with the "limited" pool of merely 1,900+ deaths, Light's still effectively trying to find a drop in an ocean. Making this even more difficult is that Yotsuba is a large company dealing in many areas - shown in the scan below. For example, if you the death of someone beneficial to its weapons divisions gives rise to it, while it's already on the up and up from success in its commercial division, how could you know? So it's more difficult to trace back a single death to a rise in its stocks. He even pinpointed those who'd been killed by diseases, and bear in mind those people falling sick, too much to work, could also disturb the stock market one way or another well before it ever kills them. All in all, Light uncovers a total of thirteen Kira victims - the first three who died by heart attacks, two killed in that same week after being indicted, one by suicide, and everyone else by disease or accidents. This shows his proficiency in data analysis.

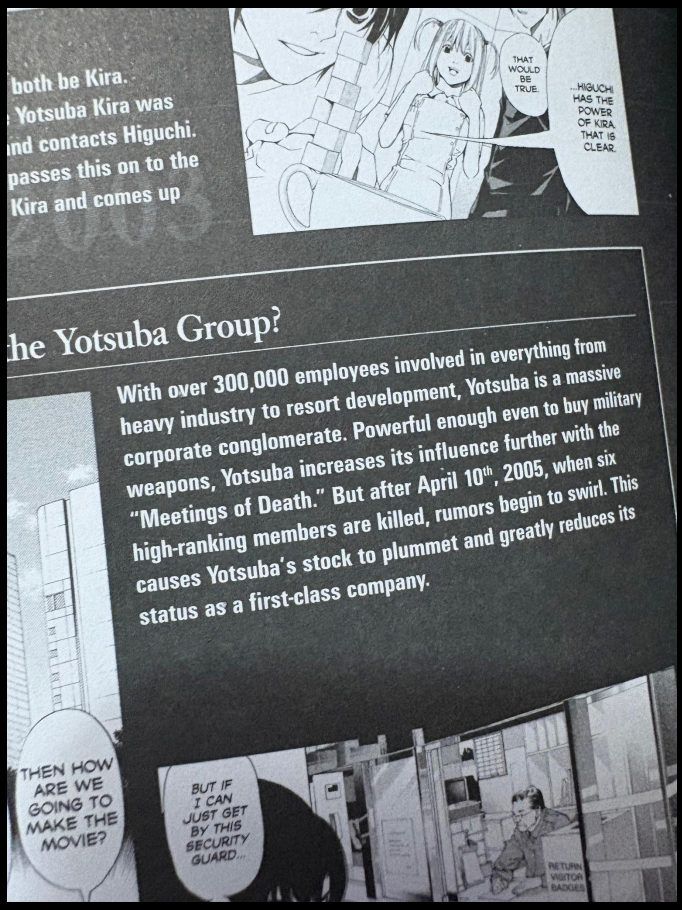
With this pattern, Light is able to use inductive reasoning to predict that Kira's next victim will be Tokio Yakoda, a bank company director who was caught embezzling funds days prior. His death, Light analyzes, would ensure Otomo bank's downfall, allowing Yotsuba to become the company's largest.

Light's feat is most analogous to the work of forensic data analysts, who collect, analyze, and transform data to detect crimes among other activities, Light began working with the task force post-release on July 23. On August 1, he began working with L in the building the latter had commissioned for the investigation. Some time before October 1st, Light discovers the pattern. In 2004, there were 61 days between August 1 and October 1. So at most, Light mastered the field in 61 days, but it's likely much less than that since it's not like Light could only have acclimated when he pinpointed Kira's final victim thus far; he would've had to learn much, much faster.

In real life, it would take someone years of studying and building a strong foundation in mathematics, computer science, and economics to become competent as a forensic data analyst, perhaps even working with a team to perform maneuvers - a data scientist to know what data to gather and how to do it, a computer scientist to develop and use software to assist in data gathering/analysis, a domain expert on corporate dynamics to know how someone falling sick or dying could affect their company and others, among others. While it'd be pushing it to say Light acquired complete mastery over each and every field, this shows his extreme learning ability that he, with no zero prior experience, was able to vastly outperform specialists in a highly complex task mostly by himself. He was working in a team setting, but the implication is that he cracked it almost entirely by himself. L was depressed and chasing his own inquiries (hence Light having to explain the feat to him), so he wasn't helping Light. Matsuda says he helped, but both parties ignore him with the implication being that whatever his contribution amounted to very little. He's even cut from the conversation in the anime. The most relevant outside contribution is from Soichiro Yagami, who notices that the killings were concentrated on the weekends, a fact that slipped both Light and L, but this well after Light discovered the connection and started digging into Yotsuba with L.

Narratively, this should be above L's own stock market feat. L was unable to find the same connection between Yotsuba's stocks and Kira despite being more experienced than Light with both general analysis of data and the stock market. A contention is that L was depressed and unmotivated when Light did this, and this is true, but it shouldn't be controversial to say that even a depressed adult L vastly outscales his six-year-old self. That doesn't mean Light > L at his peak in fluid intelligence, FRI, etc, but just that this feat is better. After all, even the slightly younger L from the LABB case was relatively retarded compared to the one that fought Light. Lending credence to this, Namikawa even states that zeroing in on Yotsuba from disease-related deaths would be especially difficult - it would take "a god."


arithmetic, L's ability in 2002 was the equivalent of five ordinary investigative bureaus, and seven intelligence agencies (and by the time he faced off against Kira, those numbers had leapt upward several more notches). This is easy to think of as a reason to respect and admire someone, but let



2022 Employment Status Survey Summary of the Results
The Professional and Technical Workforce: By the Numbers — Department for Professional Employees, AFL-CIO
China's Labor Force - Data, Trends, and Future Outlook
Death rate, crude (per 1,000 people) - United States | Data
Death rate, crude (per 1,000 people) - Japan | Data

(Associative Thinking, Fluid Intelligence, Crystallized Intelligence, FRI, Analytical Thinking, Data Analysis, Pattern Recognition, Intuition, Abductive Reasoning, Connecting the Dots, Adaptability, Information Gathering, Deductions, Prediction)

Another feat to demonstrate Light's LA is his off-screen invention during the time-skip. He was able to develop an AI voice modulator that could replicate L and Watari's voice in real time, and another one that allowed Misa to call the task force as "Kira." Modern technology is just now catching up to this with deepfake technology decades after the early 2000s when Light was operating. To do this, Light at minimum would need mastery of audio engineering and speech processing to replicate L and Watari's voice perfectly off memory since Watari had deleted

everything prior to his death, computer science and AI; and considering how primitive the field was back then, Light effectively surpassed humanity's understanding of AI by himself; and linguistic intelligence, as Light would need to study how people enunciate and intonate words in their speech. The time frame isn't given, and from what we should reasonably know, Light never studied any such things in college. He was studying to work in the NPA, and we only see him head off to Psychology with L, so it's extremely unlikely he would've been able to learn anything in college, let alone to such an advanced level. At worst, he would've done this over the years between L's death and Near's appearance, but the feat almost certainly took place over a much shorter period. He needed the modulator to act as L, commanding people and subordinates, and, given that we know he was extremely competent as L, it'd be quite a stretch to say he was radio silent as L for even half a year. The most reasonable estimate would be perhaps 1 month. So in just one month, Light effectively mastered the fields noted above and revolutionized AI technology as a sidequest.

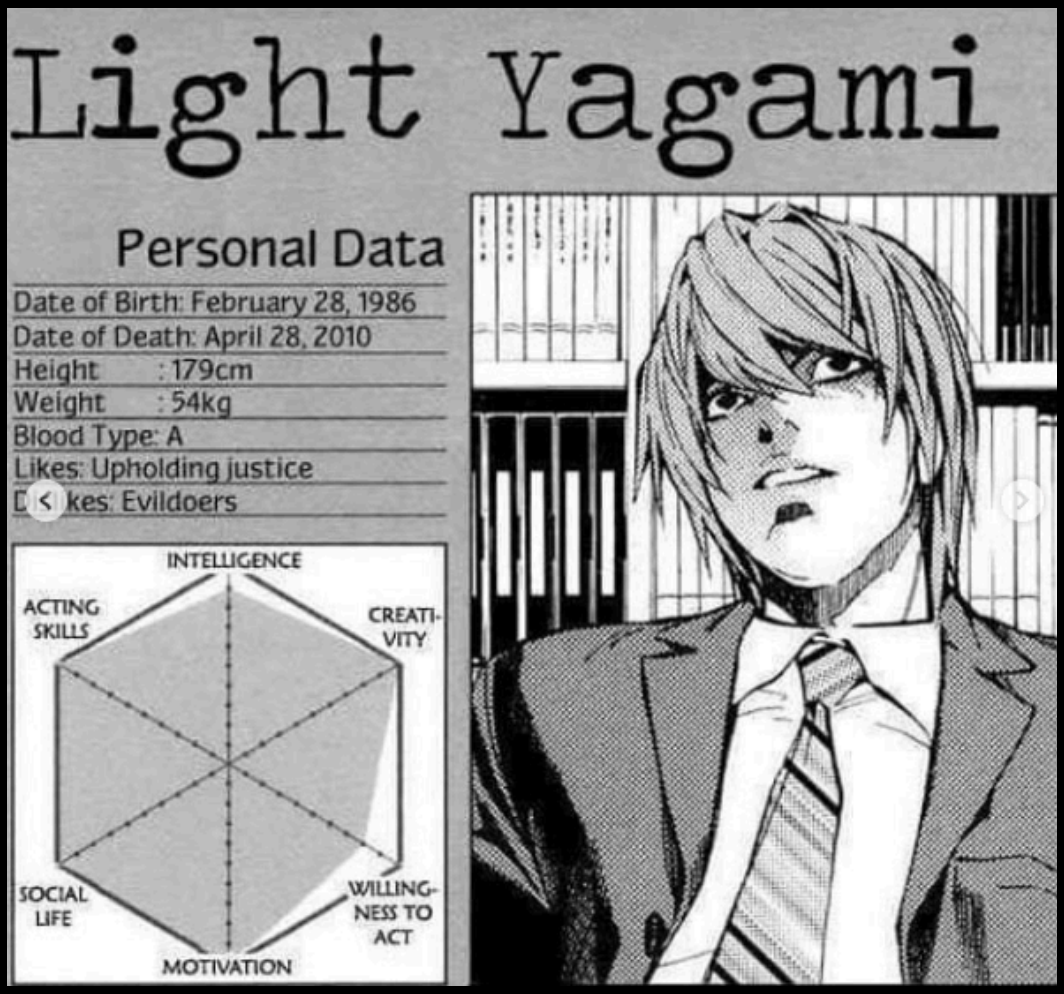
More than just knowing facts, as one would to answer questions on a test, this shows Light's fluid intelligence since he was able not just recall facts and apply them, as one would in an exam, but also to use them to advance these fields altogether far beyond what was possible for the time. And he did this while balancing his duties as Kira, L, and task force leader, so it was seemingly not too difficult.



(VCI, FRI, WMI, Crystallized Intelligence, Fluid Intelligence, Knowledge, Linguistic Intelligence)

Light's Academics > L

This comes primarily from the databook



The stat on the top of the hexagon which says Intelligence in the English version, says something completely different in the Japanese version. It says 知識 (Chishiki) which means Knowledge, not Intelligence. The Japanese word for intelligence is 知性(Chisei) which is not present in the stats. Knowledge and intelligence are two completely different things. Knowledge is how much you know, while intelligence is how smart you are. This means that there's been a translation mistake in the English version. So since the top stat actually means Knowledge, things start to make a lot more sense.

Light has more knowledge than L, which implies he has a better learning ability - the ability to acquire knowledge. Several factors affect learning:

- Memory: encoding information
- Motivation: to help stay focused and attentive

- Pattern recognition and comprehension: to detect trends, rules, and connections between concepts
- Problem solving: to apply knowledge to new situations where that knowledge is applicable (this is why we don't give children math homework consisting entirely of 1+1 repeated for the whole page to say they're mastered addition)

Light acquired more knowledge with less time and inferior quality of knowledge sources. Light had a normal, if studious, upbringing. He went to an ordinary school, hung out with friends, dated girls, he spent time with his family, participated in extracurricular activities such as his junior high tennis team, and of course, he lived a shorter life (RIP). By comparison, L's was one much more suited to create a genius. He went to Wammy's House under the care of a billionaire, received a "specialized education" per Vol 13, and he didn't have a social life to maintain. Despite Light's normal upbringing compared to L's, Light still surpassed him in knowledge. This could either mean, he simply brute-force processes information much faster (like speedreading), so he could read and solve more in the less time he had to study to match and surpass L, or Light has a far superior ability to comprehend material and build from there. For example, a normal person given basic physics equations could do algebra problems that involve solving for them. A person with a deep comprehension of the mechanics at play could take the first principles and quickly use that to extrapolate conclusions elsewhere, how recoil works in firearms, how energy is lost in a bouncing ball, etc, allowing them to learn deeper, and thereby, faster. Supporting this interpretation is the earlier discussion on the Yotsuba feat.

Whatever interpretation you take, this would buff his VCI. Knowledge is a part of VCI. And if you think he can quickly deeply understand concepts and conclusions, then that's that. He has a deep understanding of language, can think abstractly to apply it elsewhere and get knowledge. If you think he was speedreading, then he would still be processing words and their meanings quickly to accrue knowledge. It wouldn't be enough if he could just memorize facts to count for knowledge. After all, a parrot that repeats some sentence doesn't know what it means.

To show the importance of education quality, consider this study:
Inequalities at the Starting Gate: Cognitive and Noncognitive Skills Gaps between 2010–2011 Kindergarten Classmates | Economic Policy Institute
Which shows a correlation between education quality and intelligence.
"Middle-socioeconomic-status children have a relative disadvantage with respect to children in the top SES fifth of about 0.4 standard deviations in cognitive skills, and almost 0.25 standard deviations in persistence in completing tasks."
Now Light's family wasn't poor, but his education quality certainly pales to that provided by a billionaire.

Given the analysis below, Light probably just processes things way faster. Of course, this wouldn't apply to non-academic stuff like L's helicopter feat.

(Academics, **VCI**, Knowledge, Crystallized Intelligence, Learning Ability, Fluid Intelligence, Concrete Thinking, and maybe **PSI**)

A possible contention might be that Mikami has the same knowledge stat as L, but that's not that crazy. Both Light and Near praise his intelligence, praise from Light being especially impressive because of how arrogant he is. In his office, we can see dozens of books over various legal matters. Mikami is shown in flashbacks to be extremely studious and obsessive, and Mikami is older than L by the time of his death, so an extremely intelligent (albeit less so than extraordinary geniuses like Light and L) acquiring such knowledge isn't a stretch.

Now what does this actually mean for their knowledge span? We know he's a top student, but the only statements really quantifying Wammy's House curriculum is from the non canon CTW novel, which also changes the lore by having L being a successor to K. There, it's stated that Wammy's employed not just world class teachers but had students act on the field with them, conducting studies and such. In the canon BB novel, the only thing we know is that some of a successive generation's members, in an attempt to replicate L's genius, died undergoing the rigorous curriculum. And later generations weren't so tough. But that doesn't mean L himself went through an equally rigorous curriculum; it could just be that Wammy overclocked the curriculum in a callous attempt at replicating L. Nonetheless, there's stuff outside to go on. We can see that Light's room is filled with bookshelves
Clip - Death Note-13-Confession (3)-Segment11(00_20_28-00_21_20)
Clip Death Note 08 Glare 3 Segment1100 16 40 00 17 37ryuk found out 64 cameras in Light's room
And Mikami himself seems to have hundreds
https://youtu.be/idlL0mnc_Ic?t=45

The best measure of their knowledge should come from Light. Taking into account his academic achievements, all the books he's read, and his inventions detailed above: He surpasses the scientists of his era in the fields of computer scientist and AI engineering via the voice modulator feat; His invention of the cell-phone sharing system also implies mastery in various engineering disciplines (radio, electrical, telecommunications) and cryptography; Being L would also mean he has knowledge of criminal behavior, general investigative skills, and likely multiple foreign languages as well. After all, it's stated that L's work singlehandedly kept the global crime rates down by a few dozen percent, which would most likely require being able to operate effectively with foreign data, crimes tailored to foreign cultures, and foreign agents and witnesses. The Yotsuba feat shows that he has a strong economical knowledge, knowing what inter/intra-corporate dynamics and hierarchies; His training and college education to be a high-level Intelligence and Information member (likely charged with handling cyber crimes, data analysis, among other tasks) of the NPA would require expertise in Japanese law, sociology, data gathering/analysis and information technology, foreign languages (for handling international crimes), criminal psychology, and forensic science; His academic stardom would mean he, of course, has a very strong foundation in the knowledge required for their entrance exams: Japanese and modern literature, Japanese and world history, and the sciences such as biology

and chemistry. In summation, Light's knowledge:

- Academic Core (Math, Biology, Chemistry, Literature, History)
- Career Requirements (Psychology, Japanese Law, Sociology, Forensic Science, Data Science, Cyber Security)
- Inventions (Radio Engineering, Electrical Engineering, Telecommunications, Cryptography, AI Engineering, Computer Science)
- L-role (Investigative Skills, Criminology, Foreign Languages)
- Misc (Corporate Hierarchies, Inter-Corporate Dynamics, General Knowledge of the Business World)

That is roughly 23 fields. Considering L was only one point below him, his knowledge must also be just as superhumanly vast.



Debunking the four note cards trap

https://youtu.be/o7W1K42Dfqo - the anime scene
The photo test explained. It was butchered in the English dub, sub and even the manga. : r/deathnote - explanation of Japanese grammar

This trap is a part of L's self revelation strategy and is admirably multi-layered. Ostensibly, L "tests" Light's reasoning skills and asks him to glean what he can from Kira's messages - a test of his brilliance for possibly aiding the Kira investigation. The second layer is that L is trying to force Light, who he suspects of Kira, to slip up, getting him to say or do something only someone who has prior knowledge of the card's hidden message would. And thirdly, it also tests Light's psyche, seeing if he fits Kira's childish and prideful personality should the actual trap of the cards (L's fabricated fourth card) get him. Narratively, it is meant to show that Light can't let his guard down for one moment for L, and the latter can get the better of him. The anime is a bit harsher to Light, with him stating he fell for L's tricks. The manga has Light get worked up internally, but L acknowledges that Light played off both the file - an earlier trap to test his emotional reaction to his victims - and the print number trick successfully.

L has profiled Light (from his POV, who is only *possibly* Kira) as a brilliant young man and asks him to submit himself to a test of his deductive reasoning skills, which Light casually obliges. The trap goes something like this. Kira (Light) sent three messages to the police. The contents of the message don't matter, so I won't write them down. L had them numbered in some way 0 to 3 (+4 with the hidden card.) One trap is that if the test taker immediately deduces Kira's real message without even looking at the printed numbers, it's suspicious. The simple way, the expected route, of considering the post card numbers forms an incomplete sentence. The supposedly suspicious route has Light simply rearranging the cards such that they form a complete sentence. L calls him out and reveals a fourth note card (a fake) that reveals a different message. Using the second video as reference:

1-2-3 -> "[L, did you know] [only eat apples] [shinigami]
1-3-2 - "[L, did you know] [shinigami] [only eat apples] (Light's intended route)
1-2-3-4 "L, did you know shinigami who only eat apples have red hands" Due to Japanese grammar, the sentence becomes coherent.

The most important thing is that a coherent message can be gleaned from the three real notes. It's a simple acrostic, and the test taker (not even someone with intimate knowledge of the notes) would very reasonably ignore the post card numberings, handwaving them away as an attempt by Kira to throw off the police, to deduce the message. But Light knows that immediately deducing his real message without even acknowledging the incomplete message derived from the numbered order might be suspicious, so he does acknowledge it and implies that he saw that but tried something else more creative. L bluntly tells him "That's incorrect" before revealing a fourth notecard, grilling him for never considering a fourth notecard and sticking with there being only three notes. Just ignore that Light is Light for a moment and imagine in his place is a simple above average person. He'd catch onto the acrostic gimmick, try the most obvious route, and.. what? Is he honestly expected to just call it quits there and ask for a fourth note card? Is it truly something most likely Kira (as opposed to any normal person) would do to rearrange the notes to look for a different, possibly real message in the cards instead of assuming there were more? Now it's even worse since this card is ostensibly a test to see if Light is fit to aid in the investigation, so of course he or someone smart enough to be considered for such a test would try the more creative approach. tIt'd be suspiciously stupid for

Light, profiled as smart by L, to not consider a different arrangement there.

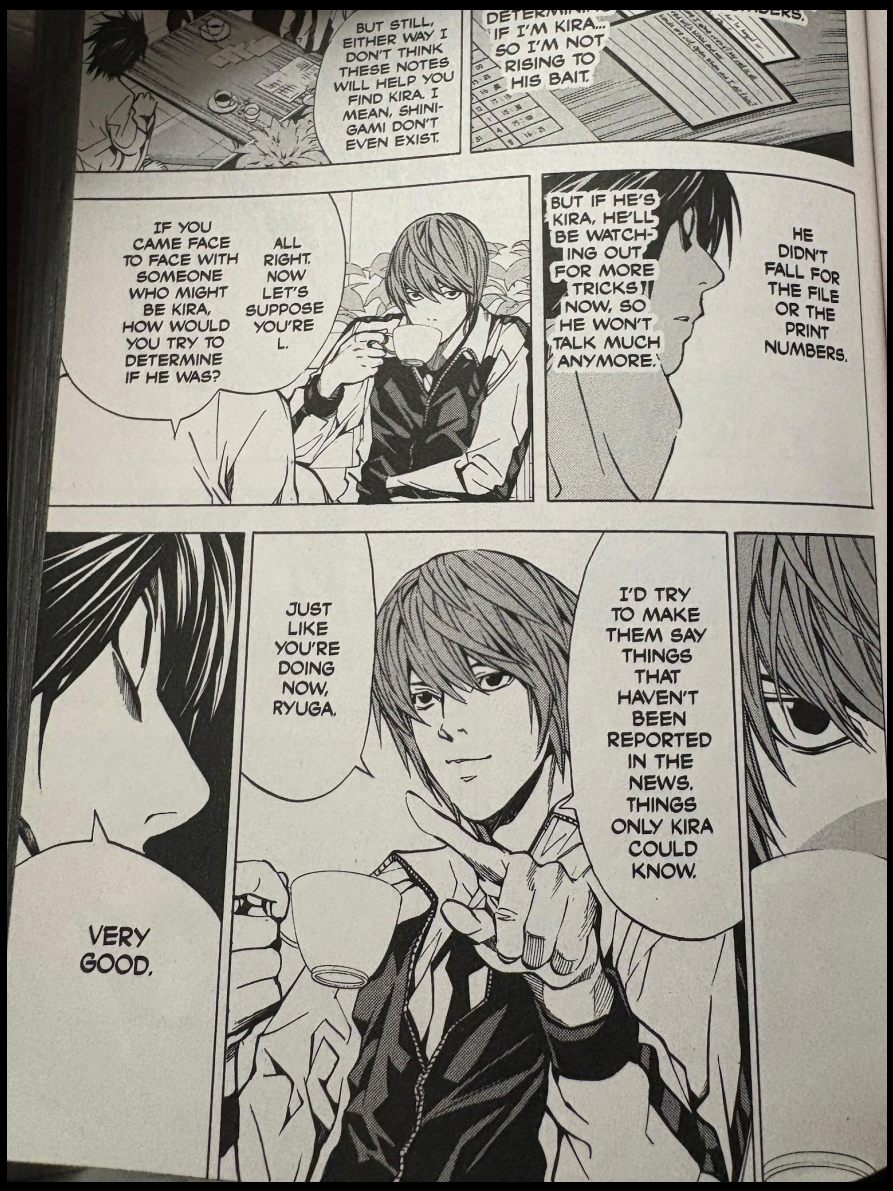
I also want to acknowledge that the first layer of the trap - that is, the “suspicion” from not even taking into account the post cards isn’t suspicious at all. You could easily play it off as focusing on the contents of the message, or just not thinking to look at the backsides of the notecards. Regardless of how you split it, taking into account the numbers or not, it doesn’t matter - solving the riddle isn’t suspicious, especially given how simple it is.

“But L states ‘You never even considered the possibility of a fourth.’” Why should Light? From “Light’s” (I put him in quotations as in “Light the high school student who is only possibly Kira from L’s POV” and not “Light the protagonist of Death Note, who we’ve seen constantly try to outwit L.”) POV, L is an upstanding and brave lawman standing up to Kira and honoring him by considering him for the investigation. It’d be odd for him to be so cautious as to suspect that L’s test was double layered with L hiding a fourth card. And test-givers in general don’t hide information from people, so it’d be more reasonable to assume the post card numbers don’t matter than that L was hiding information from him.

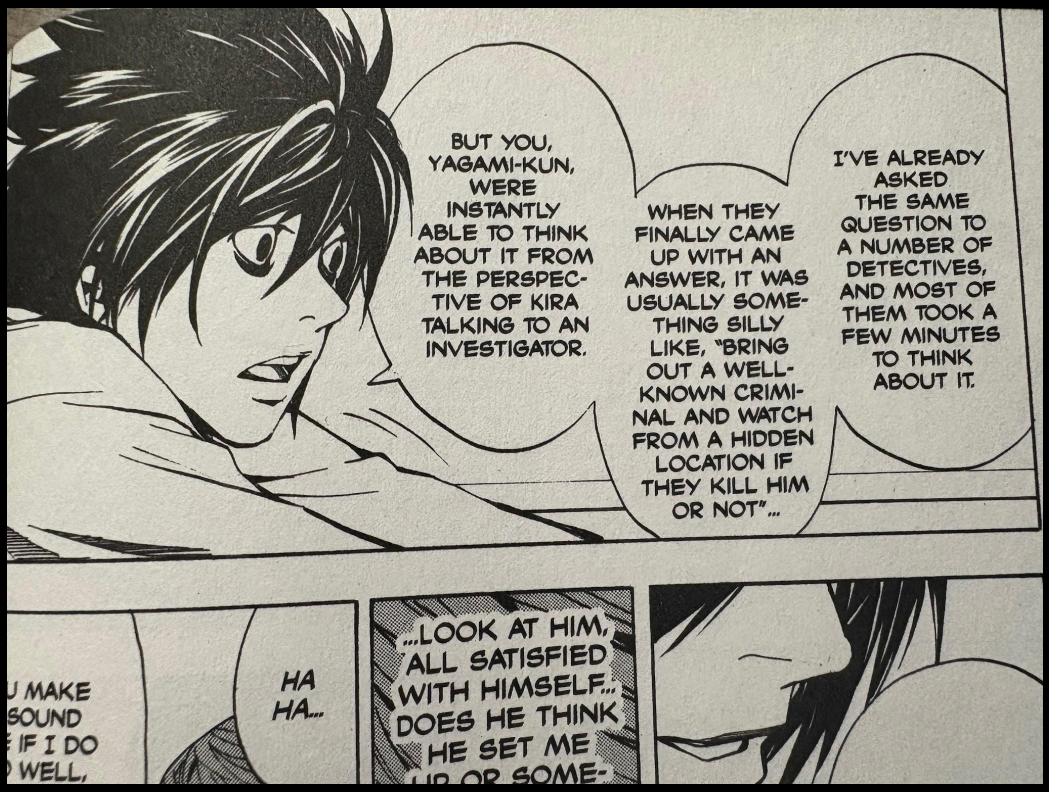
“Well, the real trap is that Light got miffed, which is suspicious.” Who wouldn’t get mildly upset by L’s little stunt there? L made him look like a fool there, and people generally don’t like being made fools of, not just prideful high school students or genocidal serial killers, but people in general.

So essentially L’s “damning” trap was that Light didn’t solve the puzzle like a 3 year old, taking the most obvious braindead route when he’s already profiled Light as brilliant, and that he got upset by L being deceptive, as anyone would be. The trap is thematically clever, but it’s poorly written. It really wouldn’t take someone of Light’s caliber to evade the trap; and even if they somehow fail, short of outright giving a confession, L at best would get a mildly suspiciously quick response from the test taker, which could, due to the ostensible nature of the trap as a test of brilliance, just easily be handwaved away by the test taker as proof of their “deductive reasoning skills.”

As mentioned before L internally thinks that Light evaded these traps.



The last part of his strategy is the question he poses in the scan. L asks what Light would do as an investigator if he came “face to face” with a Kira suspect, Light answers with a strategy of trying to make them slip up, even covering by pointing out that this was L’s strategy as L had already confessed to suspecting Light was Kira, so it was pretty obvious that this was his strategy - even someone who wasn’t Kira but in Light’s position would reasonably answer this.



L's response above is that this answer is suspicious because Light immediately thought of a situation where Kira is talking to an investigator, as is actually the case… But L had literally set up the hypothetical not five seconds prior where the investigator is "face-to-face" with the suspect. Light's coverage explained earlier and L's strategy of making it obvious that he suspected Light was Kira and was trying to force a slip up makes this an obvious answer - the person in Light's place could just point this out teasingly without having to be Kira. Regardless of that, the strategy of trying to get a slip up from a suspect isn't particularly far out there given a "face to face" situation.

This scene employed several traps: a file full of Light's victims to evoke an emotional reaction, the notecards trick, which itself is a layered trap, and the trick question. Light evaded all of them easily, but the narrative ultimately treated this as a far sticker situation than it actually was, with the last question even getting him in the manga. But upon closer inspection, it's clear L was carried by the plot here. Light played his cards as well as anyone could have.

Quick Potato Chip Analysis

Context: After bribing Ryuk with apples to have him scope out the scene, and getting confirmation, Light grabs a bag of potato chips and sits down at his desk to "study," signalling Ryuk to reveal the cameras subtly before memorizing them all quickly.

Light's sensory - Light got the locations of the cameras via verbal descriptions from Ryuk, but he also accurately visualized the vision cones of each tiny camera. That leaves two possibilities:

he looked at the cameras or he did not. He could've looked at one or perhaps all, but regardless this would've been risky if L spotted him. If he did, then Light would've had to see the camera(s), discern its field of view by analyzing the curvature of the lens, and use that to visualize the blind spot, all with an unnoticeable glance. If he did not look at the camera, then he would have no way of seeing the lens, and he most likely wouldn't have any idea of the brand of camera L would use. He could only go off the size of the cameras being so small that they're hidden to the untrained eye in various crevices or even right in front of him, and use that to get a feel for its view cones. So the feat is either Observation/Perception or Intuition. Also the feat itself obviously involves crazy Perception as Light has to see out of the corner of his eye into a tiny screen hidden in the bag at a near 90 degree angle to him without alerting L that something's off with his eye movements.

The visualization itself - Most people know the feat as Light memorizing the camera locations and visualizing their views to find a blind spot, which sounds relatively simple. However, the feat is actually more impressive upon closer analysis. Light would've had to memorize 64 locations, their respective angles, their respective fields of view (they likely all had the same lens, but many were hidden in various nooks and crannies), and then what the camera actually sees - 64 locations + 64 angles + 64 fields of view + 64 perspectives = 256 unique data points. But it's not as simple as simply adding them all up. Light would've also had to do some enormous mental juggling to not mix any location, angle, etc. I'm sure that there's some way of quantifying that involving more mathematics with permutations, but that's well out of my league.

With each location, angle, field of view, and perspective corresponded, Light could then have:

Visualized every single camera POV at once to synthesize a blind spot. Think of L's monitor hax, but with more monitors and he has to visualize the monitors.

Or

Visualized fewer cameras at once, say just one, in succession to visualize the blind spot. This lightens the load, but it still requires immense WMI as he would've had to remember what he learned from each previous camera visualized, all to ultimately synthesize where precisely he could place the potato chip bag and position his chair and limbs to pull off his strategy.

All this, again, while making sure not to mix up any of those 256 data points.

Light Memory Recall feat analysis



I saved the most controversial for last. This is an oft dismissed, overlooked feat that should significantly buff several of Light's categories.

Context: In the climax of the Memory Loss Plan, Higuchi is arrested and the notebook is handed to L. Rem states that Light will get all his memories back all at once should he make contact with the notebook. As L is distracted by the sight of the death god, the innocent Light snatches it from his grip and screams for a few seconds as months worth of character development hits him.

Manga vs Anime I will also use the anime version, which plays the scene very dramatically, for the calculation. The manga implies it lasts for a much shorter amount of time, which makes L's dialogue, wondering if Light was simply afraid of Rem, make more sense, implying Light's shout was actually a short outburst similar to the cries let out by the other officers rather than the long scream anime Light lets out. (Maybe that's why anime L caught and manga L did not?) The manga also has different visuals than the anime, which shows Light process his memories like a video playing at super-speed. As shown above, he simply seems to process everything at once,

which itself invites an alternative analysis, though I won't get into that here. So the analyses below are ultimately a **lowball** for manga Light.

Emotional Management/Engagement - In this scene, Light essentially undergoes the transition from his old "Self" to his true Kira personality in the span of a few seconds.. It's tempting to think that Kira is taking over, kicking out the good Light, but that's not what's happening. The innocent Light Yagami, who refused to even hold a gun since it was against Japanese law as a civilian, who admired his father as a model of justice and shuddered at the thought of actually killing people, who refused to even manipulate a woman's feelings to further justice, experiences in an instant the fact that he's a mass murderer with a bodycount in the thousands, with many of them being people the good Light would otherwise admire, such as Raye Penber and Naomi Misora. In the beginning of the series, Light was traumatized for several days just from 2 killing heinous people; he vomited at first and lost 10 lb of weight. It took him days to rationalize it and continue killing, deliberating on the weight of ending human lives. Furthermore, there's the stress that comes with those memories. In seconds, he goes from believing he's just successfully caught Kira to learning he's the most dangerous and wanted man in the world, and he's sitting right across from the greatest detective in the world who's promised to sentence him to death. And lastly, there's the weight of his father's disappointment. Even as Kira, Light was always unhappy when his father condemned Kira as evil; this is shown with his eyes being hidden to indicate an internal conflict. For reference, Light completely freaked out when the stranger posing as L Lind L. Taylor called him evil, so the words from his own father were especially crushing even after rationalizing his philosophy. Memory-wiped Light suddenly bearing his father's disappointment, especially with the weight of being a mass murderer and all his particularly evil moments, would be subjected to astronomically more emotional distress than Kira before, but he still held strong.
Sure, he screams for a few moments, and that's probably just from the sheer mental load of information he's receiving, but that's all, and he perfectly switches back to his good Light persona and follows through with his plan. Light isn't overwhelmed by fear, guilt, or joy. In seconds, Light recalls his memories, his motive, the rationale, undergoing a complete flip of personality from pure hearted paragon to a megalomaniacal mass murderer, before keeping his cool and silently enjoying his victory. Defining emotional engagement as "the state of being fully invested and connected to a task, activity, or goal, driven by a strong emotional connection," this is also a massive EE feat since his motives in being Kira - that is, his deep disdain for the world, his boredom, his implied disillusionment with the justice system from his father's failures ("In this world, all those earnest people like him who fight for justice - they always lose! Do you want a world where people like that are made to be fools!?"), and of course his pride in believing he was special - were all so strong that the innocent Light accepted Kira again in seconds. And it's only in the anime that L is even implied to have caught on. In the manga, L doesn't suspect a thing. For reference, L spotted a change in Light's eyes when he lost his memories through a shitty camera pointed at his cell, but Light consciously deceiving him didn't reveal a change in personality - Light's speech patterns, his tone, his body language, all fine.

Summary: In a matter of milliseconds (since 1 second would contain over 8 days worth of memories), the innocent Light processed and regulated the emotions that come with: being a

mass murderer against his ideals, his rationale for being a mass murderer, being a disappointment to his father, being the most feared and wanted man in the world, being victorious in his risky plan, and sitting across from the man who's vowed to catch and kill him.

FSIQ - I'll be explaining this as a PSI feat, but it's worth acknowledging that WAIS tests measure how well subjects can analyze and integrate visual information from the environment with coding and symbol searches. The feat obviously isn't visual, being entirely within Light's mind. However, the feat does still involve discerning information, which is core to PSI.

Light first picked up the Death Note on November 23, 2003 and lost his memories with it on June 9th, 2004. That's 199 days worth of memories to process in a few seconds. According to scientists, the average person processes 74+ GB a day. We can round up to 80 for Light since he's obviously above average, and lives a very active lifestyle constantly deliberating on how to outmaneuver his enemies and continuing his education. So in an instant, his mind was hit with 15,920 GB of information. But most of it wasn't useful. The majority of it would've been mundane stuff like Light going about his daily routine, eating, drinking, studying, etc. The relevant stuff would be critical Kira-related activities such as his successful memory loss plan's formulation, his origins in killing 2 criminals and developing a philosophy from there, and his short lived tenure as a good person (June 9th, 2004 to October 28, 2004), which adds an additional 142 (11,360 GB) days worth of memories to scan through to keep up his facade. In short, that's 27,270 GB worth of memories to scan through in about 23 seconds. The average person processes. So Light's processing speed is 1,185.65217391 GB per second. The fastest mental calculators in real life come out to about 80 bits per second. Note that the definition of "processing" given in the article is actually much simpler than what Light is doing. Hick-Hyman's law: *The time taken to perform a single operation is proportional to the logarithm of the number of choices available.* Except Light isn't making simple decisions like (as done in WAIS tests) clicking a mouse when the computer screen flashes an X instead of a Y or matching numbers to symbols. He's analyzing his memories for what he needs and changing in real-time as he learns from those Kira-memories. So this is an underestimation, but Light would process information 118,565,217,391 faster than the fastest mental calculators, who can multiply eight digit numbers in seconds, calculating the weekday for 140 calendar dates in 60 dates, and add 10 10-digit numbers.

To give an analogy, imagine sitting in a room with 100 screens that will each play a meaningful day from the future days of your life. Those days will play out in their entirety with sound, but the footage will be compressed into 20 seconds. Imagine then that you watched this, and then I asked you who your wife will be, why you will love her, how you will meet her, where you two will live, what will be the best moments with her, what will be the worst, what your job will be, how many friends you'll have, and how you'll die. Imagine further that your personality shifted entirely in the seconds you watched this. If you were a cynical coldhearted loner before, now you're a joyous romantic as you comprehend the depth of this woman's love for you, but even as you do so, you don't get distracted and still can answer those other questions. The anime and manga display this with the memories playing out in Light's head simultaneously and at incredible speed. If we interpret this as Light just visualizing his reign as Kira, which is very reasonable,

then this also counts as VSI; one might even call it “**perfect memory comprehension hax**.”

Syllogistically:

1. Light received 100+ days worth of information
2. To become Kira again would require processing and understanding that information (the reasoning involved, the planning, the powers, etc.)
3. To do so in so short a time frame would be superhuman by real world standards
4. If Light did not process that information, he would be heavily confused, disorientated, or even brain-damaged - at the very least, not Kira.
5. Light did become Kira again in the short time frame of, at most, 20 seconds

Conclusion: Light processed the information he received to become Kira again at a superhuman level (by irl standards).

Too Much Information, Too Little Time: How the Brain Separates Important from Unimportant Things in Our Fast-Paced Media World · Frontiers for Young Minds
Fastest Possible Processing Speed of the Human Brain – World Mental Calculation

AC/Adaptability - In *Death Note: Short Stories*, the notebook is stated by Light to require great emotional strength to use. This is in line with Ryuk himself warning Light in their very first meeting that should Light continue using the notebook, he will know the “terror and torment”, or, in the anime, “fear and pain” only ever experienced by users of the notebook. Indeed, A-Kira kills himself out of guilt after Near calls him out for being a murderer. PTSD was found to heavily correlate with the act of killing in a study done on cops who killed in the line of duty. This inhuman pain is what Light also comes to grips with and adapts to when he regains his memories. Early on, Light himself took multiple days to gain his conviction in becoming Kira and overcome his guilt. Light here not just learns that he’s killed 2 people, but that he’s committing genocide on the world’s criminals, and he not just tanks the sheer horror of the person he was and is, someone completely opposite to his good self, but accepts the rationalization in seconds. He doesn’t get distracted by it as he gets his later memories, and he comprehends the plan he had made and sees it through to its fruition, completing the final step by playing it cool in front of L and killing Higuchi right next to him. Not to mention, the sheer amount of information he’s hit with is also something to consider. Needless to say, this combined with Light regaining his Kira personality also shows his insane adaptability.


DO I HAVE THE GUTS ...?
JUST TWO, AND LOOK AT ME...
WELL, IT'S ONLY NATURAL. THEY'RE HUMAN LIVES... OF COURSE IT ISN'T EASY.
CAN I TAKE IT?
MAYBE NOT.
...
BUT... COME ON, I CAN'T QUIT. SO I LOSE MY PEACE OF MIND. SO I SACRIFICE PEOPLE'S LIVES...
SOMEBODY HAS TO DO THIS!!
THE WORLD NEEDS TO BE CLEANED UP.

The impact of killing and injuring others on mental health symptoms among police officers - PMC

(Emotional Management, Emotional Engagement, Mental Fortitude, Cognitive Discipline, Stress Tolerance, PSI, CPI, VSI, Multitasking, Composure, Acting Skills, Adaptability, Metacognition, Holistic Thinking, Fast Thinking, Non Linear Thinking)

Some possible questions

Does that mean Near is smarter than L and Light, given that he's younger than both but has equal knowledge? - No. Near does have more knowledge than L, but Near also had the benefit of growing up in Wammy's House later on in its existence. When L grew up there, computers were hardly a thing. Near likely benefited from a more developed curriculum as the school advanced with the world.

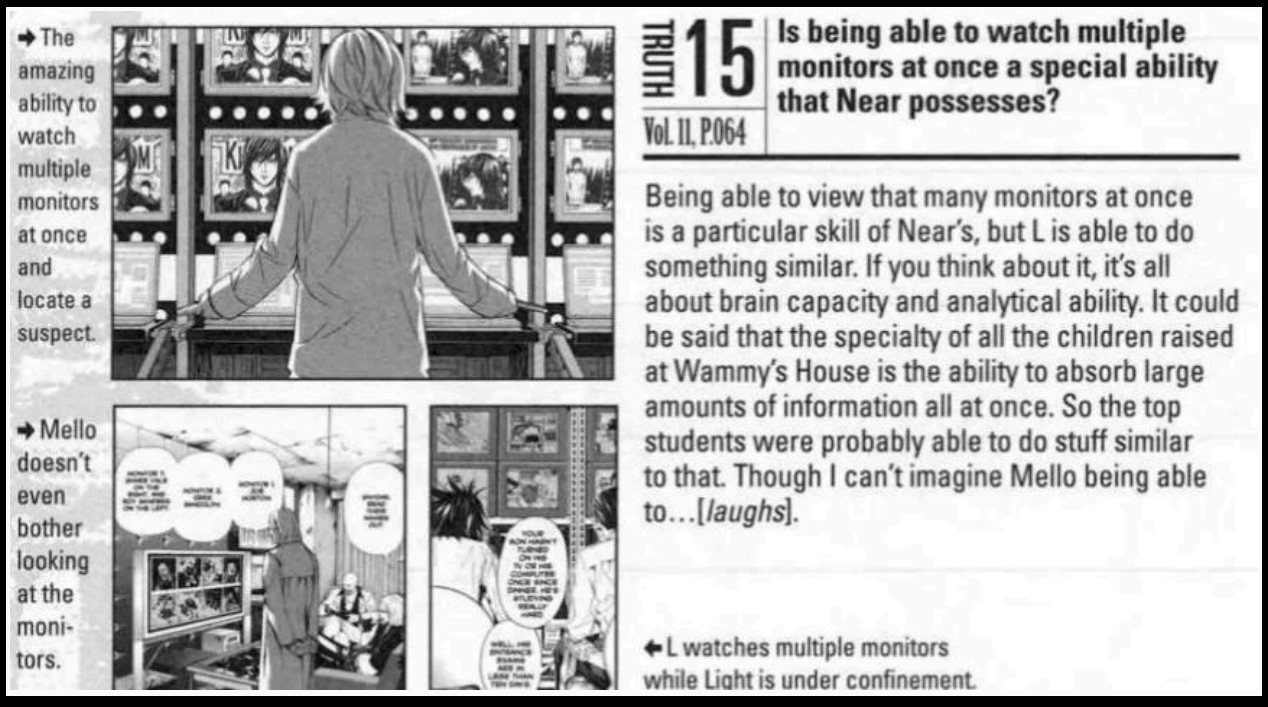
Does Misa get buffed by Memory Recall? Sort of. She did get hit with a massive load of information, but unlike Light, Misa was fundamentally the same insane person prior to getting the notebook. She wouldn't have had to process the complex scheming, the rationalization for genocide, and the guilt and trauma that Light did. Misa was also Kira for a much shorter duration compared to Light. The memory dump is nowhere near as impressive there. But I can already anticipate that's not quite a satisfactory answer for some. Let's steelman and say that Misa underwent the same cognitive task that Light did - same data, same complex processing necessary - so what? IRL =/= Fiction. Light isn't canonically a "superhuman" in the world of Death Note. He's an extremely brilliant, but ultimately mortal, young man. So it stands to reason that other humans within Death Note could replicate the feat or perform it to a lesser extent, at least from a narrative point of view. Even Near's feat of "surpassing human limits" is simply meant to represent how geniuses within the world of Death Note can operate. It's possible that Death Note humans simply have a higher baseline cognition or ceiling, so this, at worst, would just be a cognition feat for Misa.

What about MT Near? MT Near would still be fighting Light Yagami nerfed via the 13-day rule and task force surveillance. He still would've been logically manipulated by Light into forming his notebook swap plan months prior. However, MT Near does have the benefit of not being read as well by Light. Light still had a fairly decent grasp of him, with Near being smart enough to deduce X-Kira and form the notebook swap plan to fulfill his pride and desire to beat him, but Light didn't make any sort of anticipation on Near being ruthless enough to use the notebook. Granted, MT Near, like canon Near, would still have been aided by Mikami's perfect timing in killing Takada, so it's not like Light was in a situation that facilitated any idea of Near getting his hands on the Death Note. All in all, MT Near would just have better strategies/tactics, but still have been just another victim if not for Mello and dumb luck.

Ohba statements? The creator of Death Note has stated that L is the smartest because the plot requires him to be, or that Near is the smartest because he cheats. To that I say that if we're actually judging off plot, even disregarding the powerscaling bs like the memory recall feat, it's pretty clear Light's the most cunning one here hands down. His strategies and planning are far more intricate, and, as proven above, he almost beat Near and Mello, who narratively are above L, while heavily weakened. It's easy to appeal to incredulity here and just say, but Ohba doesn't even seem to be taking the question seriously nor does he use the definition of "smart" we'd probably use. After all, cheating does not make you smart. I would consider these unreliable.

But the memory recall is supernatural? That does not matter with regards to PSI. It would only be relevant in debunking the feat if I claimed it was WMI with some flawed argument. The feat is only bunk if Light didn't gain any information (absurd), or if Light didn't process that information (then he wouldn't have become his old self). Note that the only word we have on the mechanics behind it is that all the memories will come back at once, nothing else about it protecting him from the cognitive overload or actually restoring his psyche. So any inference about it buffing his CPI so he could bear it or whatever is headcanon.

So where does L stand now? Narratively equal to Light (in some areas). This is demonstrable in the tennis scene where both are thinking at equal speed to logically arrive at the same conclusion, plus there's statements from characters like Rem and Naomi that imply they're equal. So L also has a similarly superhuman PSI. This is further proven by his monitor hax feat. Even Near is noted to be able to process several monitors all at once

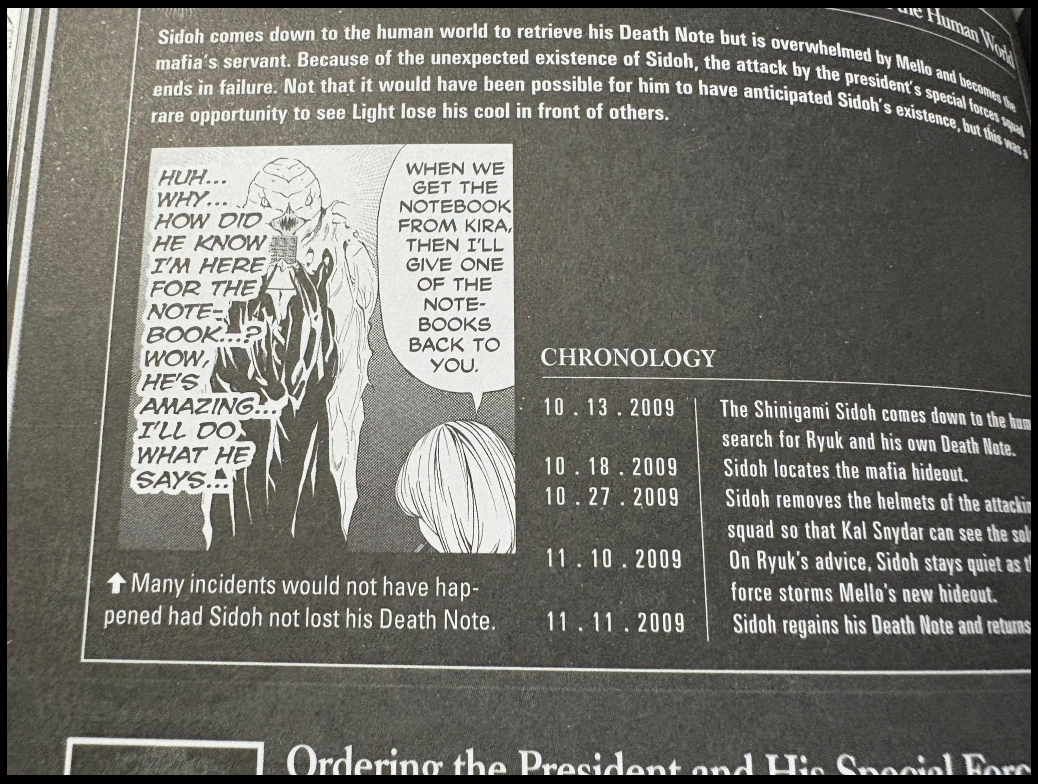


True parallel processing is theorized by some to be impossible; that is, multitasking with two cognitively demanding tasks (such as, say, analyzing two computer monitors), and people

generally switch their focuses rapidly to give the illusion of multitasking - serial processing. This interpretation is backed up by the earlier scan calling Near “superhuman.”
If you interpret Light’s feat as serial processing, i.e., he just processed several days of worth information sequentially for relevant info in a couple seconds, then L might even surpass him. The anime visualization scene apparently backs this up. But interpreting both as parallel processing is valid imo when you consider Rem states that he would give his memories back all “at once,” and it doesn’t really make narrative sense if every genius in the series (Mello, Near, L) except Light could do this.

Misc: Vol 13 Statements

1. “Many incidents would not have happened had Sidoh not lost his notebook.” - Sidoh thwarts Light’s plan to kill Mello with the President’s forces

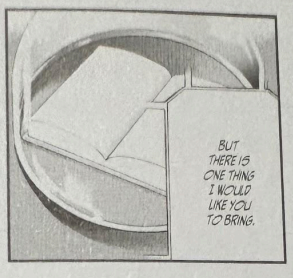


2. Even ignoring the necessity of killing Takada, Mikami was too distrustful of her. There’s nothing Light could really have done here.

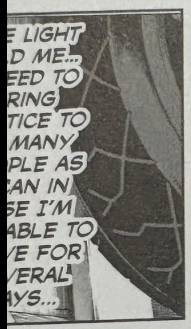
wever, if she'd
ules well, she
that that could
So because
call for help is

s until the truck
lling Mello. But this
her life.

sure are a bunch of liars. They must be taught that any lie that helps the investigation is a good lie [*laughs*].



←His reason at the time was so that it wouldn't get stolen, but…



TRUTH 19 Who actually carries out the "as much as you can" killings after Takada kills Mello?

Vol. 12, P.022

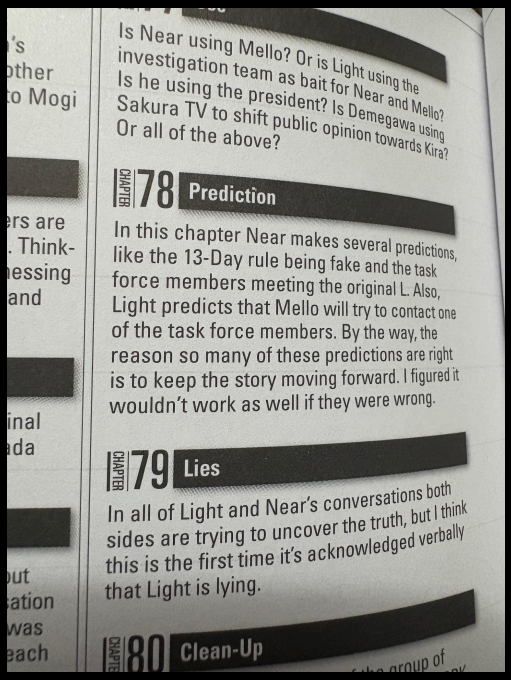
Takada has Mikami send her a list and she uses the piece of the note she killed Mello with to do the rest. However, because Mikami is worried about whether she'll do it or not, he takes the real Death Note out of his bank safe, kills Takada and writes down the same names from the list he sent Takada. He's conceited to the point of thinking that what he's doing is right.



←After receiving the call from Takada, Mikami makes the same decision as Light.

←A piece Takada hides in her underwear. It has plenty of space to write down names.

3. Light predicted Mello would contact the SPK



Is Near using Mello? Or is Light using the investigation team as bait for Near and Mello? Is he using the president? Is Demegawa using Sakura TV to shift public opinion towards Kira? Or all of the above?

CHAPTER 78 Prediction

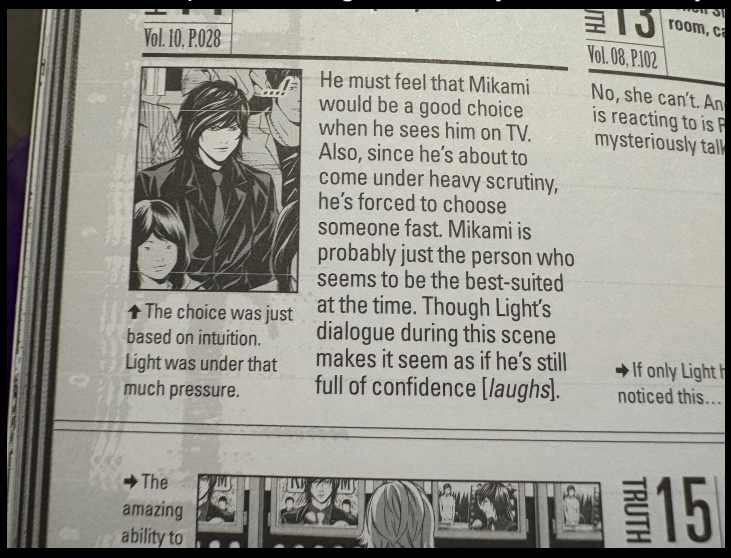
In this chapter Near makes several predictions, like the 13-Day rule being fake and the task force members meeting the original L. Also, Light predicts that Mello will try to contact one of the task force members. By the way, the reason so many of these predictions are right is to keep the story moving forward. I figured it wouldn't work as well if they were wrong.

CHAPTER 79 Lies

In all of Light and Near's conversations both sides are trying to uncover the truth, but I think this is the first time it's acknowledged verbally that Light is lying.

CHAPTER 80 Clean-Up

4. Under pressure, Light intuitively and accurately coldread Mikami



Vol. 10, P.028

He must feel that Mikami would be a good choice when he sees him on TV. Also, since he's about to come under heavy scrutiny, he's forced to choose someone fast. Mikami is probably just the person who seems to be the best-suited at the time. Though Light's dialogue during this scene makes it seem as if he's still full of confidence [*laughs*].

⬆ The choice was just based on intuition. Light was under that much pressure.

Vol. 08, P.102

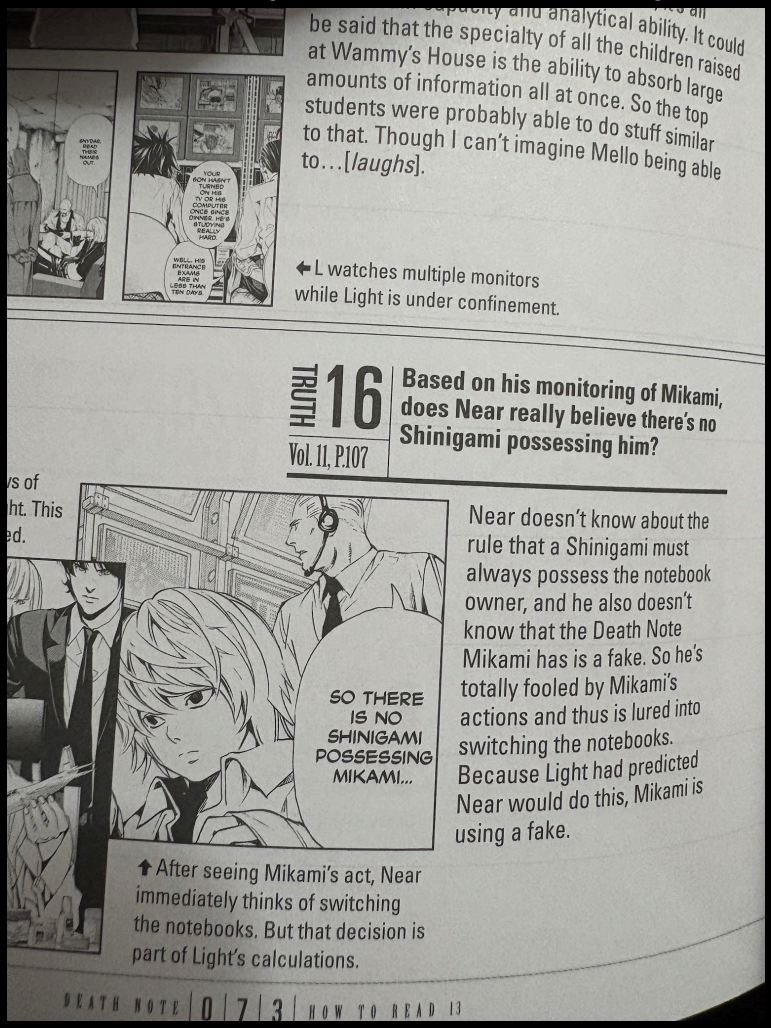
No, she can't. An… is reacting to is … mysteriously talk…

➡ If only Light h… noticed this…

➡ The amazing ability to…

TRUTH 15

5. Statement #1 that Light had predicted Near's thought process



be said that the specialty of all the children raised at Wammy's House is the ability to absorb large amounts of information all at once. So the top students were probably able to do stuff similar to that. Though I can't imagine Mello being able to…[*laughs*].

←L watches multiple monitors while Light is under confinement.

TRUTH 16

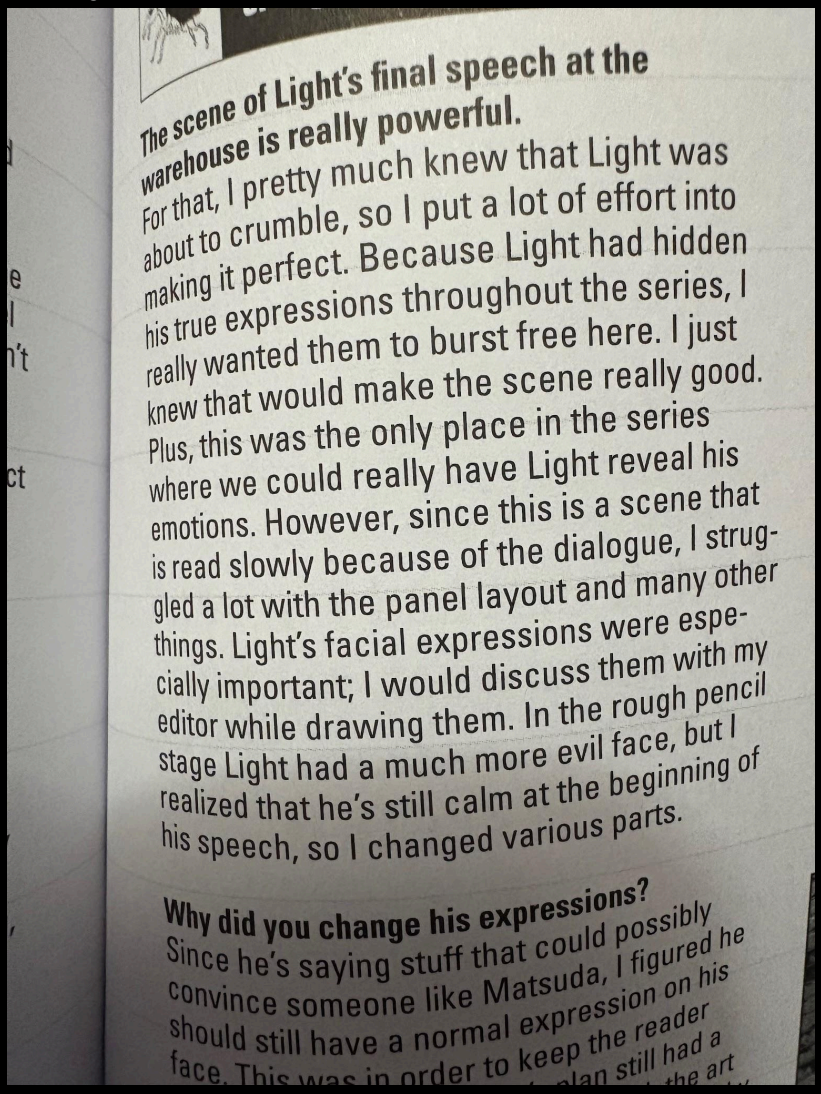
Vol. 11, P.107

Based on his monitoring of Mikami, does Near really believe there's no Shinigami possessing him?

↑After seeing Mikami's act, Near immediately thinks of switching the notebooks. But that decision is part of Light's calculations.

Near doesn't know about the rule that a Shinigami must always possess the notebook owner, and he also doesn't know that the Death Note Mikami has is a fake. So he's totally fooled by Mikami's actions and thus is lured into switching the notebooks. Because Light had predicted Near would do this, Mikami is using a fake.

6. EM: Light had concealed his emotions for the entire series up to his speech.



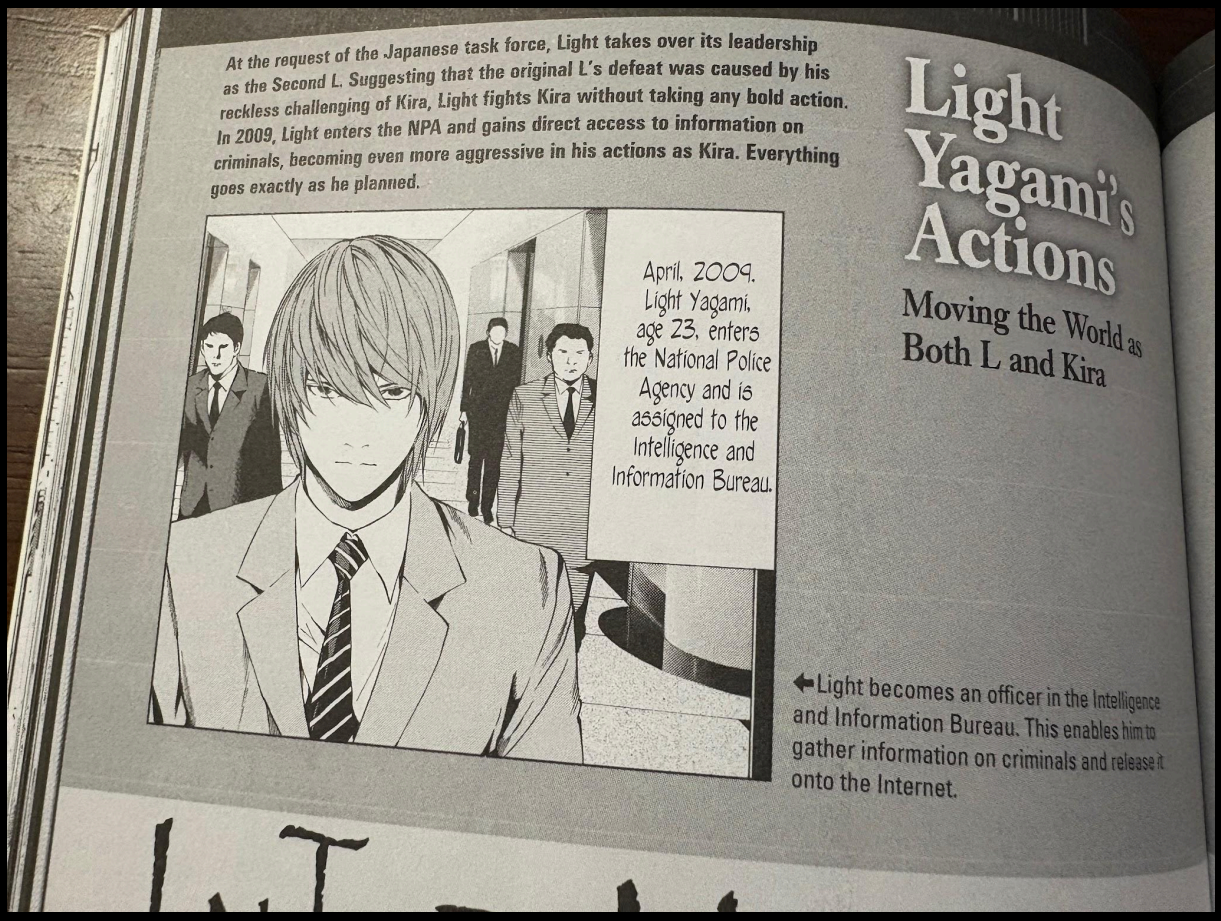
The scene of Light's final speech at the warehouse is really powerful.

For that, I pretty much knew that Light was about to crumble, so I put a lot of effort into making it perfect. Because Light had hidden his true expressions throughout the series, I really wanted them to burst free here. I just knew that would make the scene really good. Plus, this was the only place in the series where we could really have Light reveal his emotions. However, since this is a scene that is read slowly because of the dialogue, I struggled a lot with the panel layout and many other things. Light's facial expressions were especially important; I would discuss them with my editor while drawing them. In the rough pencil stage Light had a much more evil face, but I realized that he's still calm at the beginning of his speech, so I changed various parts.

Why did you change his expressions?

Since he's saying stuff that could possibly convince someone like Matsuda, I figured he should still have a normal expression on his face. This was in order to keep the reader

7. In his position as L, Light manipulated the task force to engage in a more subtle strategy against Kira. Meanwhile in his job in the NPA, Light was able to leak massive amounts of info for years without being caught. He still manages to show some power as L for the task force (this is revealed in the next page that I didn't bother taking a picture of) by commanding the government and media to stop broadcasting criminals, anticipating that this would leak to his supporters leaking criminals info online.



8. The official explanation of how Near deduced Light was Kira

DEATH COLUMN

How Near Figures Out That Light Is Kira

From the beginning, based on their lack of results in the Kira investigation, Near has his doubts about the Japanese task force and the Second L. After the assault on Mello's base, Near becomes confident that the second L is Kira. Believing, as the original L had, that the way to defeat Kira is to put him in a position where he can make no excuses, Near carries on L's legacy and plans his moves.



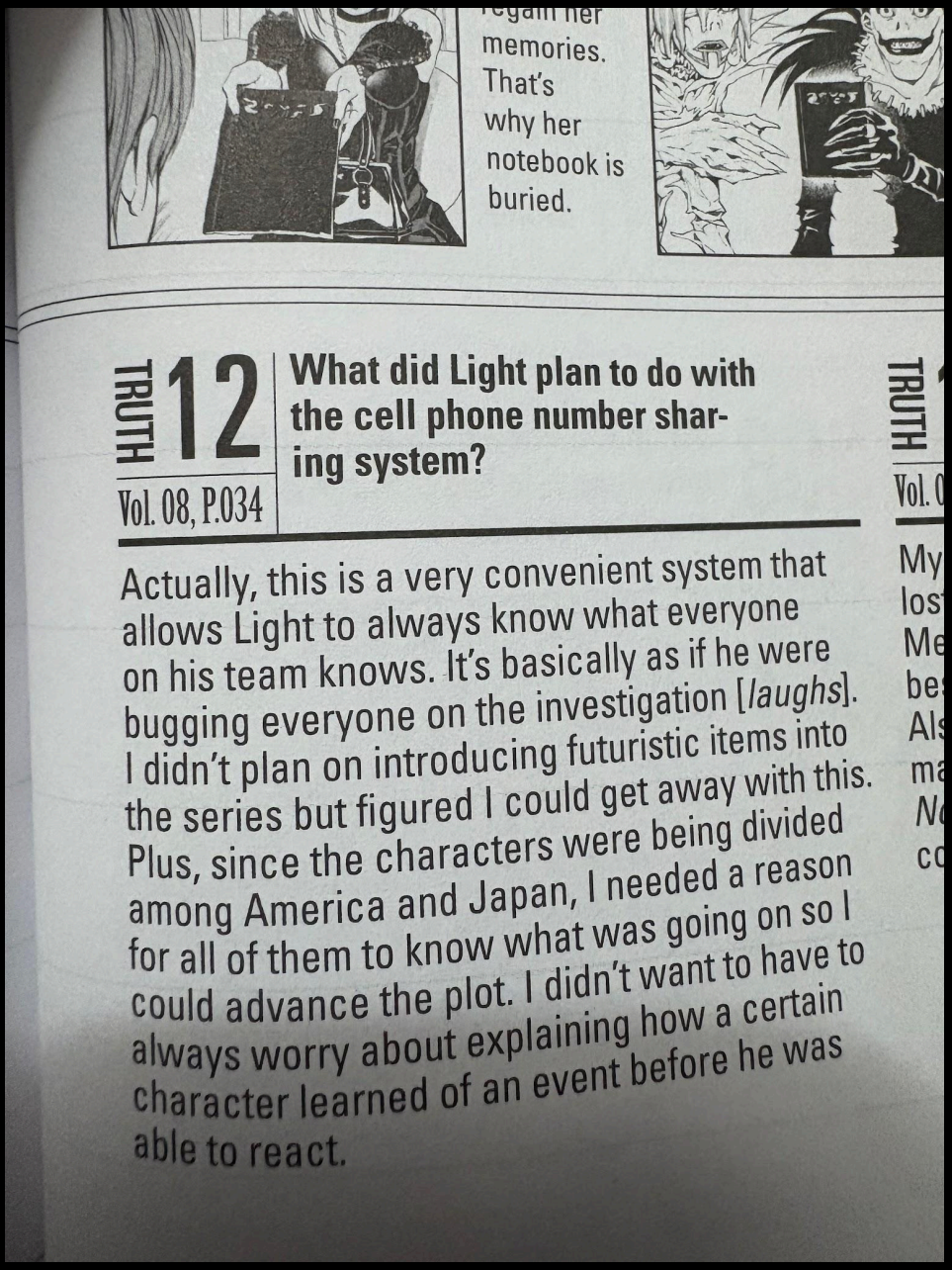
⬆ Near uses the same methods of deduction as the original L to arrive at his suspect's identity, even if he has no evidence.

The Reasons Why Near Thinks Light Yagami (the Second L) Is Kira

- The Kira investigation had gone nowhere since the Second L took over.
- Even when the Japanese task force gains a Death Note, Kira does nothing to them.
- After the Japanese task force retrieves the Death Note from Mello, Kira does not ask them to return the one he had sent them.
- After learning of the fake 13-Day Rule, Near concludes that someone in the task force used it to clear himself of suspicion.
- There's a Shinigami at the Japanese task force headquarters (where the Second L is).
- In the past, the Second L and a suspect as the Second Kira were placed under confinement by the original L. Plus, the Second L had suggested putting himself under confinement.
- Based on information from Shuichi Aizawa that Soichiro Yagami had threatened to kill Kira and then himself, Near theorizes that the Second L is a member of the Yagami family.
- Thus, the Second L is Soichiro's son, Light Yagami, and Light Yagami is Kira.

*More evidence is provided by Rester, who investigates Light Yagami's past. It's revealed that Light Yagami was close with someone resembling L and that they both disappeared after Misa Amane appeared at their university.

9. Light developed the cell phone sharing system as a clever way of knowing what his team knew at any given moment, anticipating situations like Mello contacting them.


regain her memories. That's why her notebook is buried.

TRUTH 12

Vol. 08, P.034

What did Light plan to do with the cell phone number sharing system?

Actually, this is a very convenient system that allows Light to always know what everyone on his team knows. It's basically as if he were bugging everyone on the investigation [*laughs*]. I didn't plan on introducing futuristic items into the series but figured I could get away with this. Plus, since the characters were being divided among America and Japan, I needed a reason for all of them to know what was going on so I could advance the plot. I didn't want to have to always worry about explaining how a certain character learned of an event before he was able to react.

TRUTH

Vol. 0

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10. Light instructed Mikami to confirm there was no shinigami on him, knowing this would make Mikami a more attractive target for the highly cautious Near, among other things off-screen.

ruths

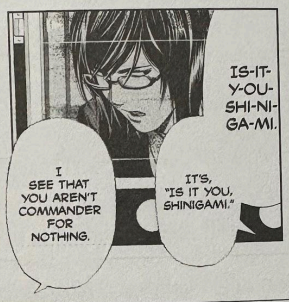


← Using the Death Note on the train. Mikami does this on instruction from Light.

TRUTH 21 Vol. 11, P.086

What does Light mean when he says he set Near up to doctor the notebook?

He's talking about his instructions to Mikami to use the notebook on the train or to say stuff to himself like, "There's no Shinigami possessing me." Such actions take place multiple times that are not shown in the series.



← Talking to himself to show that no Shinigami is attached to him. The purpose is to make those watching him think that he's unprotected.

3 47

Could Near see Ryuk during the face-off in the Yellow Box warehouse?

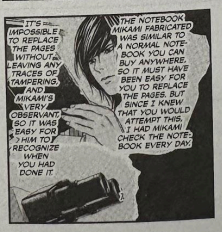
ly. All the members had touched the ok and thus could see Ryuk. They had arned by Near to not betray any reaction hat must have been tough [*laughs*]!



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d
n
mi.

TRUTH 22 Vol. 12, P.078

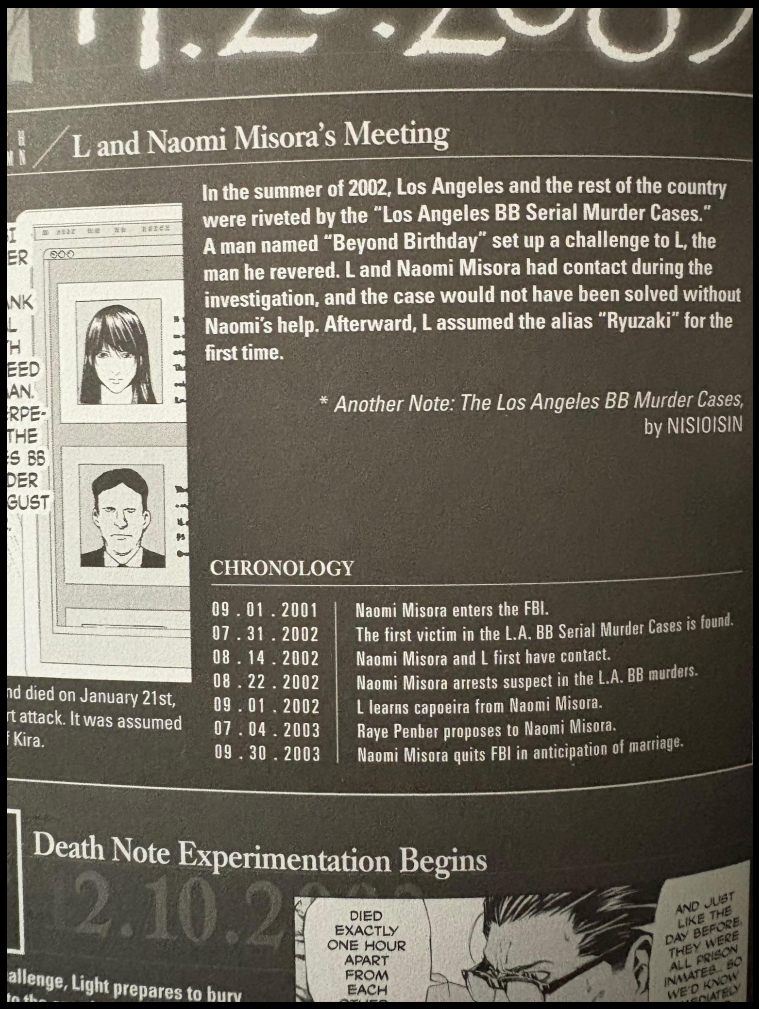
How does Mikami know that the notebooks have been switched?



↑Can he recognize the consistency of the paper just by touch? Or did he mark the pages in a way not visible to the naked eye?

Mikami had previously been warned by Light through Takada that Near would likely try to switch the pages. So the methodical Mikami was checking the notebook every day with a microscope. Obata-sensei drew that in during chapter 97.

11. L apparently couldn't have solved the LABB case without Naomi



L and Naomi Misora's Meeting

In the summer of 2002, Los Angeles and the rest of the country were riveted by the "Los Angeles BB Serial Murder Cases." A man named "Beyond Birthday" set up a challenge to L, the man he revered. L and Naomi Misora had contact during the investigation, and the case would not have been solved without Naomi's help. Afterward, L assumed the alias "Ryuzaki" for the first time.

* *Another Note: The Los Angeles BB Murder Cases,* by NISIOISIN

nd died on January 21st,
rt attack. It was assumed
f Kira.

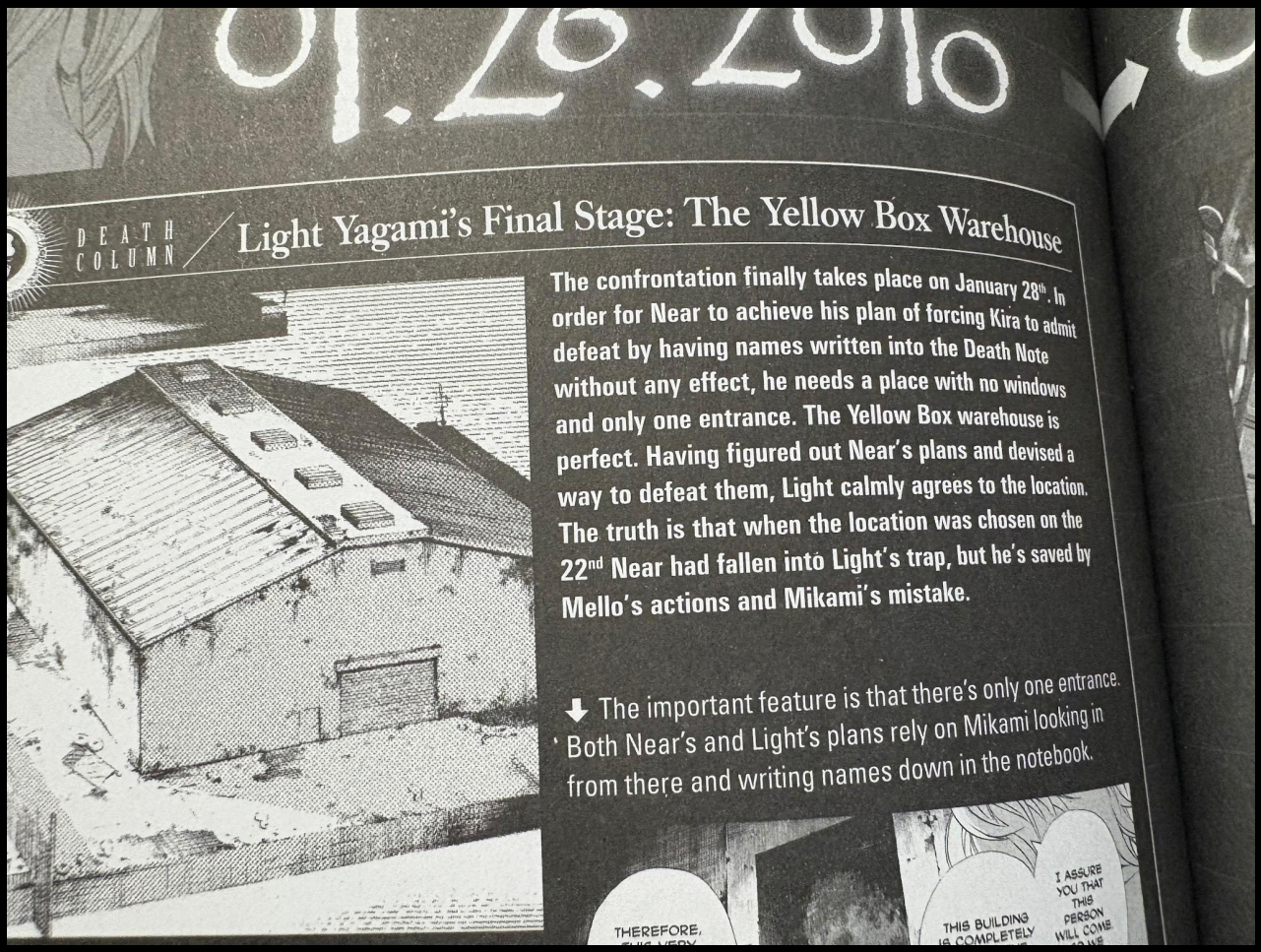
CHRONOLOGY

09 . 01 . 2001	Naomi Misora enters the FBI.
07 . 31 . 2002	The first victim in the L.A. BB Serial Murder Cases is found.
08 . 14 . 2002	Naomi Misora and L first have contact.
08 . 22 . 2002	Naomi Misora arrests suspect in the L.A. BB murders.
09 . 01 . 2002	L learns capoeira from Naomi Misora.
07 . 04 . 2003	Raye Penber proposes to Naomi Misora.
09 . 30 . 2003	Naomi Misora quits FBI in anticipation of marriage.

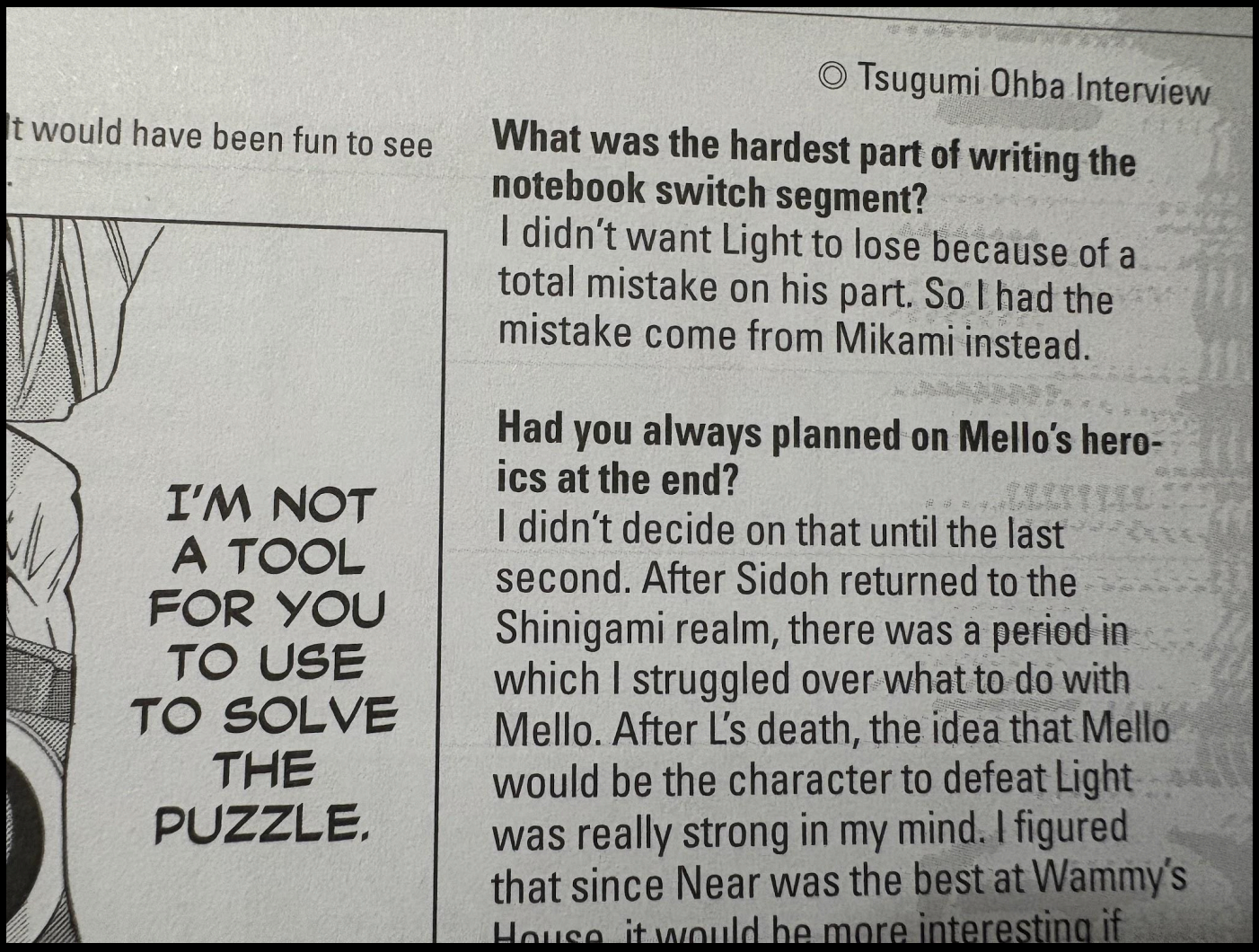
Death Note Experimentation Begins

allenge, Light prepares to bury

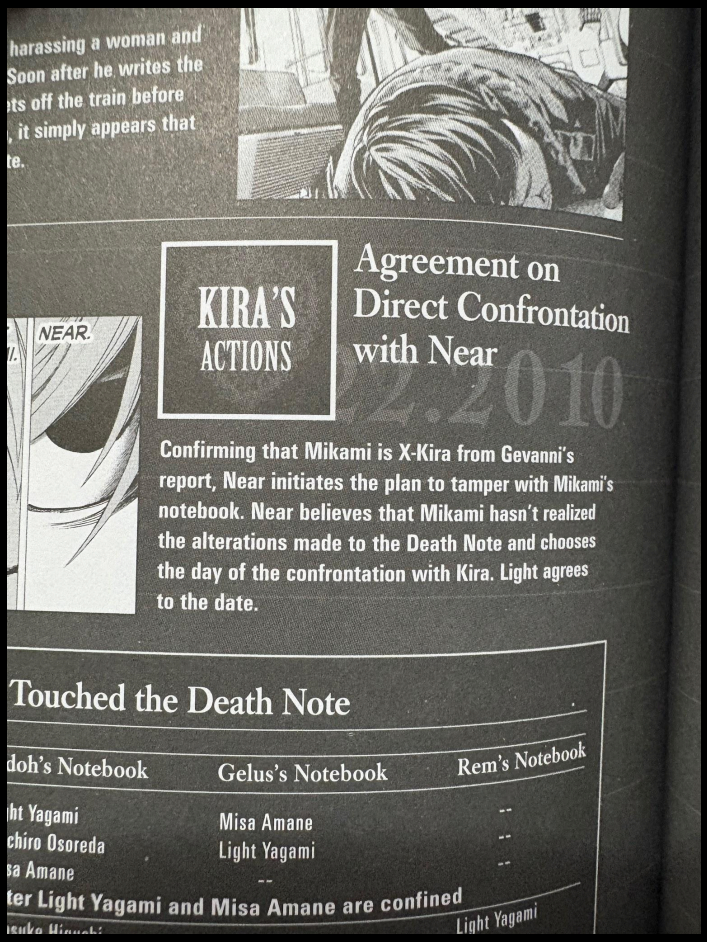
12. Statement #2 that Light figured out Near's plan + the scan for the abductive feat outlined earlier



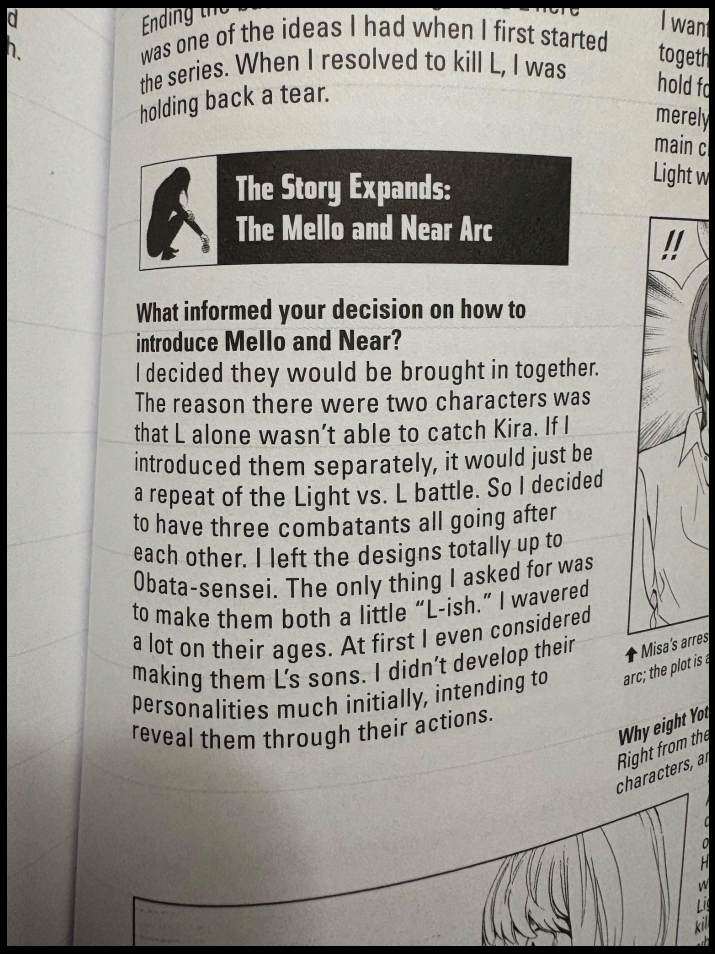
13. Light's loss was Mikami's fault.



14. Near was completely fooled when he arranged the meeting. He wasn't just lying for MT.



15. Light vs Mello or Light vs Near would have just been a repeat of his battle with L - Light would kill them just as he did L.



Ending the [illegible] was one of the ideas I had when I first started the series. When I resolved to kill L, I was holding back a tear.

I want [illegible] together [illegible] hold for [illegible] merely [illegible] main c[illegible] Light w[illegible]

The Story Expands: The Mello and Near Arc

What informed your decision on how to introduce Mello and Near?

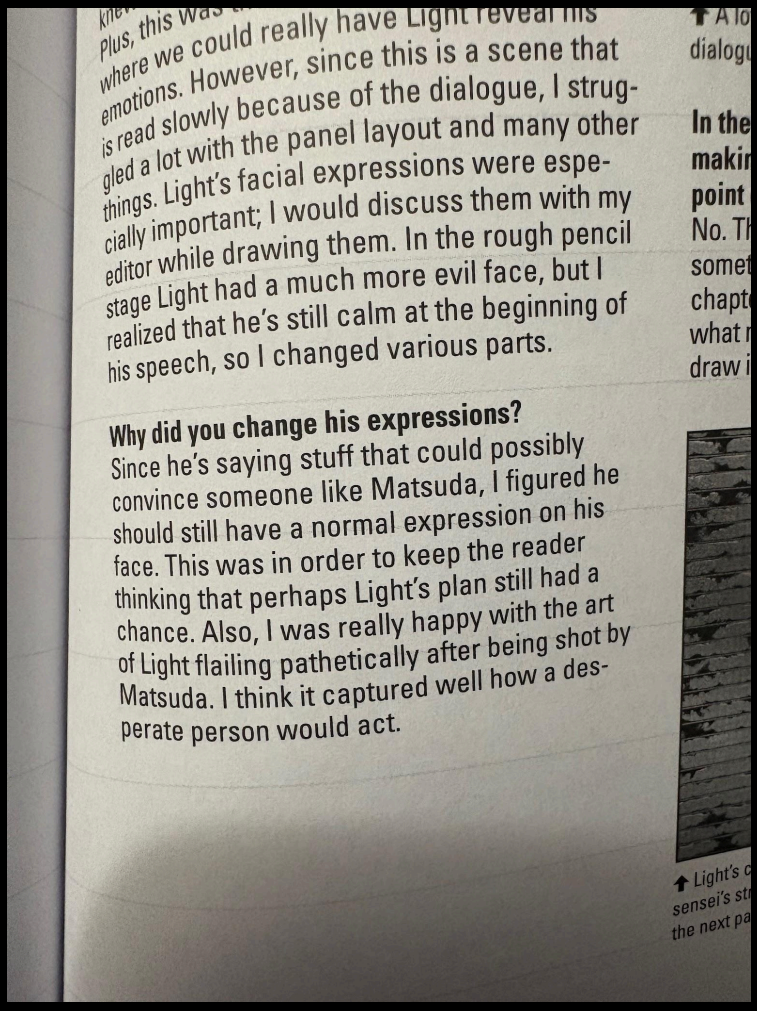
I decided they would be brought in together. The reason there were two characters was that L alone wasn't able to catch Kira. If I introduced them separately, it would just be a repeat of the Light vs. L battle. So I decided to have three combatants all going after each other. I left the designs totally up to Obata-sensei. The only thing I asked for was to make them both a little "L-ish." I wavered a lot on their ages. At first I even considered making them L's sons. I didn't develop their personalities much initially, intending to reveal them through their actions.

!!

↑ Misa's arres[illegible] arc; the plot is a[illegible]

Why eight Yo[illegible] Right from the[illegible] characters, ar[illegible]

16. Light's manipulation could still have convinced someone like Matsuda even after everything - killing L, attempting to kill all his friends and him, etc.



Plus, this was
where we could really have Light reveal his
emotions. However, since this is a scene that
is read slowly because of the dialogue, I strug-
gled a lot with the panel layout and many other
things. Light's facial expressions were espe-
cially important; I would discuss them with my
editor while drawing them. In the rough pencil
stage Light had a much more evil face, but I
realized that he's still calm at the beginning of
his speech, so I changed various parts.

Why did you change his expressions?

Since he's saying stuff that could possibly
convince someone like Matsuda, I figured he
should still have a normal expression on his
face. This was in order to keep the reader
thinking that perhaps Light's plan still had a
chance. Also, I was really happy with the art
of Light flailing pathetically after being shot by
Matsuda. I think it captured well how a des-
perate person would act.

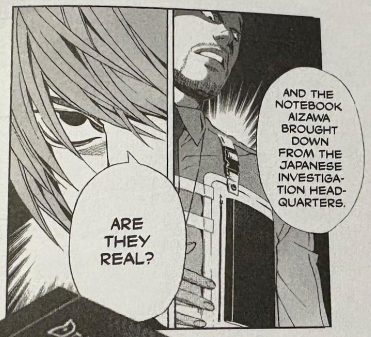
17. Light may not have been bluffing in the final ordeal, possibly having switched out the other notebook with a duplicate. He does state at another point in his battle against Near that he'd thought up several contingencies, so this might be one of them. Recall what I said earlier about the preciseness of Mikami's fuck-up. If he had this contingency prepared, then he would have been able to use the separate real notebook a myriad of ways - handing it to Mikami, using it to control Mikami, etc.

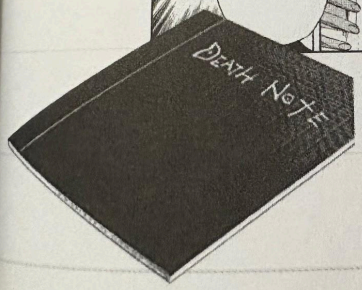


➡A scene from the Yotsuba Kira arc. This line would hint at her future.

...depression and committed suicide...something like that.

➡It may have been locked away in a safe, but there was plenty of opportunity to switch it.





⬅The Shinigami notebook that brought chaos to the human world. The time could come when it once again falls into the hands of a human...?

MYSTERY 13 Did Ryuk return to the Shinigami realm?



-OHBA-

Yes, he did. However, since the notebook at the task force headquarters was burned right after Light's death, it was never determined whether it was real or not. My theory is that Light secretly replaced it with a fake and was hiding it. So some of Light's bluffs at the end may not have been total lies. If so, there would still be a notebook remaining in the human world and when it is found, Ryuk may once again come down...?

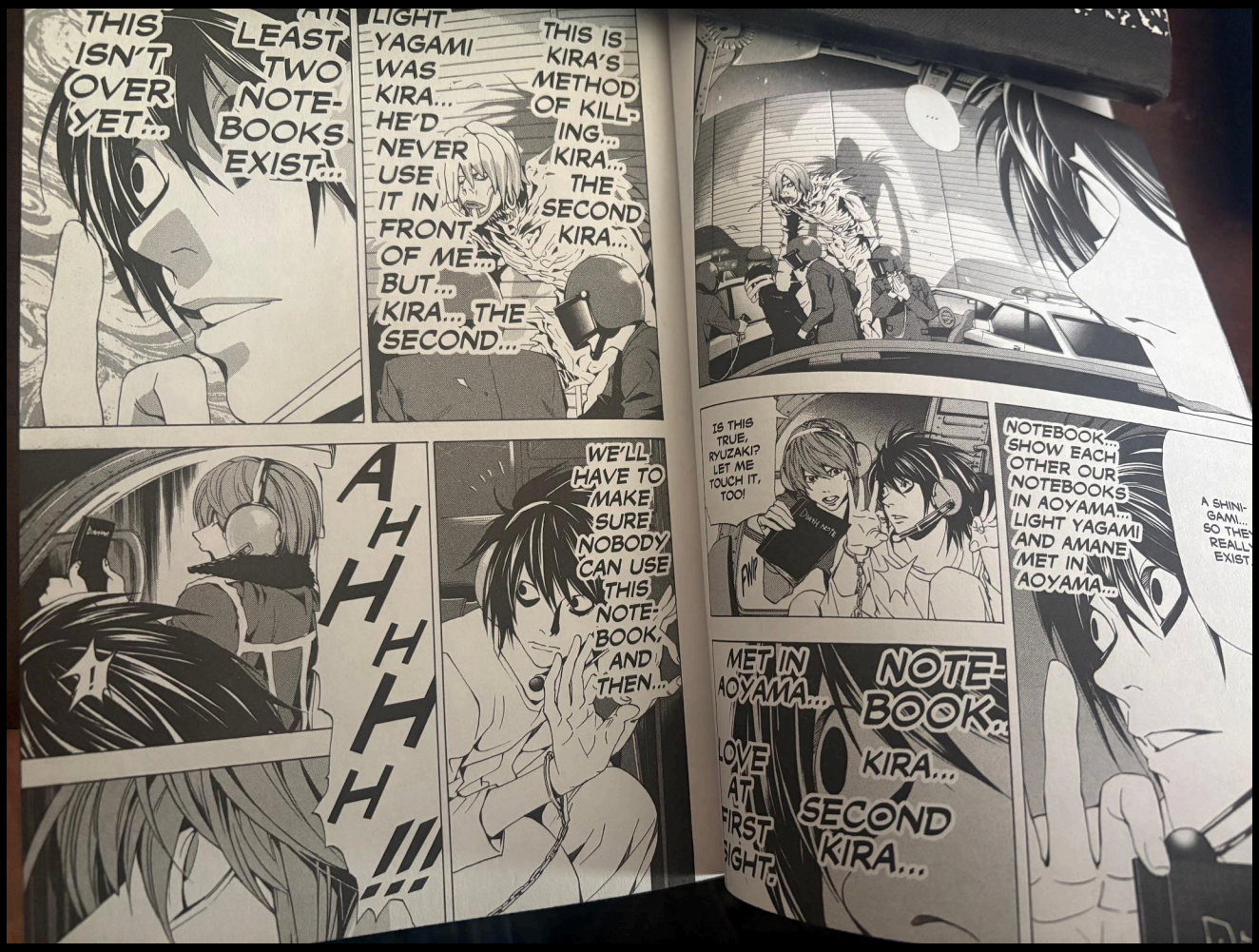


Intro:

As the title implies, this is a re-analysis of the Memory Recall feat that I've felt inclined to make after vigorous discussions with other members of the scd community. In my initial analysis found here, I had concluded that it was a PSI feat and potentially WMI + VSI as well, but new information has made it more complex than the relatively simple analysis I provided there. In this analysis, I will attempt to argue that this feat, while not strictly FSIQ as commonly used by the community, is still a massive buff to his cognition in light of new information. Note: I don't believe this new interpretation will affect the EQ analysis found in the old doc.

The Analysis:

To begin with, let's set the scene. Kira #3, Higuchi, has just been captured and the notebook transported to the helicopter where Light and L sit. L touches the notebook and sees Rem, and his mind going into overdrive with his deductions leaves him slow to react as Light grabs the notebook from his grasp. A few more seconds pass as L continues thinking in his mind before he's interrupted by a scream. Light's mouth is agape with terror as we see memories of his misdeeds flash before his eyes - his murder of Raye Penber, his murder of Naomi Misora, his first encounter with L, and the planning process behind his memory gambit among other things.



This scene is built on rule 37 of the Death Note. As shown below: "When regaining ownership of the DEATH NOTE, the memories associated with the DEATH NOTE will also return."

DEATH NOTE

How to use it

XXX VII

- When regaining ownership of the DEATH NOTE, the memories associated with the DEATH NOTE will also return. In cases where you were involved with other DEATH NOTEs as well, memories of all the DEATH NOTEs involved will return.

所有権をなくしたノートの所有権を再び得れば、
そのノートに関する記憶が戻る。
万が一、他にも関わったノートがあれば、
関わった全てのノートに関する記憶が戻る。

- Even without obtaining ownership, memories will return just by touching the DEATH NOTE.

また、所有権を得なくとも、ノートに触れていれば、
触れている間のみ記憶は戻る。

Let's first go over how much those memories were worth since that is still relevant to the reinterpretation. Light first picked up the Death Note on November 23, 2003 and lost his memories with it on June 9th, 2004. That's 199 days worth of memories to process in a few seconds. According to scientists, the average person processes 74+ GB a day. We can round up to 80 for Light since he's obviously above average, and lives a very active lifestyle constantly deliberating on how to outmaneuver his enemies and continuing his education. The number I gave in my last analysis was 15,920 GB of information, but I didn't adjust for sleep there. Assuming Light gets 8 hours of sleep, Light would actually only have received 3,184 hours worth of information instead of 4,776 - 132.667 days. That gives us **10,613.336 GB** that Light's mind received. The time span is trickier, but I will be using the anime scene for reference. Light grabs the notebook around 1:37, but we hear Light scream at 1:53 as the memories flash before his eyes - 16 seconds. 8.4906688e+13 bits / 16 = 5.306668e+12 bits per second.

An error I made in the first interpretation was assuming it was essentially an infodump to his conscious mind, but that's not the case. As can clearly be seen in the scan provided, Light wasn't instantly responding to information as would be the case if he was. There's clearly some time between him clearly touching the book and the scream, enough at least that he was able go from leaning over to grab the book to staring straight ahead. More reasonably, it first went into his unconscious mind (temporary storage in the cerebral cortex) for unconscious processing. Here is where the distinction between semantic and episodic memory becomes relevant. Semantic memories are those of general knowledge - the names of colors, the faces of close family members, basic math, etc. Episodic memory comprises experiences specifically, including emotional ones. The relevance of this is that I had initially assumed equality across all memories Kira-related and non-Kira related such that Light would have to consciously process each one, disregarding irrelevant ones and deliberating over relevant ones. Now that we know his memories were all episodic, it's reasonable that his memories weren't all equal, his mind would prioritize emotionally relevant episodic memories (such as his first kill and his reasoning to become Kira) in sending them to his conscious mind for conscious processing. This is why, as shown in the first scan, all of the memories visualized are important plot-related memories. Of course, that doesn't necessarily mean that all relevant Kira memories were sent to the conscious mind, some could've been unconsciously encoded into his psyche as well.

But the thing is, that this still entails superhuman processing (by irl standards). His unconscious mind would still have to sift through unimportant memories vs relevant memories, or it wouldn't know which is which. An analogy helps:

My previous interpretation:

> Imagine 20 doors, behind 19 are stacks of garbage and 1 has a pile of cash. You would have to open each door to find out which is which if you don't get lucky on the first few tries.

The new interpretation:

> Imagine 20 colored doors, behind 19 red ones are garbage and 1 green door with a money

sign has a pile of cash. The green door obviously gives you a strong inclination to open it.

Relating that to Memory Recall, I had assumed each memory (door) had to be "opened" or consciously processed, but now we can say that only the relevant ones had to be since his mind unconsciously prioritized the Kira-related memories for "opening." Now does that preclude processing altogether? Absolutely not. Logically, some part of his mind would have to discern emotionally volatile memories from the mundane ones, and we have merely shifted the burden from his conscious to his unconscious. Even within the analogy, while the colors (emotions) provide some prioritization, you still have to apprehend the doors' colors, locations, and the sign on the safe door to begin with.

Is that superhuman? Yes. Numbers online put the speed of average human unconscious processing from 11 to 40 million bits per second. This is absurdly faster than conscious processing because of the way our brains are wired. Conscious processing is a product of serial processing, so we can work out and logically reason a math equation linearly, but unconscious processing is a product of parallel processing, where information splits into many pathways and into different neural circuits simultaneously.

Using the anime, we calculated that his processing speed was 5.306668e+12 bits / second. With simple division using 11M as a high-end and 40M as a low-end

High-end: 482,424.363636
Low-end: 132,666.7

Light's unconscious mind is 100-400,000 more efficient than real life people.

The Argument:

Now to reintroduce a logical process:
1. The Death Note returned to Light 132+ days worth of information
2. The Death Note did not assist beyond "returning" his memories
3. The information was first returned to Light's unconscious mind
    3b. If it wasn't returned to his conscious mind, then it would have been sent to his conscious mind
4. Emotionally relevant memories were sent to Light's conscious
5. Light's unconscious mind had to process and discern the received information in order to do this
6. To process this much information, consciously or unconsciously, is far beyond the cognitive capabilities of any real human
7. To become Kira again would require those memories to be processed
8. Light became Kira again

Conclusion: Light's cognition is far beyond any real human

Note that I have carefully structured the argument such that it will either massively buff his

conscious or unconscious processing whichever route you take.

What does this mean?

My first interpretation concerned PSI, but unconscious processing isn't quite the same thing, but it is still just as, if not more, powerful. In fact, most information is processed via System 1 (the unconscious) which contributes to our intuitive decisions throughout the day. It contributes to our implicit memory. This is a form of long term memory which isn't tied to recollecting past events but acquiring new skills, including language learning through the unconscious acquisition of grammar and syntax . Obviously, it also means that Light's unconscious mind is able to apprehend far more information than any real person, so it also buffs his perception. And it also contributes to pattern recognition.

To analyze the memory aspect of this, let's look at what memory is. The steps involved in memory are encoding, storage, and retrieval. Encoding is the initial acquisition of information, storage is keeping it over time, and retrieval is the ability to recall it when needed. If someone has great encoding but mediocre storage and retrieval, then that person captures experiences with great fidelity, writing in his mind all the context clues, emotions, details, etc, of a given memory, though the mediocre storage and retrieval means that it is liable to degrade over time and that it would be difficult to consciously recall.

Of primary interest is encoding. Neither conscious nor unconscious recall could be done without a memory being encoded. For Light's conscious mind to be confronted with all those relevant memories so fast means that his brain must have encoded the given information extremely fast, and, given that we don't see Light suffer from any sort of gaps in his memory and even relatively irrelevant memories are present in the manga during his final speech, we can infer that Light likewise also has superhuman memory encoding, which by extension would also buff his short term memory, and likely storage and retrieval as well. That's because there's great overlap in the parts of the brain that manage those tasks. The key regions of each are: Encoding (Hippocampus, Entorhinal Cortex, Amygdala, Prefrontal Cortex), Storage (Hippocampus, Neocortex (Temporal, Parietal)), Retrieval (Hippocampus, Prefrontal Cortex, Parietal Cortex). Strong encoding means highly detailed, emotionally rich, and contextually tagged memory traces. The more robust the encoding (the richer the initial trace and its interconnections), the easier and more stable consolidation becomes. Effective retrieval depends on the quality and distinctiveness of encoding and the connectivity established during storage. Retrieval relies on cue overlap, which is the degree to which present stimuli match stored representations. If Light's encoding captures every sensory, emotional, and conceptual dimension of a moment, then almost any related cue will successfully trigger recall.

Speaking of which, while it would be presumptuous to assume that Light literally encoded every single bit of information returned by the Death Note, it is reasonable to assume he most or at least a solid portion of it. That is still several days worth of memories that he could encode in seconds and recall. So it wouldn't actually have to be perfect, but for the purposes of normal life outside of huge dumps of information, where he merely has to process a seconds worth of

received data over the seconds or a day's worth over a day, then his memory would be more than enough to be effectively "perfect."

What about PSI? When we receive sensory input, it is sent to our cerebral cortex for processing. Only 5% of this is usually selected for short-term memory (WMI), but information from short-term memory makes long-term memory. That % is actually very convenient as it makes sense that only a small amount of memories would be needed to recreate Kira. Applying that to the 10,613.336 GB above, then that gives us 530.67 GB that Light had to keep in his conscious mind in short-term memory. We can use the same lowball time frame (using the anime scene) from the last interpretation and put the denominator at 20 seconds, putting his conscious mind's PSI at **26.5285 GB/s**, or nearly 7 days worth of information in a couple seconds, a far cry from the original but still very superhuman.

(CPI, FRI, VCI, PSI, WMI, Intuition, Perception, Memory, Learning Ability, Pattern Recognition, Overall Thinking)

Counters:

The most popular counter to the previous interpretation, and one I predict might be brought up against this one as well, is that the Death Note helped him, hence me now including premise #2. I base this premise on lack of evidence. My argument synthesizes the context of the scene - the rules, the time frame, the involvement of a brain - and the unstated conclusion that entails. It's analogous to this situation: If the story goes "Bob the human walked to Stacy's house," then it follows that there was ground to walk on, that Bob has legs, that Bob's skeletal muscles contracted to produce movement, etc, despite that not being explicitly stated. It is what follows from the given information.

How does that relate to Death Note? Because nothing in this scene entails that the Death Note assisted Light beyond returning his memories. Let's look at the word "return" used in Rule 37 since it is important. The Oxford Dictionary's transitive definition of return is simple: "to give back somebody/something to somebody/something." The simplest interpretation would be that the Death Note simply gave back Light his memories, not that they restored the memories. The distinction is important since one is a simple return and the other is reintegration. As used in this debunk, the Merriam-Webster's definition fits well: "to integrate again into an entity **:** restore to unity." Given the two, we can see that all reintegrations by definition are returns, but not all returns are necessarily reintegrations. For example, if I return home from war, then I have simply set foot within my household or community, however alienated I might be; if I have reintegrated into my home, then I am in unity as I was before, in harmony with my friends and neighbors and the social norms.

So, since reintegration is a more specific form of return, it's presumptuous to assume his memories were reintegrated by the notebook. Occam's Razor favors that we simply assume a transfer and nothing more. If we wish to look at the scene in isolation, then it follows from

nothing in the scene that supernaturally assisted reintegration happened. You would need to assume the conclusion that Light's superhuman cognition is false to abductively assume that the DN assisted him in order to prove that he has no superhuman cognitive feats, which is obviously circular reasoning.

And that brings us to the next debunk argument, the one from holistic consistency. The argument goes that Light's PSI feat doesn't match any other feat from him (or anyone in Death Note, really), so the conclusion is absurd and something else likely is at play. This method of feat analysis I don't really agree with, but it's a reasonable enough one that this is a valid debunk for the old interpretation under a certain scaling philosophy. But this new interpretation, since it's not focused on conscious processing speed specifically, is better guarded against that. The abilities strengthened by the unconscious mind, we have seen, are clearly demonstrated by Death Note characters to a superhuman or nearly superhuman extent multiple times outside of just this scene, providing consistency:

1. L flies a helicopter by intuition
2. L states Light could do it too
3. Near is stated to be able to process huge amounts of information at once, and this is something apparently even nameless background students from his school can do
4. Light learning how to analyze causation within the stock market in an extremely short time frame
5. L at 6 years old playing the stock market
6. Light learning how to create a voice modulator in an extremely short time frame
7. Light learning how to work as a detective, taking L's place as the greatest, in an extremely short time frame

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Perfect Victory



Too bad. This would've been a lot more interesting if you were just a bit smarter!

Introduction:

This analysis concerns Light's holistic strategy of dealing with his greatest rival, L Lawliet, and seeks to isolate his actions against L not as a series of disjoint parts that ultimately culminated with L's defeat via the Memory Gambit, but as one long strategic performance on Light Yagami's part.

Strategic Aim: To draw L out, closing the gap between them, join the task force, kill L Lawliet, and replace him as L, the world's most powerful law enforcement agent. Page 40 on Vol 13 assures us that it was no coincidence that Kira became L, "Just as Light planned, Kira is now in the odd situation of being in control of the very team whose duty it is to capture him."

The benefits of this are obvious. Not only does he rid himself of his greatest enemy, Light would also be able to effectively spearhead the investigation as he sees fit, endlessly misdirecting them. Success in this pursuit would greatly play into Light's long term vision of creating the New World as he acquires L's power of complete access to law enforcement intelligence (allowing him

to easily kill criminals) and the media to advance his ideology. Finally, since his father is on the task force, he is unable to wipe out everyone there without suspiciously sparing his father, so he has to kill L with a surgical strike, but that would leave a power vacuum. Given the choice between Kira or someone else as smart or less smart than L taking L's position, it would be ideal for Kira to hold that position and prevent anyone else from taking it.

A very daunting but rewarding goal indeed. Anyone else would never even have considered taking on such risks, but Light is no ordinary person.

Outline:

Light lays the groundworks for his strategy after his most humiliating blunder at the hands of L in Chapter 2. Through the ingenious broadcast trap, L had triangulated Kira to the Canto region of Japan and already profiled him as a young idealistic man bent on changing the world and willing to kill innocents if need be, but Light has adapted fast. We see Light hint at this to Sayu as he says he plans on being the top member of the NPA, showing his interest in the battle of Kira vs L. At the task force HQ, we learn that all of the victims recently after the broadcast trap were in Japan, and the times of their deaths were concentrated in hours where a Japanese student would have free time. Earlier in the day, Light had hinted at an "advantage" to Ryuk, and that advantage is his father Soichiro Yagami. Light shows an interest in his work, and Soichiro reveals details about the investigation, particularly that the person in charge (L) suspects that Kira may be a student based on the time that criminals are dying. Just as planned, Light reveals to Ryuk in his room that he's "been acting from the start to lead them to that conclusion."



Light proceeds to the second part of his strategy by utilizing the notebook's ability to script the details surrounding a victim's death. In the next three days, 23 criminals die of a heart attack, each one hour apart from the other and all targeted within prisons so that the police would be sure of the exact time frame. The police speculate that perhaps this means Kira is not a student since the killings were on weekdays, but L deduces that this means Kira can schedule a victim's time of death and that he has some way of getting information known only to the police, a clue which he infers as a deliberate challenge from Kira to L.

Meanwhile, Light explains to Ryuk that L is probably puzzling over the killings, and that he has reserves of criminals to kill if he needs to. He has also prepared a cover story should anyone in his family find the Death Note, which is that he's simply keeping notes on Kira. But still, that's not enough. We see him begin tinkering with a boobytrap to destroy the notebook in case his family ever touches it as the chapter closes out.

Chapter 4. L ponders the meaning behind Kira revealing that he has insider info in the police, but regardless of what it, information from the investigation leaking to Kira is a problem he can't ignore. L has Watari contact the FBI. And as if Light read his mind, he states to Ryuk that about now L is suspicious against the police force. Light explains to Ryuk that letting him know about his connection to the police is a strategic move based on his knowledge that humans are "foolish, two-faced creatures." He knows the police don't trust L, since the latter hides his face and name, and that L doesn't trust the police, which will naturally lead him to investigate his own men in the NPA, which will make them mad in turn. This sows division between the two as they'll now have differing goals despite the pretense of working together to find Kira: The police will investigate L, and L will investigate the police. Back at HQ, several officers resign, fearing Kira would kill them. The case is too risky. We see that the police, who don't know about L's distrust of them, have already built up resentment towards L since he's well fortified behind a screen while they risk their lives in the open.

Challenge I: The FBI



Chapter 5. L has gathered information through the FBI on all of the NPA members and their loved ones. Light encounters his first major challenge that he must overcome in his strategy - FBI Agent Raye Penber - who Ryuk informs him is tailing Light. Light enters his room and checks the small, subtle system he had in play to detect if anyone entered his room, showing that he had anticipated being tailed well in advance. Light reasons that L wouldn't use Japanese

forces to probe the NPA, and that, based off the short gap in time between the information leak and Penber's arrival (4 days) and him only being a family member from L's POV, not a major suspect yet, then that must mean there's several agents. He not only needs his tail's name but theirs as well.

During a casual discussion with Ryuk, he suddenly formulates a plan to deal with the agent tailing him, one utilizing the rule of the Death Note about manipulating the circumstances of someone's death, but he needs to test its limits. Furthermore, he needs to act soon since, if they conclude their investigation, they may be more thorough the next time around. Light scripts one criminal to draw a pentagram, the other to write out a suicide note, and the last to escape; three others are scripted to die in ways that either go beyond their knowledge or what they can physically do, and these just die of heart attacks. L figures out that Kira possibly used those deaths to test his powers, and he instructs the NPA to not release any details to the media to prevent Kira from knowing if he succeeded or not. Regardless, Light knows because he's hacked into their database. Light's seventh test is on a violent criminal named Matsushiro Nakaokaji responsible for repeat murders, whose death he scripts in a manner such that it would be reported in the morning paper, so L wouldn't know it was by Kira. Considering the possibility of something besides a test, L catches onto a hidden message in the suicide note that reads, "L do you know…" As planned, the criminal dies after Light had forced him to hold up a store and get stabbed in the stomach at 1:30 AM. Next, the core step of his plan to kill the FBI agent, he finds the addict and burglar Kiishiro Osoreda and then calls up a girl for a date the next day.

The next day, Light takes his date aboard a bus to Spaceland, sitting one seat from the back. The burglar boards the bus Light, his date, and Raye Penber are on. Light writes a note to his date reassuring her that he'll disarm the burglar when he comes close, making sure to hold it out so that Raye can see. Raye immediately tells Light to not do it, but Light feigns distrust. He notes how Raye has a foreign accent. He also explains to his date that it's a standard move to his date, where one hijacker works the front of a vehicle while a secret accomplice in the back keeps watch. He demands to see proof that Raye isn't an accomplice, so Raye presents his ID. Light asks if he has a gun, Raye says yes, but internally he notes that he can't use it or that would alert the police about the FBI. Light "accidentally" drops his note so the burglar can see it, the burglar picks it up (it's a different note that just notes where the girl would meet him), and the guy sees Ryuk. The burglar runs out of the bus in a panic before getting run over. Raye asks Light not to tell the police, and Light agrees. Successful, Light monologues that this would fly under the radar as an accident. Good for him since he doesn't want L to know he had contact with the FBI. He takes the further precaution of letting Raye, after clearing Light off his list, investigate other people for a week.

Light then executes his plan to kill the FBI agents a week later. He foreordains Raye to go to the Yamanote line and ambushes him there while wearing a hoodie. He threatens to kill him instantly if Raye tries anything, and to sell this Light had scripted a criminal nearby to die right in front of Raye, leading Raye to believe that only a face is needed to kill someone. Light bluffs that he has Raye's wife and family hostage. Light gives him an envelope with a transceiver, a crappy one that leaves no record, and an earphone and orders him to board the train. He has Raye ask the chief to send him an email, but to lie that there's some sort of glitch between the

chief's computer and his so that it has to be sent through someone else's computer. Inside the envelope are papers with slots for the name, which he orders Raye to write the names of his colleagues on one at a time as he reads the email. Raye plays along, hoping that just the names alone wouldn't be enough for Kira to kill them for a while since, as he said, Kira needs a face. As instructed, Raye places everything back into the envelope, places it in the storage space above him, and waits 30 minutes to leave. It's revealed that Light had scheduled Raye to die 3 seconds after leaving the train, and it's later revealed that Raye died at 4:45. The scripted deaths on the paper Raye had written on scheduled the other agents' death at random between 3 and 5 PM, so it can't be traced back to him through the time the files were received.

Meanwhile, L is completely focused on the hidden messages in the notes that Light has been sending through criminals, thinking Kira is giving him some clue. All twelve FBI agents are dead. A request had been made to the director for the names and faces of all agents on the mission by one of the agents so they could all coordinate. The requests all came in at once, so the director sent the file to the first four agents and told them to send it to the others. The FBI terminates their investigation. Soichiro Yagami learns that the FBI were probing the NPA shortly after. And Light ends his series of messages with a taunt, but L catches on that Kira must have been in contact with one of the FBI agents to pull off this scheme. Meanwhile, Light elaborates that this is per his machinations, the FBI are either pissed off and have left entirely, or they can't send more agents in a short time frame. L has lost a lot of allies, so Light expects him to move into action himself.

Soichiro reveals that he's part of the elite task force bent on catching Kira. When his family encourages him to quit after the FBI massacre, Light encourages him to stay, promising to personally go after Kira if he dies.

Analysis:

The Bus Hijacking is planned as this:

1. A drug addict/burglar will board a bus to Spaceland and hijack it, see a phantom, and get hit by a car
2. Light will board that same bus with a date
3. Light will carry two slips of paper, one with the simple information about the date and one insuring his date that he'll stop the burglar
4. Light will sit at the back of the bus
5. Raye will see it, act to protect Light by stating that he would handle the hijacker instead
6. Light would show skepticism, forcing Raye to prove his identity
7. Light would drop the first slip of paper, which is actually a piece of the Death Note, and the hijacker would pick it up, causing him to see Ryuk
8. The hijacker runs out, gets run over, and Light is off scot free with the FBI agent's information to scheme further as he pleases.

As mentioned by Light, he wants to let this incident go unnoticed since he doesn't want anyone to know he had contact with the FBI. This would only draw more suspicion to his later scheme. We can see he made sure of this in several ways. He killed criminals inventively, clearly manipulating the circumstances of their death, and sent L the hidden messages in the suicide notes. As Light had already established by deliberately letting L know about the info leak, Kira was trying to communicate to L and was willing to subtly give information about the scope of his power and situation. This was only natural after L humiliated him with the broadcast trap, as L had made it very personal by taunting Kira relentlessly, so it makes sense from L's POV that Kira was responding in a similar manner and seemingly trying to communicate to him again with the "Gods of Death" notes, that is, Light was thinking what L would think about how Kira was responding to L's past actions, and he deliberately played into the personal element that had already been established between the two of them. The "Gods of Death" also wisely catches L's attention. The case clearly has extraordinary circumstances with a killer wielding possibly supernatural power, so it may seem that Kira (from L's POV) is giving a hint about his power.

On the hijacking itself, Light sat at the second last seat from the back of the bus. This not only forces Raye to sit directly behind him, allowing him to see the note from up close, but it also prevents Raye from intervening immediately when the hijacker boards the bus and it gives Light time to pull off his dialogue with Raye unnoticed by the hijacker. The hijacker himself was deliberately chosen to be a high profile drug addict, so when he starts ranting about monsters it's not suspicious to Raye, who had seen the hijacker on TV and just thinks he's on PCP.

Raye's death is planned as this:

1. Raye passes by a certain cafe at 3:00 PM, boards the Yamanote line with his laptop, and dies three seconds after leaving.
2. A certain criminal was also scripted to die in front of the cafe
3. Light accosts him from behind near the cafe, uses the criminal's death and bluffing about his family to get him compliant.
4. Light would get the files with all the names and faces from Raye (This didn't work out, so Light was forced into his contingency plan which starts at #4)
5. Light hands him an envelope with a transceiver, earphones, and papers with slots
6. Light instructs him to call a fellow agent or one of lower rank to get the names and faces of the other agents (this doesn't work out, so Raye has to call the police and Light improvises)
7. Raye calls the chief, but Light instructs him to lie so that the chief sends him the file through someone else's computer, i.e. chief -> middleman -> Raye
8. Raye writes down all the names, one at a time per Light's instructions so that the faces are also in his mind
9. Raye sets the envelope with everything back in it above him, leaves after 30 minutes, and dies.
10. The FBI dies, exposing their investigation into the NPA.

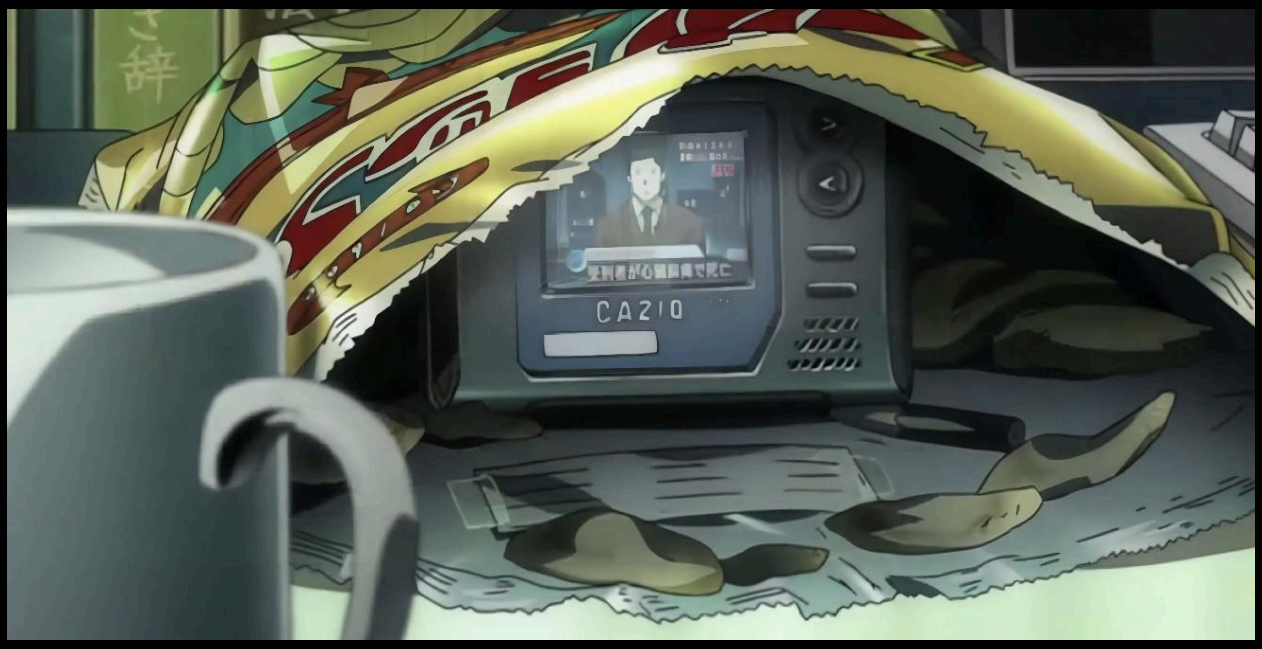
Very importantly, Light had taken several precautions to pull this off. Light integrated the information he knew the police had had on Kira based off the broadcast stunt and his

understanding of L in order to successfully bluff Raye Penber. He knew L would be smart enough to pick up on the pattern of criminals who had their names and faces dying, but that the others wouldn't, and they would have to rely on what L proved in his broadcast trap, seemingly that Kira needed a face. L, Light knew, wouldn't have revealed this information to them, being so secretive. Then he kills a criminal to "prove" that he needs only a face. This both ensures that Raye believes his and the lives of those immediately around him are in danger, but that the FBI agents whose names he had written down had some time. Why is this? If Light just wrote "Raye complies with everything Kira tells him to do," then there's a chance that Light already knew that Raye was very heroic, possibly willing to take the risk of beating Kira if need be. And outside of a suicide, the Death Note doesn't have the ability to make the victim act in ways unnatural for them (hence him not being able to write a direct message to L with one of the criminals he killed). The bluff ensures Raye doesn't try anything, the use of what information he had gives him a false sense of hope for his fellow agents, and the criminal dying in front of him seemingly "proved" that Kira could kill with a glance and was willing to do so in broad daylight. Later on, it's shown that Light hadn't been caught on any cameras, so it's even implied he'd taken the precaution of memorizing the cameras and their sightlines on the path between the cafe and the Yamanote line plus the ones in the train to avoid detection. Despite L's incredible perception, he never sees Light.

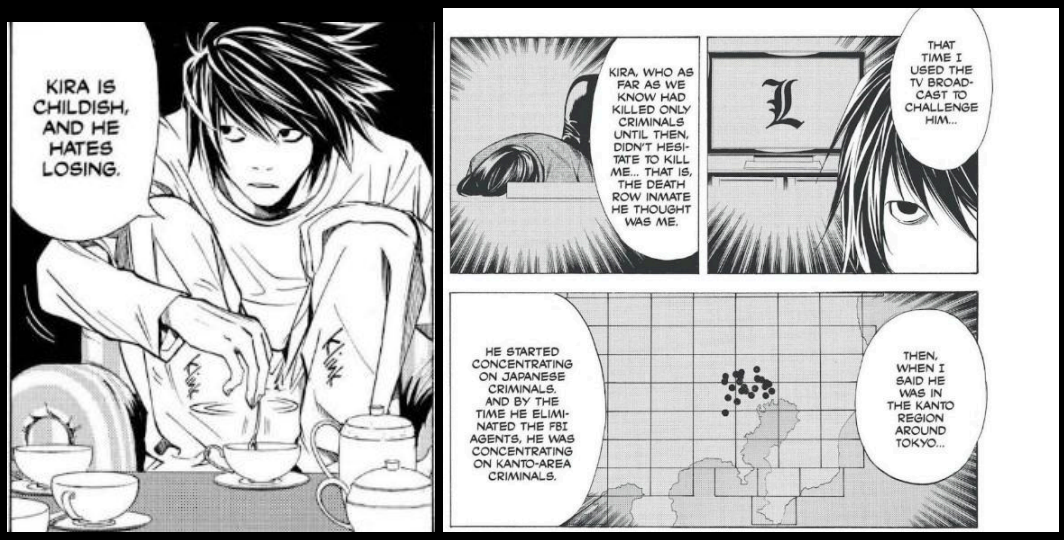
The strategy is extremely effective in how it turns L's allies against him. There's the obvious, with the FBI leaving Japan in horror after their agents all died. Light exploited the distrust and resentment that the police had built up for L, because now not only did he demonstrate that Kira was willing to massacre everyday investigators, instilling them with fear, but it also exposed L's investigation into the police. They were already putting their lives on the line while he hid in the shadows, but the secrecy in investigating them while doing so was nearly a betrayal. From the dozens in the NPA that were working on the case, only six detectives remain, and even they demand that L reveal himself to them if he wants their help. Furthermore, L is even briefly suspected of being Kira. This is because not only has Kira demonstrated clearly extraordinary abilities, but, as far as they could know, only L and the FBI knew that the FBI agents were in Japan. So with the FBI having no reason to kill their own and being made of public figures, and the extraordinary power possibly being between these two people who knew of the FBI's involvement, suspicion naturally falls on the mysterious L. Ultimately, L is forced to acquiesce and immediately agrees to meet them, though Soichiro speculates that perhaps L had anticipated this and wanted to work closely only after he knew who the most loyal investigators were.

It has one major flaw in that Raye would've been compelled to report the bus incident to his superiors, and information that Light was on the same bus as a criminal dying in such a manner would naturally reach L. Though I explain later how Light wouldn't be foiled in the long run by this.

Challenge 2: Surveillance



Knowing the pool of investigators has been whittled down, Light knows he can't publicize his access to secret information anymore. Meanwhile, L meets the taskforce directly and explains his understanding of Kira's psyche, that he meets every challenge with a counter, as he goaded L by concentrating killings in Japan after the broadcast trap and further focused on Kanto area criminals by the time of the FBI massacre. In the 7 days between his test killings and the FBI massacre, Kira had killed an unusually large number of criminals, many of whom weren't quite as vicious as his usual stock. To eliminate the FBI agents, he probably needed to use some lesser criminals, and he used the high death count to conceal which ones those lesser criminals were.



Chapter 15. After Light stumbled onto Raye's wife, Naomi, who theorized that Kira can kill by methods other than heart attacks and knew that Raye had revealed his ID to someone, he narrowly got her ID out of her and killed her. With Naomi and Raye both dead, any connection between Light and the bus hijacking isn't concrete enough to incriminate him. L makes the connection that Penber was the second person to receive the file and called the first minutes before, that his fiance is dead, and that his strange behavior means he's the agent likely contacted by Kira. He focuses on the families Penber was probing before Kira's test killings.

Soon after, Light notices that his subtle alarm system had been triggered: a piece of paper wedged in the door serves as a red herring to signal that Light doesn't want anyone snooping in his room, one that can easily be replaced, but a piece of lead and Light's subtle usage of the door handle's angle allows him to gain information regardless out of any spy who wouldn't know how the door handle works or about the lead. He goes to the store to buy - and convinces Ryuk to search for any bugs and cameras.

Volume 2, Chapter 17. With L watching, Light pulls out some gravure magazines and deliberates as Ryuk discovers the cameras. He explains he had bought them for just the occasion, having anticipated that they would put him under surveillance. Despite having scheduled criminals to die for three weeks in advance, he knows that just them dying won't be enough since he's already revealed he can set the time of death for his victims. Criminals have to die after being shown on TV while he seemingly has no access to that information. L airs a fake broadcast about ramping up international efforts against Kira by sending more men to Japan as Light goes to have dinner with his family, but Light instantly sees through it because it is the same trick L pulled on him in their first encounter. Light explains why it's a bad strategic move on Interpol's part if it's real, and that therefore it's probably a fake broadcast. And this is perhaps the first moment L takes interest in Light. Light grabs the potato chip bag he'd prepared for the surveillance strategy he'd predicted and makes way to his room.

Ryuk tells him all about the cameras and their angles, and Light's amazed but unsurprised that L would go that far. Light memorizes all the cameras (explained more in depth

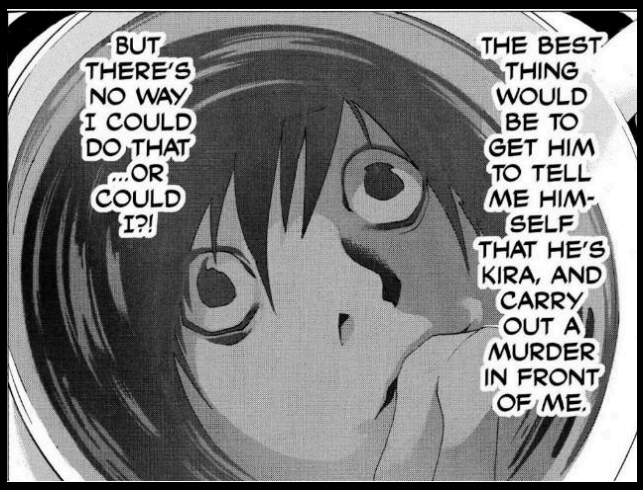
in the other tab) to angle the bag, which has a miniature tv inside, and kills criminals while solving math equations. The flaw is that due to Light's split focus while multitasking and the possibility of bugs, he couldn't maintain his usual pattern of targeting the most heinous criminals. He'd killed more minor criminals, and he is aware of this. So, to throw mud in the water, Light stealthily kills minor criminals while he has access to the TV as well. He also schedules some criminals who appeared on TV to die later. Despite L's constant surveillance, he admits to the taskforce that he saw 0 suspicious activity. He didn't see any hint of fear or anxiety on Light, nor did he see Light stealthily writing inside the bag or on the scraps hidden around his desk. The only logical conclusion, L knows, is no one in the family's he's observed is Kira, but working with the assumption they are… L ponders that Kira's psychological state has reached the "divine level" to be able to kill criminals without batting an eye.

Analysis:

Despite the simplicity of the plan, it actually took a lot of forethought and prep work on Light's part, and the execution was nothing less than "divine." First, he made sure to pick a flavor no one in his family liked so that when L did execute this strategy he would have the bag ready to go with the TV inside without anyone in his family discovering it. Second, he had taped a fragment of the Death Note to the inner wall of the potato chip bag, but he would've also had to account for the oiliness of the bag caused by the chips. He must've also dried it beforehand. Third, the metal lining of the bag would've interfered with the TV's ability to receive signals if he didn't either modify the bag or the miniature TV somehow. Miniature TVs back then also all used retractable antennas which had to be extended, but Light's TV didn't, so he either modified the TV or procured a brand that did not. Fourth, he had to hide the Death Note scraps on other spots around his desk, within his books, etc, before the surveillance ever began. And finally, the bag of course had to be resealed after the preparations were made. Besides the bag, there's of course the flaw in his plan that Light made sure to deal with. By killing minor criminals both when he was and wasn't watching TV, L couldn't reasonably conclude that anyone he was watching was Kira. It would be very odd if minor criminals died only when Light was studying while whoever else L was watching went about their activities - whether they were studying as well, watching TV, showering, etc - so this was crucial. At best, L could only conclude that, based off the minor criminals dying once surveillance began, that Kira might be in the two families, but that line of reasoning is obviously very circumstantial.

The execution is also similarly exhaustive. Oil from grabbing the chips would make his hands slippery, increasing the difficulty of writing with the small pencil he hid in there. Since Light is writing one letter at a time, he also has to have extremely good spatial awareness to prevent the letters from overlapping or drifting too far. TVs back then used passive-matrix LCD panels that didn't allow for smooth multi-angle viewing. If one were to look from above or below, the screen might look extremely washed out or dark. This is further compounded by him not only sitting at an angle above the bag that makes viewing within difficult, but also the fact that L is watching him. It's not like he can glance too long inside the bag. And most impressively, Light, as L states, shows no hint of any irregular motion despite the extremely complicated execution of killing criminals under these circumstances.

Challenge 3: Revelation



Chapter 18 and 19. With all attempts at info gathering having either hit a brick wall or ended in tragedy, L moves to a strategy focusing on making his prime suspect slip up. L enrolls as a fake student to take the same entrance exam as Light. Predictably, both effortlessly ace the exams. L reveals that he is L, real name "Hideki Ryuga." Light quickly realizes that he's been cornered - if he kills "Hideki," he might imagine the popstar's face and his cover would be blown; it might not even be L, who might be employing a proxy; and even if he is L, it's likely that he's also shown himself to Soichiro, so L dying soon after meeting Light would set off red flags. Indeed, Light had misread L so he never expected that L might come face to face, betraying his previous strategy of seclusion, and L has made it such that if he dies Light will be the prime suspect. L is free to execute his strategy of watching Light scrutinously, but to his credit, Light sees through the strategy and doesn't falter once despite the highly stressful scenario.

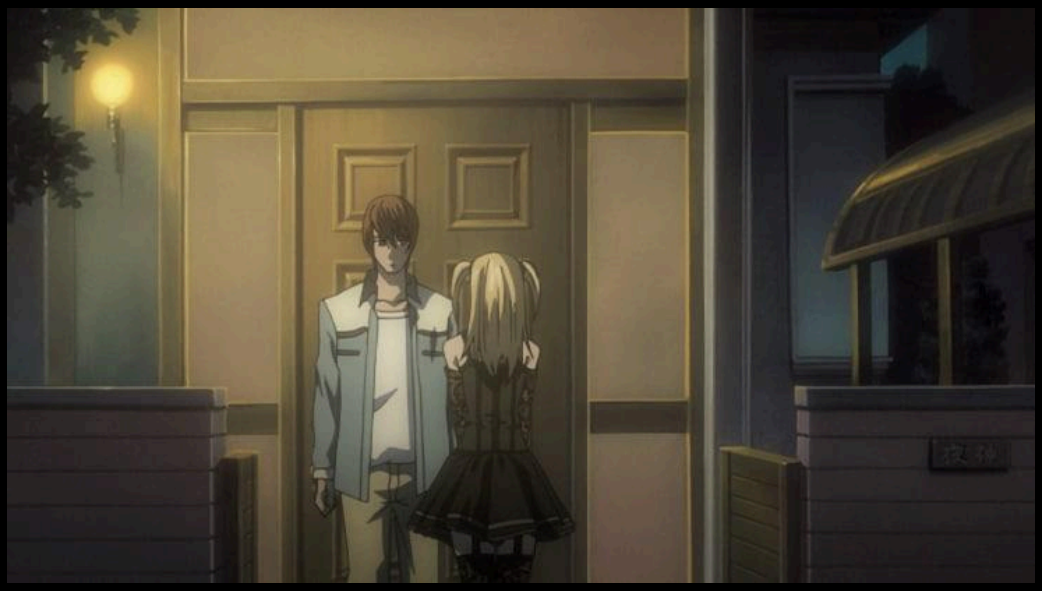
Light seethes for a moment at home, but quickly he changes his mind in delight, adapting his strategy to match L's. He knows, for L to remain close, that the latter will have to have some pretense of a relationship, and this will give Light an opportunity to get information out of him. The two play tennis the next day and demonstrate an exceptional understanding of each other. Light knows that L has profiled Kira as someone who hates to lose, and that trying too hard might therefore be suspicious. But if he loses on purpose, then perhaps L would think that Light had thought that L had profiled Kira as someone who hates to lose and had consciously made the effort to evade that. L knows that Light knows that L has profiled Kira as someone who hates to lose. The two seem to have a conversation with each other entirely in their heads, both thinking along the same lines of thoughts strategically - and both considering each other on multiple layers - to the conclusion that they'd discuss going to HQ.

Chapter 21. After the game, the two head to a cafe. L inquires about testing Light's reasoning abilities, but Light sees through it. He had taken precautions by exhaustively going over what he should and shouldn't ostensibly know. Kira makes the impressive deduction as "Light" that L has likely taken precautions so that even if he reveals himself to someone, he won't be killed; that, despite the news saying Kira needs only a face to kill, that he knows that L likely suspects that Kira needs a name as well based off his usage of the alias Hideki Ryuga. Light further says that the probability he is L is extremely L. From a strategic POV, he says, it'd be enough to just have someone else claim to be L to reap the same benefits. The real L would maintain his distance. L springs his two traps - the FBI file and the four notecards trick - to get a reaction out of Light. In the manga, Light evades all of it. (A section in the main tab explains why this test is poorly written either way.) L invites him to join the investigation. Light knows it's strategic: if he's Kira, then he can keep a close watch on him to apply pressure; if he's not, then that's one more brilliant mind to help catch Kira. Light agrees on the condition that L proves he's L by having someone else confirm it, but a call interrupts their discussion: Soichiro Yagami has had a heart attack. Both of them shout "Kira!" in confusion and rush to the hospital.

After confirming that Soichiro is okay, L states his suspicions have only increased because Light's comments regarding the case were too on-the-ball. Light declares that he'll catch Kira to avenge his father, using his earlier promise made at the dinner table. L finds the show Light puts on convincing, too corny to be an act. L asks Light what he thinks Kira is like, and Light gives very nearly the same profile of Kira as L did: an affluent child. If someone had the power to kill others so easily, using it to get rid of criminals to improve the world is something only a fifth grader to highschooler would think of. Any younger and they'd be either too scared to use that power or focus on going after people who personally wronged them. Anyone older would use it for their own personal gain.

Afterwards, Light pleads what he could do to clear L's suspicions, suggesting even being locked up for a month. The two part ways.

Challenge 4: Misa



Chapter 23. Sakura TV airs a message from “Kira” ordering the police to stand down. The police who arrive at Sakura TV to shut the broadcast off fall dead. Soichiro crashes a van into the building to retrieve the tapes, and L coordinates the police so that he can safely exit. L has the tapes sent to forensics. “Kira” had two videos prepared if the police agreed or rejected the offer, with both essentially putting L in the line of fire in exchange for other police officers’ lives. Meanwhile, Light opts to work alongside the task force as it would grant him information of both the new Kira and L, and he needs a hold over the new Kira to prevent them from leaking info to the investigation by incompetence. Back at HQ, L explains why this new Kira is probably fake and not affiliated with the old one based off their choice of victims and the sloppy video editing on the tapes. They also have fingerprints off the tapes and stamps. L predicts that Kira will try to track down the new Kira, gauge their views, and eliminate them. L asks Light to be brought into the task force. He’s not free of suspicion, but, L explains, Light is very brilliant.

Chapter 26. L plans to have Light examine the footage and see what he concludes. If Light concludes there’s a second Kira, then he will be less suspicious since Kira, in Light’s position, would be incentivized to let the police think that Kira #2 is the real Kira. Light is brought in and meets the task force. L informs him that they have one member on the outside that only he can contact, so if every investigator but one dies, that survivor would be the prime suspect. The mysterious outside investigator would have free reign to pursue the survivor, shielding L’s own strategy of bringing Light closer to pressure him. Light observes the tapes and passes L’s test by stating that there’s probably another Kira based off the choice of victims and the deaths of policemen who only had their faces shown, replicating L’s own reasoning on the spot much to the task force’s amazement. L lies that he only wanted a second opinion on his second Kira theory, but Light quickly surmises that the test was to see what he would do, that not deducing there’s a second Kira would be suspicious. Despite knowing that there is a second

Kira and being incentivized to conceal that face, he seems to have passed L's test from a strategic standpoint by intuition.

L orders Light to draft up a message as the real Kira to broadcast to the fake Kira. Light orders the new Kira to stop and try to understand his goal, not to kill innocent lawmen. Unfortunately, the second Kira stands down. Light had hoped that this copycat would understand Kira's true feelings and go through with killing L, and not only that, but Kira #2 also asks to meet in a new video that reveals the existence of Shinigami and "the eyes." Due to L's strategic maneuvering, Light is in a very precarious situation. L knows that the real Kira wants to get to the second Kira first, whether the real one is Light or not, and even if the second Kira gets ghosted, it's likely they'd only divulge more and more information to the world about their powers since their goal is to meet Kira. Later that night, before Light can form a proper plan to wrangle the copycat he receives word that they sent another message to the media, this time in the form of a diary with entries from last year. Misa cleverly had the last entry be in advance of the current year, with it stating that they would meet on the 30th and show off their Shinigami, as an attention grabber while the earlier entry on the 22nd said she showed her notebook to a friend at Aoyama, an implicit reference to the Death Note. L isn't completely fooled and wants plain clothes officers stationed at Aoyama on the lookout for any suspicious activities. Light volunteers under the pretense that he would look the most normal there. Once home, Light sees the news and discovers the hidden message in the hidden message that Misa had placed to arrange their meeting in Aoyama. There's a concert at the Note Blue club. "Ao" in Aoyama = Blue. He goes there with a large group of friends to make sure he can't be identified as one Ryuk is attached to, preventing Kira #2's shinigami from identifying him. Misa goes home, successful.

Chapter 29 and 30. On the 25th, Misa sends another video to Sakura on the 23rd confirming that she was able to spot Kira. L makes the connection then that it was probably at Aoyama, which, combined with the Raye Penber deductions, leaves Light as the prime suspect. L orders the police to send a message granting Kira #2 leniency in exchange for the true Kira's identity. Misa makes contact with Light later that night, coercing him into dating her and informing him that shinigamis die if they fall in love with a human and kill to extend their life. Light orders her to send one last tape explaining that she won't turn in Kira but continue killing criminals he can't in his honor and then spread his power. He also explains that he is under slight suspicion, which allowed him to get close to L, but that it makes any public appearances with her risky. Rem also promises to kill Light if any harm befalls Misa. Meanwhile, L reviews all footage from Aoyama on the 22nd and has Mogi, who was acting as L for the Kitamuras outside the regular task force, tail Light.



Chapter 31. Light is stumped with the new situation, feeling Misa has become a bigger problem than even L with Rem's ultimatum. L completely sees through the tape, but he says it does lower his suspicions, as he feels Light as Kira would want the second Kira to hold others hostage again to eliminate L. Light sees through the lie, stating that if he is Kira then he knows L's personality, then that would mean he knows L would never surrender himself over, so the hostage deal would be pointless. L knew that Light would know this, but if he let it slip by then that would be more suspicious from his POV since it would be to his advantage for L to lower his suspicions, i.e., Light considers what L considers what Light considers what L considers what !Kira-Light would order Kira #2 to strategically broadcast in order to see through the lie very quickly.

Later, Misa accosts Light while Mogi is tailing him, but he negotiates with Rem to have her kill L the next day. With his previous suspicions of Light plus his deliberations that Kira and Kira #2 have most likely met, L instructs Soichiro to proceed with the assumption that Light = Kira if L dies soon as a counter to Light's holistic strategy of closing the distance, allowing him to keep applying pressure without Light being able to capitalize on his progress. Light counters this later on. He has also received word about Misa and had Watari investigate her.

Chapter 32 and 33. L tells him this the next day when they meet on campus, even throwing in a lie about "other Ls." Misa arrives and Light proceeds with the plan anyway and

tries to call her, but L narrowly dodges death. L picks up the call after pickpocketing her phone, trolling Light, and tells him that Misa has been apprehended as being the prime suspect of one Kira based on the forensics evidence . This de facto makes Light the prime suspect as well, given L's reasoning that Kira and Kira #2 had met. To add salt in the wound, Rem shows up later to inform Light that she will kill him if Misa dies. Through Misa's incompetence and meddling, Light is now in the worst possible situation, a dead man if he doesn't save her, a prime suspect, and still against the world's greatest detective, who likewise has made it such that if he dies Light will be implicated. In the first half of the series, this is Light at rock bottom. However, he's already in the stages of formulating a counter...

Memory Loss Plan



Since innocent Light's actions can largely go ignored for an analysis of Kira's strategy, we can go straight to the plan. This is perhaps the most thoroughly scrutinized and analyzed play by Light Yagami, so I will forego an in-depth explanation of the steps of the plan for a basic outline:

1. Light creates two fake rules in the Death Note using Ryuk's pen: the 13-day rule, which states that anyone who has killed with the Death Note must kill at least one person within every 13 days or they will die; the other rule states that if the notebook is destroyed, everyone who has touched it will die.
2. Light modifies his watch to hold a small scrap of the Death Note
3. Light prepares his personal diary with fake notes that track his own personal progress of the Kira case, concluding with "I think I might be Kira."
4. Light scrubs all his fingerprints off his notebook and rewrites every one of his victims' names in a different handwriting.

5. His personal diary
6. Light Yagami has been given Misa's (Gelus's = G) notebook after she forfeited it so that he now has ownership of it.
7. Light forfeits ownership of G to give back to Rem, who hands it to Ryuk, who drops it on the ground for Light to pick up again.
8. Light then buries that one.
9. Light's OG notebook (Sidoh's = S), he forfeits that (but retains his memories as retaining one notebook grants memories of all DN usage) and gives it back to Ryuk, who transfers it to Rem
10. Light instructs Rem to give S to someone greedy, high status, and who would want to use it only for financial gain, but to make sure he keeps killing criminals broadcast on TV
11. Light turns himself in to L to confine himself. He says that he could be Kira, that it's a logical conclusion all things considered, though he claims no conscious memory of it. He brings up the supernatural element of the case, the "shinigami," and speculates he may be acting as one in his sleep.
12. He instructs L not to release him no matter what he says.
13. The killings immediately stopped after Light became confined. One week in confinement, Light forfeits ownership with the secret phrase "Get rid of it." He immediately begins ranting, contradicting himself that he was out of his mind to suggest that he was Kira.
14. Two weeks after confinement, Kira resurfaces, but L confines him for 50 days.
15. L tries one final trick once Light and Misa are released, though it doesn't work, and Light joins the task force to help catch Kira
16. They catch Kira, Light regains all his memories, and kills the fake Kira to retain his memories with the watch's scrap
17. Light instructs Misa to go and retrieve the notebook, and a letter there instructs her to remember L's name, retrieve a few pages of the notebook, and kill L on Light's command

Plan B: Misa doesn't remember, forcing his contingency plan

Light situated Ryuk there so she would make the eye deal without Rem's protests. When Misa informs Light of her failure, he calmly instructs her to use the pieces she retrieved to kill criminals discreetly in the bathroom of her movie sets. Light returns to HQ as Misa goes on a killing spree and tricks L into a discussion regarding the imputability of usage of the Death Note, causing him to respond that he intends on having any Kira proven guilty executed. Rem pieces together Light's plan, realizing she's been checkmated with her feelings for Misa, and L announcing that he intends to test the 13-day rule, which would negate Misa's exoneration, seals Rem and L's fate as she decides to kill him.



Misc:

The purpose of the shuffle is clever usage of the ownership rules on Light's part. It ensures that both death gods are in situations conducive towards his goal when the notebooks are found by their respective targets, otherwise their personalities would cause problems. The shuffle made sure that Ryuk would be the shinigami attached to the buried notebook for Misa's usage. Since Ryuk doesn't give a shit and is neutral, he will have no qualms about performing a second eye deal with Misa, halving her life a second time. Likewise, Rem, who does care, is made to attach to the notebook intended to be discovered by the task force. Since Rem cares about Misa, she's less likely to divulge information that might provide L with any clues about its rules, Light being Kira, etc. If they were switched, Rem might refuse an eye deal or talk Misa out of it, and Ryuk, if he doesn't just tell L that Light is Kira for entertainment sake, might slip up critical information with his loose lips. The shuffle also makes it so that Light can forfeit ownership of one notebook, keep his memories, and then only lose his memories fully when he forfeits the second in his possession.

How did Light know he would be recruited to the investigation? He came to this conclusion off of his own and L's respective personalities. He knew that, if he weren't Kira, he would be interested in the case regardless, being a good, honest person like his father, who was also passionate about catching Kira and was also one of the few people he respected. If not for justice, innocent Light would certainly feel slighted by the brutal confinement, having anticipated that L wouldn't relent once the killings pick up again and seemingly exonerate Light, and, being someone who "hates to lose," would go after Kira. As for L, Light has already induced L to employ a "keep your enemies close" strategy, hence self revelation strat, to apply pressure, but even if he weren't Kira L would still want Light on the case since Light has made the effort to prove his own brilliant mind. So L can continue his strategy (if Light = Kira) or have another brilliant person on the case if he keeps Light aboard. Letting Light loose subverts his entire strategy up to that point of pressuring Kira to make him slip up. After going to such efforts to zero in on two Kira suspects with strong circumstantial evidence, it would be extremely

dangerous move to let them run free, especially given that L retains his suspicions, which Light knew would be the case. Plus, since Misa is attached to Light, letting Light go = letting Misa go; and keeping Light close = keeping Misa close. It's a strategically good move from L's POV, seemingly limiting two Kiras movements under close watch.

How could he know he would be chained? This is less certain but still fairly reasonable and not so reliant on luck as many claim. With Light on close watch, and the assumption that he's Kira, then it'd be reasonable to prepare for the possibilities that Light would attempt to sneak off to execute some plan or whatever, perhaps under the pretense of using the bathroom or screwing Misa. Chaining himself to Light precludes any meeting with the second Kira suspect under their allegedly intimate relationship, and, given that L had already demonstrated a willingness to resort to extreme measures via confinement strategy, it would be reasonable to assume that L so quickly wouldn't deescalate to granting Light complete freedom to roam in, around, and out of HQ. So chaining himself to Light also seems like a good strategic move from L's POV.

As a corollary, the previous two points effectively ensure Light will gain access to the notebook. He'd naturally want to get his hands on it once everyone starts freaking out about the shinigami, and, without knowledge about the memory rule, L would have no reason to keep it from him, perhaps even wanting to see what how he'd react to the shinigami and murder weapon while banking on Light not committing murder in front of him. Regardless, Light, as he canonically did, knew he could BS some reason to keep his hands on it long enough to get the kill.

So far as Higuchi goes, it's not like Light actually had to be at the scene of the arrest. Light knew that if he worked alongside L to catch Higuchi, then he'd naturally be privy to the same information that L had, especially if he was able to contribute to the investigation (as he did). Light had even made sure that the new Kira was someone high status, not someone anonymous, so by the time the new Kira gets arrested he's a semi-public figure whose face and name Light would have discovered as his innocent self and used to confirm the kill with the scrap as Kira.

How could he be sure he would have the watch? As far as his innocent self goes, Light knew that the watch would have sentimental value to his innocent self since it was a gift from his father, plus he knows he's a creature of habit; he wouldn't remove the watch without a proper reason. As for L, Light knew that L would think that someone as careful as Kira/Light wouldn't turn himself in with self-incriminating evidence. Furthermore, without knowledge of the Notebook, he couldn't anticipate any clever usage of a watch on Light's part. Even then, Light was certain that he could retrieve it once he was released. There would be no reason to keep it from him, especially with it being a gift from his father.

Invincibility:

Now with the debunks out of the way, it's important to establish that this plan is effectively unbeatable. To begin with, the 13-day rule has a triple effect. (1) It completely exonerates Misa and Light. While it'd be fairly simple to exonerate Light alone with Higuchi killing in his place, the 13-day rule was needed to clear the strong forensics evidence against Misa. Seemingly no matter how tie the link between her and the tapes Kira sent was, the rule effectively shuts down anything short of witnessing her writing in the notebook since she is not dead. This allows them both freedom to roam outside HQ. (2) It's bait for L. It's TOO convenient that it exonerates Light and L so easily. In Chapter 45, L speculated this exactly, that it'd be feasible to come up with some sort of plan where Kira turns himself in after lending his power to someone else, helps catch the new Kira, and then reclaims his power while in perfect position to take over as L as well. If L could debunk the rule, then all the pieces would seemingly fall in place that the whole affair was a strategic play by Light. This rule, alongside with other details, Light counted on L to see through to fall into the trap that killed him. (3) It is strongly against anyone else's morals and character to test it. L was the only one amoral and brave enough to test it with a prisoner. With L gone, the next two people in charge would be Soichiro Yagami and Light Yagami. Soichiro is obviously very much a moral paragon who couldn't even use the notebook to kill Mello in self defense and had previously expressed that the power to kill as Kira itself was evil. Light obviously could just take after his father and state that it's too risky/evil to test it and let the others fall in line.

Those "other details" I mentioned are the scrap of paper he visibly tore out of the notebook and the information Light granted of the notebook itself. This combined with the 13-day rule is what strongly plays into L's intuition in testing the notebook. The tear was made after Light tore out all of his original pages, which he had used to acquire the scraps used to kill Naomi, kill while under surveillance, and the one hid in his wallet. It was a deliberate move to trick L into considering the possibility that fragments of the Death Note could be used to kill and that Misa was doing so. After all, the task force had thoroughly combed through her apartment for forensic evidence. (And that itself is another detail that shields her exoneration.) They didn't discover the notebook in her belongings, so L couldn't be sure, but this, from his POV, would allow him to tighten the noose around Misa. A very enticing bait.

Allowing the discovery of the notebook itself is a tactical move that further helps exonerate Light and Misa. From here, it's simplest to examine the outcomes by altering some variables and seeing how they ultimately benefit Light:

Outcome 1: What if Light remained in confinement?

If L keeps Light in confinement, so must he keep Soichiro Yagami, who volunteered out of being emotionally compromised. The longer this goes on, the more strained his relationship with the task force becomes and the more unreasonable he looks as Kira continues killing. It's likely more members than just Aizawa leave, and he doesn't bother to lend the aid he canonically did in catching Higuchi. Furthermore, Light made critical progress in the investigation via Yotsuba analysis. It's possible L cracks the pattern, but it would certainly take longer as he

wasn't able to pick up on it as fast as Light did. By that point, L had already become depressed and lethargic due to the case seemingly flipping the board on him. With limited resources, no Light, and a mental nerf, it's unlikely he catches Higuchi. Since L himself wouldn't consider anything less than hard proof a win despite his extrajudicial power, and plus because he wouldn't want to divide his focus between the Kira suspects and the new Kira, he would eventually have to release Light, Misa, and Soichiro -> and this leads to the canon route we saw with L having to either go after Misa or not after catching Higuchi.

Outcome 2: What if L didn't try to debunk the rule?

Misa's exoneration, as Light internally monologues, hinges on the 13-day rule. If it gets debunked, she would have to at the very least remain under their surveillance. If L, perhaps sensing a trap, foregos investigating it and Misa, then Misa simply continues killing criminals, continuing Kira's reign. At best, this is a stalemate, though Light mentions that he could perhaps get Misa past the security systems or get a picture of L somehow for her to use the eyes on, so it only be so for a limited amount of time.

Outcome 3: What if L let Light go but kept him away from the case?

As explained, from L's POV this would be a bad strategic move, but what then? Higuchi gets captured, never dies, and the rules of the notebook and the circumstances under which Higuchi acquired the notebook are revealed to L without Light being there to become Kira again. That brings Light and Misa back to being under close surveillance by L but not suspicious enough to confine. L is forced back to square one, which is to keep them within arm's reach, and the innocent Light likely begins helping him to find the other Kira(s), likely getting his hands on the notebook at some point -> back to canon route.

Outcome 4: What if Higuchi never got caught?

Then Light and L continue chasing Kira, who continues Light's ideals of the wicked suffering punishment. It's not ideal, but Light lives on as a free man while someone carries on his work. An improvement from where he started with this plan. Since Light had instructed Rem to pass the notebook to someone greedy, lustful for power, and high status, this outcome is unlikely since the new Kira would be a semi-public figure and, due to pursuing their own personal goals in addition to punishing criminals, they'd be more likely to slip up and make mistakes.

Outcome 5: What if Light wasn't with L at Higuchi's arrest?

Due to L's character, he knew he would keep Light close no matter what. As explained above, Light would've inevitably gotten his hands on the notebook in some way or another to regain his memories.

Outcome 6: What if L checked the camera footage of Misa?

This genuinely makes little difference to the plan's success since L died because suspicion was beginning to ramp up against Misa. If Rem saw L checking footage that would definitely implicate Misa, L gets instagibbed alongside every other member of the task force. Even supposing that she spares the task force for whatever reason, then that just leaves Light in a similar situation as he was before Misa's capture. She is almost certainly a Kira, and Light is implicated by circumstantial evidence. BUT now he has the 13-day rule as further shielding, though even in that more damning situation the task force wouldn't jump the gun on him. In this situation, Light could just throw her under the bus or perhaps with some quick thinking pull a sneaky maneuver to make it seem like Rem also killed more of the task force.

You can also consider this yet another layer of planning coverage in his switching of the notebooks. L destroyed all footage of himself from the university as a precaution against Kira, and if he chose to review it and Light picked a different notebook to be discovered by the task force, then Light would be clearly seen alongside a shinigami. But Light manipulated the situation such that the only evidence L might find if he reviewed tapes would only hasten his death.

Greater Kira Theory:

If he really wanted to bank on the 13-day rule entirely, then Light could've just had scheduled several criminals to die who were in jail until Rem made the switch, but of course L would spot the pattern that these victims were suspiciously not live broadcast, so he had to instead widen the scope of possibilities of Kira's powers and nature that L must keep in mind. The existence of a Greater Kira who used the suspects L knows of as pawns is a possibility that Light logically forced L to consider. The fabricated diary that concludes with Light stating he might be Kira and Light supposing he might have been possessed by a shinigami in his sleep play into this. Given the already extraordinary circumstances surrounding the case, L can't not consider that there might be validity to this theory. This acts as another layer of fortification for the exoneration since now, even if Light and Misa have heavy circumstantial/forensic evidence against them, then they could never be held accountable since they were under supernatural possession. This possibility actually makes L depressed. And to shield that, Light waited 7 days to stealthily give up the Death Note while in confinement. The killings had stopped immediately after he was thrown in jail, but he waited a long time to lose his memories. Why?

It's likely that Light attempted to time his contradiction in personality (from stoically accepting confinement and wanting L to keep him there no matter what he says to desperately begging to be released) to around when he thought Rem would discover a new person to act as Kira. He was off by one week. But the idea was that if the contradiction coincided with the resurgence of killings, then it would indeed seem like some evil spirit had left Light and found a new host. As for the contradiction, the instruction Light gave to L to, no matter what, not release him shields the contradiction and his exoneration. It's harder to dismiss Light's change in personality as just anger or madness from confinement if he directly goes against something he said earlier so clearly, which the memory-wiped Light just dismisses as him being previously crazy earlier (again, lending to the possession supposition). It also adds another layer to his

exoneration. The task force were loyal to Light's word and withheld pressuring L to release Light, which only built tension as more and more criminals continued to die.

Finally, Higuchi's death plays into Greater Kira Theory and adds yet another layer to obfuscate any suspicion towards Light and Misa. When Higuchi was captured, he immediately died. With the consideration of another Kira, then it seems like a tactical move to prevent Higuchi from spilling any information. (Thus, this theory also has the effect of concealing the benefits Light gained from killing Higuchi, casting suspicion elsewhere.) It would then be reasonable to consider that Greater Kira kills Kiras who get caught ASAP. Given that neither Light nor Misa died after capture and after they were freed, it would seem like Greater Kira didn't fear them spilling any info, further obfuscating whether they were even Kira or not, i.e. if they were Kira, then Greater Kira would have killed them; but even if they were Kira, they couldn't be held culpable due to supernatural possession. Light's masterful execution of Higuchi while sitting right next to L clinches this, as, since L couldn't discover Higuchi's name in the notebook, the only one at the scene as far as L knows with the only murder weapon that could've caused Higuchi's death, then it's something he had to consider. Though to L's own credit, he does make the deduction in seconds of getting the notebook that there were two notebooks on Earth, so he's only somewhat fooled.

This possibility drives L into depression for quite some time, with Light seemingly having changed the rules of the game entirely after his confinement. But his intuition so he still feels certain that Light is Kira. Against anyone else, this would've been extremely confounding, and the possibility of a Greater Kira only remains a troubling uncertainty in L's mind once he gets his hands on the notebook.

Effectiveness and Execution:

To start, the Memory Recall required, as detailed in another analysis, an extremely high threshold of cognition and emotional strength to pull off the plan smoothly. Anyone lesser than Light would be too overwhelmed, confused, braindead, or mentally conflicted to kill Higuchi as he did. But the presence of L makes it exponentially more difficult given the detective's power of perception and observation. To kill Higuchi would therefore require an absurdly high level of composure and sleight of hand. Lastly, taking over as L also required immense intellect in several ways from deduction to engineering (detailed in another document).

The obvious victories of the plan are that it brought his holistic strategy to fruition, simultaneously killing his only equal and taking over as L, but it also erased the new problems that had arisen, Misa's incrimination and Rem, who protected Misa and threatened to kill Light. The plan leaves Light free to kill Misa at his discretion. It also achieves more subtle victories. It secures Light's position on the task force. Before that, he was on shaky ground with them, but making progress with catching Higuchi demonstrated his worth and intellect. It completely bypassed L's own preparations that made his death implicate Light by allowing a shinigami to be discovered and cornering her into blatantly killing L. Having the wherewithal to go for Rem's notebook after she died, also good execution on Light's part, also gave Light his own notebook to use. With the only other known notebook in their possession and having combed through Light's

place, Light would have a further alibi to keep killing as Kira. And one last coverage, Light knew he had to kill L fast. L had a feeling soon after Misa's killing spree that Light had him cornered. If he fled or retreated with the Death Note, Light knew, it would be suspicious for Rem to hang around there. It would beg the question who she was possessing.

Truly a "perfect victory."



Holistic Analysis:

Light's entire strategy in the first half of the series is a brilliant mix of offense and defense. The offense aspect can be thought of as drawing L more and more out of hiding while also gradually limiting the moves he can make.

Concentrating his killings in Japan soon after the broadcast trap forces L to focus his attention on Japan and work with the Japanese police -> He is now dependent on them, and must therefore also maintain some sort of relationship with them.
Light uses information from the police, showing he has a connection to them -> L is forced either to investigate them, setting himself up to compromise their relationship, or ignore the information leak, giving Kira an advantage -> L investigates discreetly to maintain his relationship through the FBI, but the FBI get massacred, revealing L's deception and scaring away most investigators -> L is forced to either reveal himself to rebuild trust with the few detectives brave enough to remain or possibly lose all his eyes and ears in Japan.

With Kira having demonstrated that he will kill tails and the massacre of law enforcement acting as a strong fear-based deterrent, L is forced to rely on a safer hands-off surveillance strategy -> The prime Kira suspect (Light), if he is Kira, seemingly evades surveillance effortlessly.
With Kira having demonstrated a willingness to kill tails and an ability to bypass hands-off surveillance, L is forced to again pursue a direct "keep your enemies close" approach, albeit heavily fortified, to apply as much pressure as possible and possibly trick the suspect into killing -> Light is now on the task force.

Looking at it this way, we can see that Light brought L down from a shadowy operative commanding the world's police and media through a screen while hidden far away in a dark room to an investigator forced to work alongside his #1 suspect with a team that's count didn't even hit the double digits. L has a few subtle victories here and there - surprising Light at the ceremony, the card trick (if you shut your brain off), and his handling of the second Kira - but for most of his battle against Light he was playing right into the latter's hands. We can see this with how Light anticipates several of his moves. He had the alarm system to warn him of any tails, he had the potato chip and porn magazines ready for the surveillance strategy, and he saw through the second broadcast trap with ease.

More impressively, he adapts everything the story throws at him (L's attacks, Rem, Misa, etc.) to his advantage. Even the first move made by L, the Lind L. Taylor trap, Light turned to his advantage by responding with a killing spree in Japan that played into the semi-false profile (explained later) that Light caused L to form, which later would play into the "L Do You Know" misdirection to conceal the FBI massacre. The potato chip strategy and FBI massacre showed L that surveillance was useless, but the false profile gave L hope that Light could be made to slip up in another emotional mistake, causing him to form the self revelation strategy, which has the advantage of fully closing the distance between them.

L's biggest stunt came after the FBI massacre. By then, he had gotten a grasp of Kira's strategy of closing the distance between them and decided to use that to his advantage. L had logically concluded that neither an indirect approach with tails or cameras would do, that he had to be well-guarded given the risks, that he needed to make Light slip up some compromising information, and so he surprised Light at the ceremony. Since Light had profiled L as someone who did his best to remain anonymous, aloof, and distant, and L's previous strategies had reflected that accurately, L directly approaching him was something he was genuinely blindsided by. It's likely that Light instead thought that L would opt to recruit him through some sort of proxy, not via direct contact. A good move that makes him for a while unkillable. It briefly turns Light's own strategy against him. While Light only countered this later on, he played his cards well such that L ultimately got nothing besides fortifying his position.

And that brings us to the Memory Loss Plan. Just to immediately get this out of the way, it's perhaps Light's best moment of improvisation/adaptability, going from being almost cornered by Rem and L's to killing them both with his master plan, among several other numerous victories that it accomplishes. Since Light was so good at evading any directly incriminating traps, the most L managed against him was circumstantial evidence, though very suspicious evidence - that Kira #2 had left an implicit hint to meet at Aoyama on the 22nd, confirmed seeing Kira #1 on the 23rd, and that Light was in Aoyama on the 22nd + the Raye Penber stuff. Memory Loss Plan was always a defensive measure he could come up with to exonerate himself against any circumstantial evidence L could find. In fact, it's hinted at after Soichiro's heart attack when Light suggests confinement to make L trust him, showing that Light already considered such a possibility. And even if you think it wasn't fully formed, there's no reason to believe Light couldn't formulate if he was caught in similar but different damning circumstances. This includes the other examples of "luck" people commonly charge against Light. Naomi says Raye revealed his identity to one of his tails (Light)? Raye reports the bus incident to his superiors, and L reveals Raye revealed his ID to Light? It would inevitably be countered by some version of Memory Loss, albeit without Rem to kill L. Thus, it functions as the ace up his sleeve defense against anything short of direct evidence, but the canon version also acted as offense.

With the run down over the strategy complete, it's important to analyze the more minute, nuanced areas that contributed to his strategy. Light gave 2 characters to consider: the ace student, all-around nice guy Light Yagami, and the childish super-killer Kira. Everyone knows the first is a facade. Light studies frequently, has perfect grades, has friends, and is seemingly the perfect son and brother. He's helped solve two cold cases in the past, and it's even established early on that he plans to rise to the top of the NPA. He idolizes his father, undoubtedly the most moral person in the show, and observes that the Kira case is taking a serious toll on Soichiro, and he promises to personally put Kira behind bars if Soichiro dies. These details subtly plan the seeds for Light to close the distance between him and L without acting as Kira. His career aspirations will inevitably put him within L's sphere of influence (the NPA) within 1-2 years, and his father he utilizes to give himself an emotional reason to take on the case, both humanizing him and giving him another reason to join the case. It's best seen when Soichiro has a heart attack, Light immediately feigns panic and shouts that it's Kira, and brings up his promise in front of L later in a "corny" display.

I've hinted at it before, but the "childish and hates to lose" profile of Kira that L has wasn't completely accurate. L had profiled Kira as a young person around the age of a student prior to the broadcast trap, young enough to be idealistic, old enough to not be afraid of the Death Note. The broadcast trap produced an emotional response from Kira in response to being called "evil," a childish outburst. Through the power of introspection, Light knew from his past actions and from his understanding of how L would interpret such actions, how L would profile Kira, hence Light being able to exactly replicate L's profile of Kira when the latter asked him to. Light played into this with the killing spree concentrated in Japan. In the context of someone who just suffered a humiliating defeat and is likely a young idealist, then it does seem like an emotional outburst, revealing a very competitive side in response to a loss, but that, as previously said, conceals the strategic aspect of it. He purposefully committed murders around the time frame of a student then blatantly switched the pattern when the police caught on. That (1) plays into the "childish" personality as it seems like a taunt directed to L, (2) foreshadows the "L Do You Know" misdirection. From L's POV, it seems like another message to L, but more communicative given the actual words. L is tricked into focusing on the notes, causing him to be blindsided when the FBI drop dead. And the final suicide note that L receives after the FBI agents' deaths further plays into this, forming the message "L Do You Know Gods of Death Love Apples." It's useless. Kira was trolling L like a child. Later, Light not so subtly calls L dumb when he tries a second trick with a fake broadcast, showing another seemingly emotional, foolish moment. While L gets an understanding of Kira's strategy after some introspection and that he's very cunning, he's still convinced of the profile. This leads him to believe that he may be able to force emotional mistakes if he applies enough pressure, leading him to reveal himself to Light. Since Light's resolve was stronger than L believed, Light is able to maintain his cool completely, no-selling the offensive aspect of L's strategy.

That's not to say L was wholly off. Light does clearly get pissed when he feels he's lost, but Light just flanderized it in order to make L feel safer risking strategies based around this profile. He was wholly self aware of how others would perceive his true personality and knew how to strategically utilize it to his benefit in order to make L make mistakes and underestimate Light. And by the time of the tennis scene, it does seem that both have a greater understanding of each other, with L knowing that Light knows of his profile of Kira. And the two engage in several layers of "I know that you know that I know…"

But of the two, Light does seem to engage in a greater degree of metacognition with a greater understanding of his opposition. We see this in his constant usage of throwing dilemmas that force L into lose-lose positions based around his aloof, pragmatic, and logical personality. L can either investigate the police or allow the information leak, L goes behind their backs; L can either reveal himself to the police to retain his allies in a risky move or attempt to rebuild resources more slowly, L goes for the former; L can either keep Light Yagami close - allowing more direct surveillance and pressure - or keep him afar to keep himself safe, L chooses the riskier option to make progress; and the Memory Loss Plan is filled with these. Ultimately, past the first move made by L, Light heavily strategically outmaneuvered him, with the latter playing right into his hand. When L tried to exploit his understanding of Kira, we see that the attempts

largely fall flat, with direct pressure yielding no hint of fear or anxiety for L to pick up on. It's no wonder that a few moments before his death L intuits that Light has turned the tables on him, and at that moment L was the moment under Light's gaze.

And for fairness sake, I'll quickly go over his blunders. As I've said, I don't believe any of these would've sunk him due to the confinement strategy he had, but still errors are errors. Note: This doesn't count bad luck. (1) Realistically, Light's bus hijacking plan would've been reported to Raye's superiors. Light could've easily planned around this by simply scheduling Raye to die when he did but stating that he doesn't discuss the incident with anyone. (This would've also saved him from the Naomi situation. (2) Anime only: Light considers the notecard scene a loss within his mental monologue, but this is still very inconsequential short of him outright confessing. (3) Light pursuing Kira #2 proves to be damning later on. L deduces that Kira 1 and Kira 2 made contact on the date that Light volunteered to go to Ao, but he was in a bad situation either way as he did have to get Kira #2 under control but couldn't really have done so since Misa had planned out finding Light well. L's strategy of turning Light's own strat against him genuinely pays off well. (4) Light fails to anticipate that L would turn his own strategy against him. (5) When Light has Misa send her final tape to the station, he doesn't have it thoroughly cleansed of forensic evidence, which gets her caught. These are the 5 notable mistakes Light made. Considering it's a battle that spans several months, this isn't too bad.

I'll give a quick run down of the various categories:

Adaptability - Adapts all of L's moves against him - surveillance strat, FBI, profile, etc. The strat most impressively also adapts to Misa's interference and Rem's ultimatum, turning it into a two birds with one stone against both of them.

Effectiveness - Achieves all of Light's goals. Manipulates L into a strategy that ultimately proved to be his downfall. Other victories include crippling the investigation via FBI massacre and successfully making L underestimate him.

Alignment - Each counteraction draws L closer and closer towards him. Fake profile draws directly into suicide note misdirection and later when Light calls out the second broadcast as dumb.

Fortitude - Memory Loss obviously serves as a major contingency plan against any sort of circumstantial evidence against Light, which itself is loaded with contingencies. Other aspects of this include Light making sure that L couldn't get any major difference in temporal pattern during the potato chip killings, the suicide note misdirection, etc.

Resilience - Light most impressively overcomes Misa and Rem, who put him in a situation where he was effectively cornered. Getting rid of Naomi on the fly is also impressive.

Shielding - Memory Loss. Light's general strategy of forcing dilemmas on L has the effect of either closing the gap between them, increasing the risk to L, or keeping Light at a distance, where he can more easily evade anything L throws at him.

Execution - Light's superb acting skills during surveillance strat and L's self reveal. His general composure. Memory Recall. Him actually winning.

Feat Framework:

External Situation: First, as Light mentions at the start of the series, he has to maintain his grades and study fastidiously as he previously did. It plays into his long term goal of joining the NPA, an alternate contingency plan to get close to L, it plays into his main plan of joining the task force as it's a very blatant indicator of his intellect to L, and it shields his innocent "Light Yagami" persona. If Soichiro informed L that Light's grades or behavior changed noticeably around the advent of Kira's reign, then L would have more reason for suspicion. Second, Light has to maintain a convincing facade of an innocent, precocious high schooler around trained detectives who are after him, letting no signs of stress, anxiety, nor deception slip through; this becomes particularly egregious when L observes him for hours on end through surveillance cameras, even ambushes him at the graduation ceremony to apply pressure, but can't arouse any sort of reaction in him.

Opponent Quality: L. While his brilliance is well known, people overestimate how far he got because of it. L was a billionaire who was able to casually have a multi-story building built merely to act as a temporary HQ for the case, he had command over the FBI until Light's machinations set them apart, he had dozens of detectives who could perform the more hands-on work of forensics for him - and they also acted as his eyes and ears - and his anonymity served as the perfect counter to Light's Death Note. It's fitting that Light was up against such a massive force, as he would obviously run circles around any ordinary government threat.

Internal Situation: Light's biggest advantage is the Death Note, a supernatural weapon that can kill anyone with just a name and a face. Via clever usage of the information he knows about it and its ability to murder and puppeteer people, he matches the other greatest mind on Earth, L Lawliet. An underrated aspect of Light's performance is that he is constantly nerfed throughout the series. Just using the note requires immense mental strength. In Death Note: Short Stories, it's shown that a later Kira was catatonic after using the Death Note for 3 days, and he eventually committed suicide after Near called him out. More than that, multiple times it's mentioned that the Death Note is a curse upon its user, bringing misfortune to them, so Light in fact had in-universe bad luck throughout the series, making it very impressive how much he accomplished.

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One final thing. What was Light's plan, after closing the distance between them, to secure the kill on L before Misa and Rem came along? He seems to have in mind a broad strategy of getting close to L and manipulating information out of him that Light could use to discover his name.

If we bare in mind the Memory Loss plan, he might've had some concepts of a plan involving another Kira with the eyes, but we'll never know.