TIME SCALE
(i am black, He is red)

Some people claim Light came up with memory loss in a few seconds. This is nonsense. After Misa was apprehended, L let Light do whatever he wants for 3 days straight, during which he came up with the memory loss plan.

Counterargument: but Light had to ask Rem questions after the 3 days passed, and the answers were the basis of his memory loss plan.

Light didn't ask questions out of curiosity just to gather information for coming up with a plan. He instead asked confirmative questions: ["What happens to the ownership of the Death Note after it is returned to the shinigami" (the ownership reverts to the shinigami) and "As long as you have one notebook, do you retain memories of all notebooks?" (yes)]

The answer to the first question is common sensical. It's so obvious, even Ryuk guesses the answer on his first try despite not being that knowledgable about the Death Note compared to Rem who confirmed it for Light. And the answer to the second question is what the memory loss plan hinges upon, and Light confirms it by adding "that's correct?" to his question after asking Rem the Yes/No question, so he already assumed in his mind that the answer was probably yes.

So the claim that he came up with the memory loss plan on the spot AFTER asking those questions is irrational to conclude compared to the more logical alternative: Light came up with the memory loss plan over the 3 days at home when he was researching on his computer, and free to do whatever he pleased, meanwhile the plan hinged on some information he needed to know (the ownership of the death note, and retaining one's memories) which he confirmed with Rem after she finally went to him.

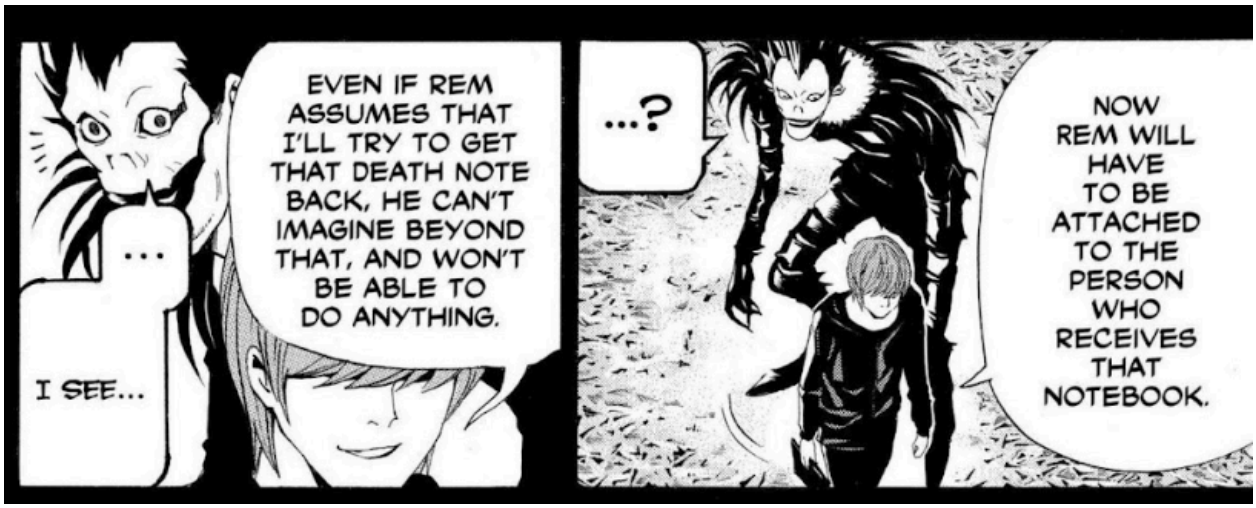
While yes it is true he came up with the plan over the course of three days, however its

Very much implied he came up with it quickly and was just waiting for rem to pop up so he can ask her questions in order to execute it the way he wants to



If you also consider the rational inference that some ideas about a memory loss plan may have formed in his mind even before Misa was suspected (due to the rules of the notebook), then he had even longer than 3 days to come up with it. So the timescale is ambiguous, but potentially quite high according to the narrative. This reduces the potency of the feat, since thinking time reduces how much intelligence is required.

This doesn't necessarily downscale light that much, as the plan still takes high level of prediction and foresight, an accurate assessment of Rem's capabilities despite of only seeing her twice before and and only ever talking to her to the extent of below even casual conversation even if he knows that Rem loves misa and will kill to extend her life span. He has the foresight to know what Rem thinks is happening and the exact minute she realizes what truly is happening due to how he set it up.



Then here comes L. Light despite being only on the investigation for a very brief time, and I mean VERY brief (26-33) During that time, he was able to grasp a complete understanding of how L works, his personality, how he does things and confidently predict with high accuracy exactly what L would do, understanding of the task force, and probably most importantly understanding of himself, and what a hypothetical version that didn't have the death note would do and see how it would interact with L.

L's prudence

Misa was apprehended as almost definitively being the second Kira. Light was the main suspect throughout the investigation with the task force, and Misa's apprehension almost made it certain that Light is Kira, along with all the other evidences such as Penber, Naomi, the meetup with Kira-2, etc., which all pointed to Light being Kira. The rational thing for L to do would be to apprehend Light immediately rather than letting him go off for free for 3 days without any surveillance.

Light used the 3 day opportunity to defuse his trap, dispose of the death note pieces in his wallet, and sneak off into the forest to bury a death note for implementing his plan after spending several days coming up with the plan.

Misa has physical evidence of being a second kira, There's nothing that Implicates Light of having even met Naomi or Raye Penber, He wasn't even seen on camera when Penber died. And L has no way of knowing if He met Naomi MIsora due to her using an Alias when she was at the police station. Simply meeting light would not implicate him in any way, Furthermore, how would the rest of the task force and his father react? L's reasoning is that Misa moved to tokyo in april and became close with light, her parents

were killed by a burglar which then were killed by kira, furthermore Light has a personal cellphone to call just her with. Also light is NOT a prime suspect yet, he tells Yagami to be prepared for that outcome means he assumed he will get information out of misa that would implicate light, which he did not, therefore Light has not been called as a suspect, only misa.

Also, people take drastic measures when cornered. This is why they blindfolded Misa incase she can kill people just by looking at them. Drastic problems require drastic measures. Instead they treated Light like he's some insignificant stranger they shouldn't worry about.

Because Light is not a suspect, Misa is, and has damning evidence.

Counterargument: but that would be illegal and L doesn't have definitive proof.

L installed cameras into the homes (including bathrooms) of 2 families and spied on them for a week straight because Kira might have been among them. This is illegal, and he had even less reason to suspect them compared to the suspicion against Light at this point. "Legality" is only a problem when Light needs to have his plans succeed.

Because, how would the task force, or even Soichiro react to his son being suddenly captured for being kira on the basis of Misa hanging around him? How would L accomplish it in secrecy? How would he keep it hidden from Soichiro that his son is just missing? Just because he doesn't care about the law does not mean he will just do whatever he wants. While he does act outside of the rest of the task force's morals, He consistently tries to appeal to them as well.

Also L literally had Mogi stalk Light the previous night when he met with Misa. And now he can't even install a basic security system to watch over him?

Where? In his house again? The same thing already failed once before, why would it suddenly work this time?

The only reason Light could plan for 3 days, and sneak out of his house into the forest in a suspicious getup to bury the notebook is because L lacked prudence and did not confine OR surveil him which would have been the rational decision to make even from his own perspective.

You do know Ryuk and/or Rem can notice someone tailing light right? What's stopping Rem from telling Light and Light just planning around that? L having someone tail light 24/7 just stops that one method, there's multiple ways to get that notebook buried in the woods using Ryuk.

Also, it was a mistake for L to give Light the information about Misa getting apprehended and the evidence that lead to it. He could have used the informational advantage he had to trick Light, for example by saying that Light is under arrest due to Misa admitting that he is the true Kira. There are countless excuses he can use such as by claiming that Misa was tortured for information, or even more effectively something similar to the prisoner's dilemma which Yokoya used, in order to trick Light into thinking he was betrayed by Misa.

This prevents Light from taking drastic measures, while giving L the opportunity to confine him.

Why would this work on light? You can't just say "Character X from a different series used Y to outsmart A, therefore in a different series Character B could outsmart Character C using Character D" L never actually has to say much for Light to catch on what he's doing, why would this method work? And why wouldn't light be able to see through it?

Rem instructions

This is only a minor mistake, but fortunately he got lucky and it didn't become a problem. When Light told Rem to find someone to take the place of Kira, he specified "Find the person within a month. The longer it takes, the longer Misa is imprisoned." This means that Rem will try to find the person as soon as possible. However, Light only initiated his memory loss 7 days after confinement. This means that if Rem found someone else too quickly (within a week), then Light would change his personality AFTER someone else already gains the power and criminals dying, which will look less like a transfer.

In other words, Light should have specified to Rem that the person should not start killing criminals until AFTER 7 days passes from this moment. This is only a minor mistake, since L can still interpret it in several ways, but it's easy to fix with only a few words while increasing the persuasive robustness of his deception.

This is a very unlikely thing to happen, secondly it doesn't really matter if rem found someone the next day, if criminals are still dying well after a month light and misa goes into confinement L would still have to let them out due to the pressure of the task force, and L would want Light to work with him to catch this new Kira, as light probably would be doing already.

As I mentioned before, Light implied that Rem should find the new Kira as soon as possible. In that case, if Kira started killing soon after Light was imprisoned, L would have a lot of time to catch Kira. More precisely L had 50 days to catch Kira, but he just sat on his ass doing nothing.

L is supposedly the greatest detective in the world, and given how stupid Higuchi was, it should not have been that difficult to find him within 50 days. After that, if L had been prudent and cautious after seeing the killings stop with Light being imprisoned, then once he obtains the Death Note from Kira, he would not let it get into Light's hands, because the killings would actually stop once and for all. Meanwhile Light is too busy imprisoned to interfere with L testing the 13-day plan. This would collapse the memory loss plan completely, but fortunately L sat on his ass doing nothing the whole time.
Taken from u/TheNamelessMonster_

This is honestly the worst point so far, in what world would L do this, first he quite literally specifically told light he would NOT be let out of sight BEFORE he got rid of the memories (scan below), this was affectively forecasted by light, id like to just remind you in Death Note it is emphasized that Light is confident in how L orchestrates events. L's style being a hands on approach where he brings suspect into controlled environments or personally overseeing sting operations (remember that Light has a wealth of experience against L's methods at this point either by direct experience or through observation "a posteriori".)

L's Sensory

For Light to open up his watch compartment, he needs to pull a part of it 4 times, making 4 click sounds. Light got lucky that L happened to be wearing headphones and therefore unable to hear the clicking. This is auditory perception conveniently being blocked.

You do know he could have just talked over the clicking if the thought L was going to notice the sound right?

When Light cut open his finger with a needle and scribbled it over the paper, blood was exposed to the air. Blood has a pretty distinct smell, which is why you'll notice a weird smell if you ever kill an ant accidentally. Fortunately for Light, L's olfactory perception is on the level of an average human, so he never noticed this.

It is a small pick of blood, while L is focused on higuchi, in a helicopter with the windows down, there are competing smells and odors all around them in the wind and the people close to them you are not going to be able pick it up, hell how many times inside or outside you accidentally cut yourself and you dont notice it until you happen to look at it? This does not downscale L at all.

The worst of them is visual perception (observation): When Light gained a hold of the Death Note, he fiddled with his watch, pulled a button four times, took out a needle, cut his hand, and wrote someone's name down on a tiny piece of paper, then potentially even grabbed the paper and swallowed it (which is what he claimed he would do when speaking to Ryuk at the start). L never noticed anything off about Light's behavior despite sitting right next to him. Based on this, L is below average human in sensory perception (specifically observation).

His hands are obstructed by the death note.the needle is hidden in his watch, also the needle and paper doesn't make enough sound for someone to pick up, especially through headphones. And he doesn't have to swallow it immediately, he could have done so later, after he is freed from his cuffs with L. The fact that the piece of paper is still in his watch means that they don't find it suspicious enough to take it apart and look for clues.



Auditory, olfactory, visual, one of them was blocked by the headphones L wore on his ears, the second one relied on L being an average human in noticing distinct smells, and the third one relied on L being absolutely horrendous at observing.

Counterargument: L wasn't looking at Light.

First of all, yes he was. L was at least sideeyeing him as shown in at least 2 of the manga panels of volume 7.

Second of all, even if we assume you're correct, L is an idiot if he chose not to observe Light. Light was consistently the biggest Kira suspect, then all the killings stopped after Light was imprisoned, and Light (without memories) even admitted that the likeliest explanation of the situation is that he purposely passed on Kira's powers. Then now, all of a sudden the Death Note returns into Light's hands. L's intuition should have been blaring out intense warning signals that something is seriously wrong, even I would have felt that way if I was in L's position, instead he's just sitting there letting Light do whatever he wants without even watching over him. In conclusion, L's intuition is actually horrible. And Light's luck is actually insane, with how L let him do all that on the helicopter. Luck and plot convenience might be Light's top 1 category.



Counterargument.



Counterargument: L assumed Light wouldn't do anything suspicious, because he's able to check if Light writes anything in the death note.

This is an unintelligent assumption, and it relies on L suddenly having a personality shift as well. When Light showed up on the train where Penber died, L thought that Kira may have been on the train. The counterargument bought by the task force was that Kira can kill from afar, so this can't be the case. However, L refuted the counterargument by saying that Kira may have wanted them to think this way.

It isnt, because that is verbatim what he said, and what prompted L to think that Kira was on the train was because of what L saw, he saw Raye Looking at something and deduced he must have been looking at Kira Himself.

Just like the task force did, L reasons that Light would not do anything suspicious with him sitting right there, but he doesn't even bring up the natural counterargument that "Light may have wanted them to think that way." instead letting him do what he pleases.

He has no reason to think otherwise, he has no idea how ownership works

He is dealing with a supernatural notebook that kills in absurd and seemingly illogical ways in the first place. Anyone reasonable would keep themselves at least a little open minded without making big assumptions about what can be done with the notebook.

Yes however, the assumption light can still kill while holding this notebook requires hindsight, you can reason that the shinigami gave higuchi the notebook and higuchi wrote names in it, giving the names and face thing to kill, which you can come up with on the spot, the idea that Light can probably still kill despite not only him sitting there, watari in the helicopter, surrounded by cops is complete madness.

In conclusion, L's horrendous reasoning, prudence, intuition, and sensory perception, is what let Light go off scott-free in the helicopter. A more average human wouldn't have let this situation occur, but for this
scene, L was below average. Far below average.

The average human would, in fact, the average human would have cleared light completely the moment Higuchi is arrested until later coming to the conclusion of there being two notebooks

Light relies on Rem being there to cover up his scream.

When Light screamed at having his memories forced back into his head, L didn't notice anything suspicious and decided to attribute it to Light seeing a monster. This isn't an antifeat for Light, because he couldn't have planned for it.

But it is an antifeat for L. First of all, Light should have some mental preparation after seeing all the other people scream. Even L only widened his eyes after seeing a monster for the first time. Second of all, they are safe and sound in a helicopter, which should reduce the fear factor. Thirdly, Light made a sudden quick recovery after screaming harder than anyone else did after seeing the monster. It can be interpreted in several ways, but L should still have been made at least a little suspicious, and thus increased his observation of Light as he fiddles with his watch.

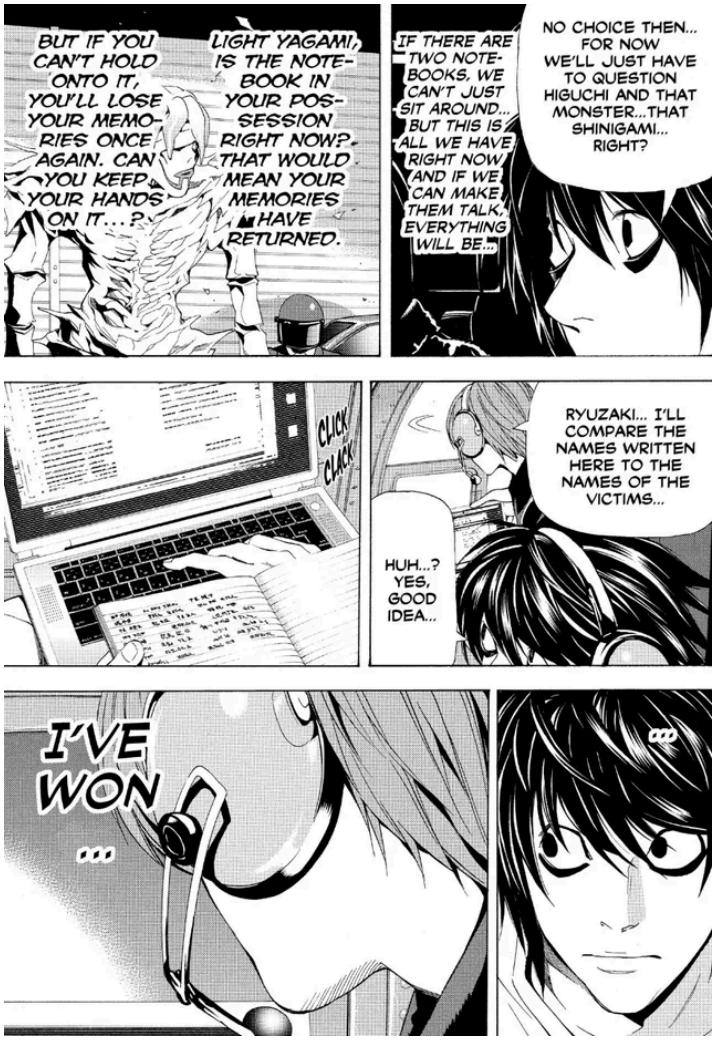
Seeing 2 people scream would not make you just not scream and be scared for a couple of seconds seeing a shinigami that looks like a damn grim reaper in front of you for a few seconds. Furthermore, this scream is at best a “WTF IS THAT” kind of scream. The same as his father. Yes Light knows you see something but is also very curious as to what it is, as he isnt really prepared to see a shinigami like L is.

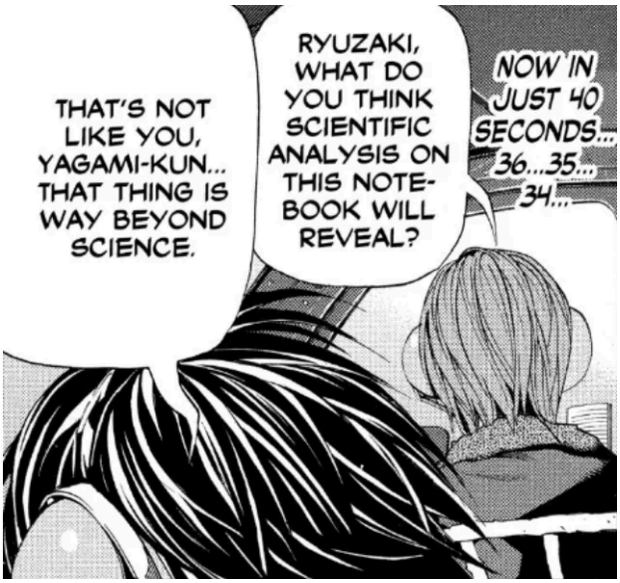
L being distracted

After Light gained the notebook, L asked him a question, but Light ignored it (likely due to being distracted in his thoughts), which made L a little suspicious.

Being distracted for a second, and not hearing what the other person had said is very common, you can ignore them and not even notice they did ask you a question, thats not really a suspicious thing to do, which is highly why I didn't pick up on it

All these suspicions are racking up constantly. They should have cumulatively made L so suspicious, that he doesn't even keep his eyes off Light for a moment.





Light even turns his back on L to hide the fact that he's writing a name into the scrap paper using a needle and his blood. At this point, it's far more suspicious how oblivious L is being to all this.

All the suspicions are racking up madly, but L just places his complete faith in Light not doing anything, choosing instead to sit there ignoring Light.

Counterargument: L had to focus on other stuff.

No he didn't. The biggest problem here is Light and the Death Note. L wasn't shown to be giving orders to the police or focusing on anything else, so his attention should be on the priority, aka the biggest Kira suspect who now has the death note in his hands and is fiddling around with his back turned.

There is two things, 1. He is facing higuchi, do you expect L to be suspicious because hes facing the suspect?



And 2. Again, He does simply because L thinks that Light could not kill with the death note while he was right next to him. You are using hindsight to explain what L should have done, do you expect L to have known Light would kill Higuchi here? Or that Light has a secret compartment in his watch? Even if L thinks light is still the prime suspect, he has no reason to assume Light would use it here.

Fake Rules

Light also gets the shinigami Ryuk to write 2 fake rules into the notebook using otherworldly matter, so that the taskforce doesn't burn the notebook (likely possibility just like Near burned the notebook at the end), and also the fake rule to completely alleviate suspicion for himself and Misa. But there's nothing special about Light's deception here, it's something an average person could think of and relies heavily on Ryuk helping him again, like always. This is like the third or fourth time Light has relied on Ryuk to conveniently give him some kind of a major advantage.

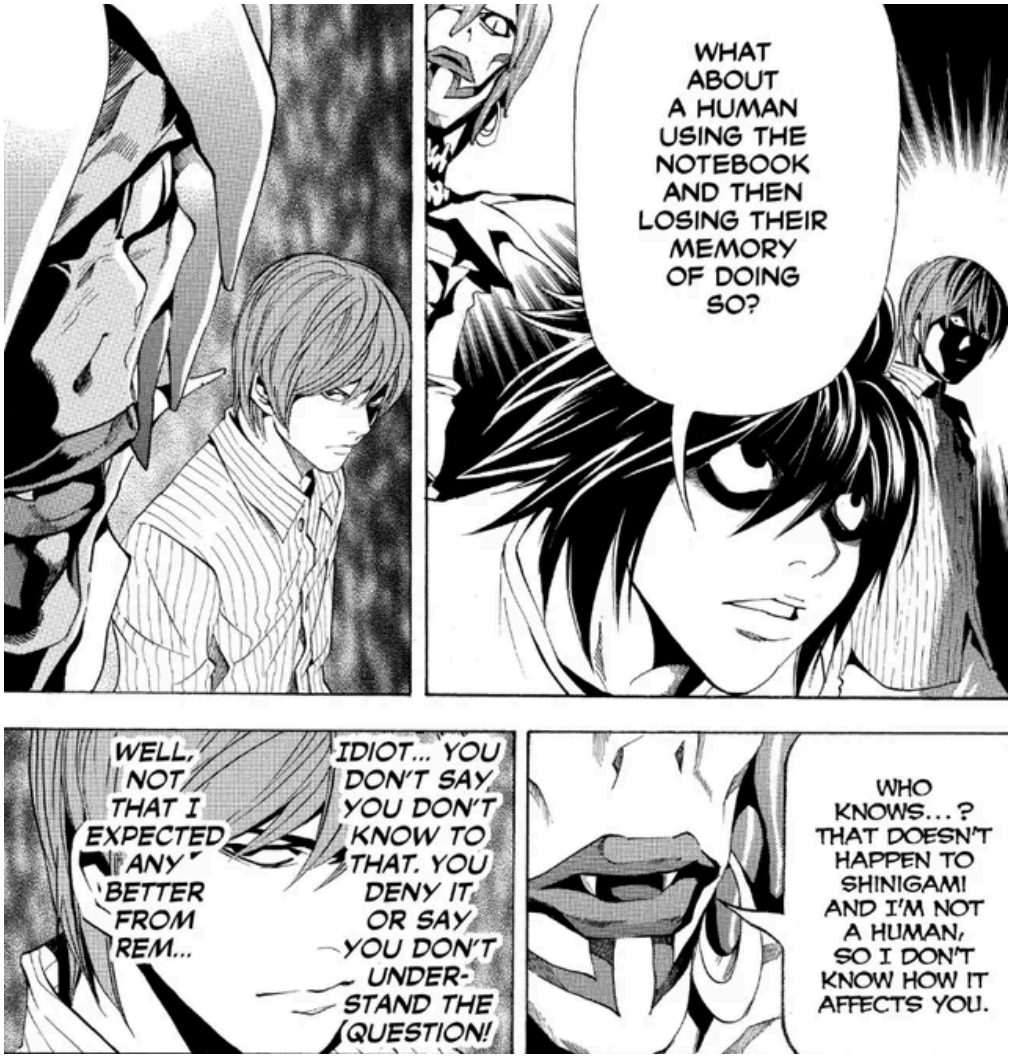


The shinigami is the reason Light has to do this in the first place. L gained something so huge from rem and misa ignoring Lights order to stay away for two weeks he almost gained everything he needed to solve the case the very next day.

L recorded Misa and Light during the confinement, and they both continued to remain main suspects. Especially Misa. Even after she was released, L continued to mention how it's so obvious she's the second Kira. Direct quote: ["But according to this, there's no mistake that you're the second Kira. It's actually so definitive that it makes me question it."] — L

So it would be a horrible mistake for L to delete the security footage right after they were released, since more information may be derivable from the questioning, right? But the footage is never brought up again.

The truth is, after touching the notebook, L is able to see Rem. Meaning that if L at least checked out the footage with Misa from before she seemed to have lost her memories, he would see Rem standing right there. It wouldn't be abnormal for L to be this cautious because L even questions the possibility they lost their memories, and Rem's suspicious answer further confirms it.



He probably would have done that, if he wasn't preoccupied with the fake rules already and trying to see how exactly the death note and shinigami worked. And this is just an assumption that rem would appear on a recording, we see them on live footage but we don't know if it works on playback. It has never been tested. But they are in a different facility than the one misa was captured in, it would take time to get it in the first place

Surveillance

Misa isn't surveilled either as she goes off into the forest to dig up the Death Note.

Why would they? The task force doesn't suspect Misa anymore, if he did order one of them to, they would have said no and he would have had to appeal to them and drop it.

And then when Misa returns, they see this on the camera. Fortunately for them, the audio is not available or something, and they can't check the mouth movements either, so her compromising words do nothing.

Again, why would they? Even L agreed to stop monitoring them, even if you think he lied about it (i am inclined to agree he would have probably monitored them again) Right now he has no reason to as he is trying to see how the death note works and questioning Rem on it, while it is true he wants to test the death note, he cannot do much because of the fake rules in it



EXTRAS

The surveillance cameras in each room are turned off unless there's a specific need for them. This allows Light to go into the room where the shinigami killed watari (luckily without any physical hindrances blocking him from accessing the room, as well as without anybody from the taskforce following him). All while receiving zero surveillance as he hides the notebook, because the security cameras were conveniently turned off.

Why would anyone check it? Even if they were suspicious, do you not think Light, who can restore most of the data can't just wipe the footage? And what hindrance do you expect to just block him from getting in? A fucking Mario comically large mario brick block? And why would L have it so that no one can get in there? This is a task force group with watari and people he trusts besides light and misa who cant get in there with no one knowing, why the hell would there be hindrances? And what do you mean lucky no one followed? If they were to do you not think light cant convince everyone to split up? How incompetent to do you think light is?

Right before L's death, he brings up testing the 13 day rule (the fake one that the shinigami wrote). For all the years that Light reigns, nobody questions this, they just pass on L's position to Light despite all the suspicions mentioned previously, and also the fact that Light without his memories even admitted that the best position for Light if he was Kira would be to become the new L after the current L's death.
Because using people like that goes against not only Soichiro's but Light's morals, why do you think they would all suddenly flip? They all agreed not to do this

Conclusion

point 1 is a disingenuous downplay, we don't know when thinking time started or ended, therefore you cannot definitively say it required either higher or lower intelligence to come up within this span of time, you can say he had the outline of the plan already considered before even meeting misa "losing memories and chasing kira and get the notebook back." I.e., but everything else, (who is going to do what, how L and the task force will move, who is going to receive the notebook, who is going to touch it first, ownership etc) was done during those three days

Point 2 Requires L to act outside of what he usually does and just restrain Light, disregarding anything the task force says and stop appealing to them, which he wouldn't. It requires light to be stupid enough to not notice cameras in his house again, despite having a multi step method for it, and to not be able to think up another way to get his notebook buried using rem or ryuk for some reason, with another requirement of L using someone's feat from another series (despite having no reason to do it) with light just falling for it.

Point 3 requires something very unlikely to happen to the extent for it to happen, Higuchi might as well have been standing right outside the woods, yelling at rem to drop the notebook so he can pick it up and light for some reason just being completely wrong about how L moves

Point 4 might as well require light to think of "what if one day this guy just gets struck by lightning, or just run over by a car"

Point 5 requires L who doesn't know what is going on yet to let Light out of his sight, despite not only already saying he wouldn't, but disregard trying to figure out what light is doing, what if light had it set up so criminals would just keep dying through the next 500+ days while light was imprisoned (we know thats impossible due to how the rules work but L doesnt know that) boom, light is completely innocent and so is misa.

Point 6 requires L to not only have doglike smell and hearing(hearing 4 small clicks over some bulky ass headphones, and hearing the needle writing higuchis name) and despite his window being down, smelling the smallest pick of blood used to write higuchi's name, and to have x ray vision to see through the notebook to notice light writing in his watch. It also requires L to throw out his reasoning of why he wasnt more observant of light but instead higuchi. And downplaying him to the highest degree because he didnt realize light could still kill and get away with it

Point 7 requires L to suspect light on the basis of being surprised when actually seeing a shinigami.

Point 8 requires L to be suspicious because Light's body is towards the suspect. And again the same thing as point 6

Point 9 is just downplay of light's fake rules and what he predicted with it, and ignoring what advantage L got from Rem and Misa forcing light into doing this plan

Point 10 requires L to think of this while trying to find out how everything regarding the death note and shinigami worked, and the assumption recordings worked for shinigami in the first place, which we have no way of knowing.

Point 11 requires the task force, despite clearing misa, to tail her, which they wouldn't because shes clear, and also for some reason the task force being able to read lips?

Point 12 requires light to be so incompetent that he wouldn't be able to know where rem went, and convince the task force to split up to go find her. And that for some reason L would have made sure no one could get access to it despite having no reason for that to be the case.

Lastly, extras for some reason need them to check the surveillance feed, which would have been wiped if it was in use due to an all data deletion. Why would they check it?