

A psychological look  
inside the movie  
'good will hunting'  
essay sample



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Upon being found as the secret sleuth to a graduate level mathematics problem, MIT professor Gerald Lambed seeks out the janitor, Hunting, in efforts to engage his mind and make him an apprentice. As the plot twists, an earlier issue lands Hunting facing jail time for assaulting an officer during a fight in his neighborhood. With knowledge of this, Proof.

Lambed Uses his university standing and professional name to allow a proposition to be offered to Hunting that Lambed believes to be mutually beneficial: Hunting is freed from jail time under the stipulations that he works with Lambed academically and sees a therapist for counseling purposes, simultaneously. Initially standoffish, Hunting doesn't seem interested, meanwhile a recent new love interest sways his thinking and he accepts Proof.

Lambed and the courts offer. While there seem to be a few dilemmas listed above, including the professors initial interest in offering a lessened jail sentence for his potential proto©g©, the intent of his proposal was not for sole self-interest if the viewer understands his point of view and life experience. In his opinion, what person could possibly turn down an opportunity to work directly with an MIT professor ND for free?

For the purposes of this paper, the ethical dilemma discussed is what happens next in the plot of Good Will Hunting, and that is when Will (who burns through multiple therapists before connecting with one) and his eventual Psychologist, Sean Maguire begin working together. Two major occurrences happen, one is that in an early meeting between the two,

Hunting begins to 'test' Maguire in efforts to make him lose his temper and it works.

By discussing a painting in Maguire's office that holds emotional value, Hunting is able to prod the weak areas of Maguire's past and after he could no longer take it, he became irate and physically restrained Hunting by the throat. To quickly go over this and how it relates to the American Psychological Association's Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct, this seemingly obvious violation is of course beyond all measures of intentions of helping but is also cited in Standard 3: Human Relations (PAP Code of Ethics, 2014) in 3.4 Avoiding Harm: "Psychologists take reasonable steps to avoid harming their clients/patients, students, peeresses, research participants, organizational clients and other with whom they work, and minimize harm where it is foreseeable and unavoidable." In order to avoid such a situation, beyond the realm of Hollywood determination, a simple separation of the two people (professional and patient/client) to collect thoughts, breathe and reevaluate the circumstances would have been an appropriate alternative to physical contact.