

Anatomy of a setup essay sample

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



Introduction:

In order to increase self-awareness and personal protection within a prison environment there are several things one must keep in mind. The tools necessary to combat these individuals are not readily available nor made out of steel. You must use common sense and a keen eye being extra diligent about your surroundings at all times. Before deciding to subject yourself to this onslaught of negativity within the walls of a prison, you must understand not only the enemy but also yourself.

Within this bubble no one is exempt from a criminals focus. No matter how smart you think you are or how many years of experience you have; even the best, most prepared, have lost their jobs and lives to the criminals games and manipulation. A criminal has 24 hours a day to contemplate how to hurt, scheme, or violate their victims. Criminals utilize an arsenal of tools to get what they want and don't mind hurting anyone as a means to that end. The intent of this essay is to provide the reader with a window into the world of the criminal. This is an opportunity get a glimpse into that which has been considered taboo and unspoken. This is an examination of illicit behaviors and controlling techniques created to systematically threaten the fundamental values of all those they come into contact with.

Once you walk through the front entrance and beyond the electrified fence; you will have just passed through one of only two ways you will exit this facility at the end of the day on your feet. You will of course receive specialized training before being expected to walk the inner perimeter but all the training in the world will not prepare you for what you are to experience inside. As you proceed to your working area you can't help but see the

hundreds of blue and orange CDCR stenciled jumpsuits, some only an arm's length away from you at times. Contrary to your popular TV show very few are locked up for 23 hours of the day, even fewer walk around in chains and handcuffs. You try to look inconspicuous but it just makes you more noticeable. All will recognize your presence as the stench of fear puddles on your skin. It's not a matter of when, where, or how, the probability of getting injured or killed is very real and it's this reality that should chill you to the bone. You find yourself having difficulty looking in the direction of the inmates as they undress you with their eyes. No matter men or woman, we all are prey within these walls.

You are the chosen one who will receive the most attention for a while as several attempts are made to test your vulnerabilities. You can expect all inmates to attempt to find commonalities with you about topics to engage you on a daily basis. There will be a pervasive attempt to create some sense of trust as if you are the only person that can solve the daily issues. You can expect that anything you say will be twisted and taken well out of context in a manner to cause conflict between staff with daily interactions. Now is your time...you are center stage...and there is very little you can do about it.

Anatomy of a Setup

I have now provided a background impression of a prison environment. It is important you have a clear understanding of a few terms before addressing an inmate. These terms are professionalism, naivety and over-familiarization. These terms if not properly understood will get you hurt and can definitely jeopardize your safety and that of your peers. Professionalism is the term

used to differentiate a person of skill and knowledge from an amateur. In the correctional sense, professionalism means that your lifestyle and standards have been and are considered better than that of the inmate. Being naïve and over-familiarization are usually spoken about in the same context. A naïve person is one who cannot differentiate between being a professional and using good judgment as compared to lacking experience, judgment, and being overly trusting. Over-familiarization is synonymous with being overly friendly. This is expressed by the sharing of personal information, using slang, or gang terminology, and even allowing inmates to address you informally or by first name. Without stating the obvious, over-familiarization is also the act of having sexual relations with an inmate, which tends to occur more every year.

Transition now into the stages of manipulation inmates use to set up the unsuspecting victim. The inmate will spend much time selecting his/her new victim. Through intentional or accidental circumstances, the inmate starts by observing all possibilities. He/she looks for characteristics like being extroverted, naïve, or just being a new employee. The criminal creates a suspicion of weakness and in the first stage tests this suspicion by testing limits, bending rules, or asking for contraband items. They will attempt to engage staff in more intimate conversations or test the employee's level of tolerance which are good ways to test your professionalism. These attempts will be quite subtle and will evolve over time, as the inmate has nothing but time to think about their next manipulation. Asking for things like a pen or pencil, extra toilet paper, or asking for a favor are some of the more popular tests. People with characteristics of confidence, good judgment, and strength

usually make it past this first stage because these traits are engrained into your personality and criminals tend to shy away from these types of individuals. Another very popular test is the “ imaginary support system.”

The inmate will attempt to show you a sense of favoritism or offer to help you in a time of noticed stress; he/she will promise loyalty or pledges of devotion in an attempt to form a strong, trusting friendship. A popular example would be noticing a problem between co-workers and staff splitting in hopes of finding familiar ground with one or the other. Another test is through the use of empathy or sympathy when an employee shows signs of a bad day. By allowing yourself to express emotions, you become more vulnerable to sympathetic ear. This test tends to happen a lot in a place full of negativity and low morale. The next two steps work together in an attempt to build a more personal bond between yourself and the criminal. The first part is the “ plea for help”. Here the inmate will create a story of their vulnerability in hopes you will step forward to help any way you can. If you fail this test, the inmate will move to sharing specific information he/she has heard spoken about you by other co-workers.

Whether a truth or a lie the idea is that the inmate is looking out for your best interests and will continue to do so. There are two tests used less often but still part of the criminal’s toolbox. The first being the offer of protection, and the second being the allusion to sex. The offer of protection is as it states. The inmate will inform you of a plot of physical injury offering to step in and handle the problem in order to build trust between you. The allusion of sex test is usually focused on the female employee although men too

have been persuaded into sexual relations. The last three stages of manipulation are always the most dangerous. The lever is better known as the act of blackmail. The shopping list is a request of the employee usually illegal, to keep the blackmail from surfacing. The final stage is the sting. This is like a “ get out of jail” card in monopoly. While the inmate is not focusing on parole, the use of the sting will be to minimize the repercussions from some difficulty the inmate is in.

The inmate has spent valuable time working toward this stage. Understand in the end that you mean nothing to the inmate. You are merely a pawn that he/she will sacrifice if it serves a purpose no matter how this affects you or your career. The last three stages come into play after a lengthy period of tests and observations. Since the beginning of this process, the criminal’s intent is to exploit your weaknesses of professionalism, judgment, ethics, and morals. If you have gotten to this point, you have probably found yourself in some sort of compromising situation or questionable behavior. If at this point, a co-worker has not stepped forward to pull you away from the fire, you may have one last chance to step forward and request help yourself. Making the decision to step forward on your own shows inner strength you probably lost sight of long ago. While there are no guarantees and your career could still end, the one true resolve is you still have your life. Once you cross into the last three stages, you have reached the point where return is much more difficult. This is because you have already performed the shopping list request once, which is sure to increase any penalties you may face. This becomes a vicious circle which only digs the hole deeper each time.

Conclusion:

I hope after reading my essay you hold a higher appreciation for those tasked with keeping societies worst offenders out of our communities. Always be mindful that the inmate is a criminal not your friend, buddy, or someone you shoot the shit with. These individuals are pathological psychopaths and sociopaths who hold no regard for anyone other than themselves. When you find yourself in the company of a criminal their intent is to test, manipulate, and get whatever personal information you will give them to later use against you. If for any reason the hairs on the back of your neck start to tickle or you sphincter tightens...it's time to stand back and re-evaluate the situation, if you have any doubts about a situation you find yourself in ask for help. Even if you have broken the rules or crossed boundaries beyond repair, honesty and some humility will go a long ways toward saving your career, or your life.

Citations:**Source 1:**

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