

# Anatomy of a SET-UP

Inmate/Staff Relations

California Department of Corrections California Correctional Center

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## Foreword

In recent years the possibilities surrounding the control and manipulation of prison employee behavior by inmates has reached alarming proportions. Concern has been expressed in prison administrative circles that degrees of sophistication never before reckoned with are emerging. The fear is frequently voiced that techniques have been developed to an extent, which threatens the fundamental values of prison staff members. Detection of deceptive manipulation is difficult because anxious alarms and dramatic speculation have overshadowed reports of sober efforts to determine which dangers are real and which imagined. Heretofore, investigators have made conjectures concerning inmate manipulation of staff based on information generated by nonspecific reports and inadequate facts. They are, in effect, untrained and incapable of dealing with this new sophistication. This paper, then, represents a critical examination of these manipulative and controlling techniques and such facts as will cut through vain speculation. It also seeks to resolve the subtlety of deception by providing a tool for recognizing and dealing with these manipulative processes. This transcript also takes as a model actual case histories in which highly resistant captives confront their victims, and through a careful process of subtle inducements, manage to compromise them. The purpose here is to provide the realism necessary for critical examination so illicit behavior control can be dealt with. Never, to our knowledge, has there been a work to systematize human behavioral manipulative procedures of prison employees by inmates, and the methods they create to receive this gratification are called "set-ups."

A prison employee who has been set-up has been compromised and coerced into violating institution rules. These violations are usually minor at first, but once a violation occurs professionalism begins to decline. Almost before the employee realizes he or she has been set-up, they have allowed inmates to secure favors from them or they have introduced illegal contraband into their institution. No one is exempt. Neither intellect nor seniority are protectors. Some of the most intelligent people in Corrections been set-up, and were terminated at the hands of inmates who could boast nothing more than Ph.D. in street psychology.

If career correctional employees are to survive at all, their only defense is in learning to recognize the characteristics of a set up, and once recognized, they must know what to do about it. The process is intricate and deceptive but believable, and its propagators are shrewd, cunning and subtle. It is essential, then, that the reader pay close attention to what is being said here, because this type of deception is becoming more and more prevalent throughout the Department of Corrections.

## **ANATOMY OF A SET-UP OR INMATE/STAFF RELATIONS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Dead Sea of Israel is a body of water that rivers can flow into but not out of. It takes but it never gives. Because it never gives, its waters cannot sustain any form of life. Still, it has the innocent look of being like any other body of water. Many travelers have been fooled into camping on its shores. They drank of its waters only to wither and die. Yet in that same area there are lakes that accept and release the river waters. These lakes are teeming with life because they give as well as receive. Human life can be likened to the Dead Sea and its surrounding bodies of water: People who live rich, fulfilling lives give to their environment and their existence; they don't just take from it. Unless the cycle of give and take is' completed within a human being, the result will be an arrested individual development. Growth within this person will still occur but a portion of the mind becomes blocked and cannot mature. People who develop a life-style of giving but who are unable to receive are very often found in mental institutions; and, people who take and cannot, or will not, give frequently live outside the law and are often found in prisons. Men or women in confinement who are trapped at the taking level of life usually continue the style by preying on institution employees. They develop intricate and sophisticated systems of deception for no other reason than the pleasure it gives them. Takers must gratify their senses. Never, in the correctional field at least, has there been an attempt to explain, examine and control these procedures. This paper seeks to accomplish that end, and was prepared by Bud Allen, a training coordinator for the California Department of Corrections, who has extensive experience in the investigative field of behavioral manipulation techniques, and Diana Bosta, an academic teacher and reading specialist for the California Department of Corrections, who herself was the victim of a compromise attempt, but managed to outwit and control her tormentors.

## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this presentation is to aid new and old employees alike in developing a greater understanding of criminal thinking and behavior.

To help them realize the importance of monitoring not only inmate Behavior, but their own as well.

To show that while not all inmates are steeped in criminal behavior, many of them are.

To demonstrate that inmates are capable of manipulating and controlling the actions of any employee.

To provide an instrument that will outline the procedures of a set-up and to describe its processes.

Finally to provide the employee with techniques for preventing or stopping a set-up without being offensive to the inmate or losing any portion of their own spectrum of professionalism.

## **PRESENTATION**

We make a common mistake in Corrections: Whenever training is offered on the subject of inmate/staff relations, it is always presented from the standpoint of how staff should relate to and treat inmates. Rarely do we consider how inmates will treat and relate to staff. Because we have been remiss in this type of training, we become vulnerable and unsuspecting to the multitude of subtle techniques Inmates develop to read us. Our words and actions tell them a great deal about us. From our response to seemingly harmless questions they can formulate a profile of who among us might bend or circumvent institution rules and regulations. They soon learn which employees are easily distracted and will allow illegal activities to go unnoticed. They know what our individual tolerance levels are and which staff members can be coerced into granting favors or bringing in contraband.

Inmates can make determinations of this type about us because our movements, language, and actions are comparable to a color spectrum. Colors have shades of light and darkness with intervening hues. So, too, does our language and the way we move and act. It is because of these variations, or shades of meaning, that a psychologist, for example, can map our personalities. They can be amazingly accurate in their diagnoses of us. It is even possible on the basis of how we act, walk, and talk to delve into a person's innermost thoughts and feelings.

Because our personality traits lend themselves to interpretation, one need not be a person of letters to seek and discover our hidden messages. Inmates become very proficient in this ability. Within a very short time after confinement they learn to read us with almost the same accuracy as the psychologist. They read the signs we post, and from these messages decide who among us will be receptive to a "set-up." Every now and then, however, they make a mistake. They misinterpret, or misread the signs, and it is because of one such mistake that the material in this transcript was able to be formulated.

## **TERMS AND DEFINITIONS**

The criminal society is composed of a highly diversified conglomeration of complex life-styles. Combined they form a system and social community that is difficult to understand even for the most astute behaviorist. It is little wonder, then, that the novice is a prime target for manipulation and the eventual destruction of professionalism. However, the criminal society, in and of itself, is only partly responsible for this breakdown. The Department of Corrections is responsible also. We contribute to the inmate manipulation process by not making clear departmental expectations. We use a number of terms without adequately explaining them. We say, "Be professional," but what does that mean? We say, "Don't be naive," but what does that mean? Before further discussion can be meaningful it is necessary to define some of these terms.

### **PROFESSIONALISM**

Professionalism, in Corrections, is a word used to admonish a specific attitude and job approach. In its strictest sense it refers to communicating and acting in a manner that distinguishes a person of skill and knowledge from an amateur. The Department presumes that you are that person of skill and knowledge if you can pass a test and have never committed a felony. This doesn't begin to explain a professional. Professionalism, in the correctional sense, means that your standards and life-style have been better than the standards and life-style of people confined to prison. In that sense, then, you are not being professional if you use inmate jargon or manipulate institutional rules as they do. Not only would this lower your standards but it decreases your productivity and limits your ability to function. For example, an inmate referring to a fatherless child will use the term "bastard"-often because he knows of no other term to use. He is limited in society to where the word can be used, so his world remains small. The professional, on the other hand, speaks in terms acceptable anywhere and would say "born out of wedlock." The standard is maintained and his or her world is much larger.

Professional people are usually friendly people and the Department expects their employees to be this way. However, inmates see this as a weakness unless the employee can make a distinction between friendliness and familiarity. In the Spanish language there are familiar and unfamiliar friendships. They are administered with the same courtesy, the same pleasant attitude and the same politeness. The main difference is that before a person can be a familiar friend he/she must be loyal, honest, and proven, which involves time and effort. All other friendships are unfamiliar. If you call an inmate by his first name, you are opening the door to a familiar friendship. This seemingly insignificant act causes inmates to take greater license with you than with other staff members. It becomes difficult to refuse requests that exceed normal limits, and professionalism begins to decay. Later, if you become the object of peer criticism, you are seen as being naive.

## **NAIVE**

In corrections, staff members who become overly familiar with inmates are said to be naive. The actual meaning of the word is "having or displaying a simple or trusting nature; lacking in experience; lacking in careful judgment or analysis, and being unsophisticated." Most people entering corrections have a simple or trusting nature. They listen to, and believe inmate stories, and act upon their information. If they become disillusioned, bitterness sets in and their effectiveness as correctional employees declines. The suffering stems from lack of experience. The solution is simple: Before acting on information supplied by men in confinement, check them out. Read their files and ask staff members who know them if the information is reliable. Be aware that not all inmates are honest and not all inmates are dishonest, but don't allow the dishonest ones to destroy your judgment by fixing your mind on one avenue of thought. Careful judgment refers to the ability of employees to analyze the movements, actions, and words of inmates as well as their own. Recently, in one of our institutions, an inmate said to a female employee, seemingly in jest, "If I had one wish, I'd wish to go home with you." The remark seemed innocent enough, but her response to the statement was to come back and haunt her. She replied, "I doubt if the institution would approve of that," and they shared a good laugh. The indication to the inmate was that if it were not for the dictates of the institution, she would approve. He spent long hours building what he thought was a relationship that had exceeded the bounds of friendship and one day he attempted to compromise her. During the investigation that followed, the employee stated, "A more careful choice of words would have prevented all this."

## **FRIENDLINESS AND OVER-FAMILIARIZATION**

Excessive friendliness and over-familiarization are also common terms in Corrections. You are overly familiar if you allow the taking of license or liberties. Such things as discussing your personal problems or financial matters would come under this category. Allowing inmates to call you by your first name or enforcing rules for one person but relaxing them for others are further examples. Engaging in intimate conversations or promising favors that are not within your jurisdiction to give is the same as accepting favors that lead to the taking of liberties, and that can lead to the employee becoming the object of a set-up.

In one of our institutions a Medical Technical Assistant (MTA) had become overly friendly with his inmate orderly and frequently shared food from his lunch box with the man. One evening he gave the orderly a piece of rolled salami about two inches long. A few evenings later the inmate suggested that the MTA bring a still larger piece because it was not sold in the inmate canteen and he would like to share some with his buddies. The following night the employee brought him a full roll. Not long after that, the inmate told the MTA to bring in drugs, saying he had the salami as evidence of rules violations, and he would report the incident if the medic failed to comply.

In this case the employee did not comply. Instead he reported the inmate to the Captain, saying, "I made an error in judgment and this inmate is trying to capitalize on it."

The Captain complimented the MTA for sharing the incident in the face of what he thought would be criticism, and told him the lesson would make him a better employee. The following is intended to show the reader how each phase of this outline is implemented. It should be understood that the process of a set-up is not always developed in the order shown, but regardless of the procedure inmates' use, all the elements will be utilized.

## **BEHAVIORAL MANIPULATION**

### **TEAM STRUCTURE**

Deception is individual, manipulation is assisted. Modifying behavior for criminal intent requires aid. Team effort makes detection of a set-up more difficult because one participant can verify the acts of another, and suspicion can be momentarily set aside. Individual deception, on the other hand, is largely devoid of verification, so tracing a suspicion can be more easily accomplished. The size of a set-up team will depend on the goal to be accomplished, the personality characteristics of the victim, the time involved, and the location and physical layout of the area where the manipulation will take place.

A well structured set-up team is composed of Observers, Contacts, Point men, Turners and Runners, each with a specific task to perform.

**Observers** in a set-up are the people who watch and listen to you. They theorize by your actions and the things you say whether or not you would be a good candidate for selection. Observers pay particular attention to employees who use inmate jargon, ignore minor rule infractions, play favorites-enforce rules for some and not others-or are easily distracted.

**Contacts** are inmates who can supply information about you. A former clerk or orderly who knows your work-style would, be an excellent contact. Inmates who overhear personal conversations between you and other staff members, and who have formed opinions about your strengths and weaknesses are valuable contacts. These people also ask subtle questions to talkative staff members and gain additional information.

**Point men** are prisoners who stand guard when an employee is in the process of granting illegal favors, violating institution rules, or is being compromised or harmed. For example, an officer in one institution was coerced into bringing inmates alcohol. While they were drinking a point man stood outside the area, ready to drop a book to warn of other staff approaching.

**Turners** are inmates who have befriended you and use their friendship to get you to engage in minor infractions of the rules. You have been "turned" when you look the other way and allow the taking of license or liberties. Runners are people who are not active members of the set-up process but will assist in a phase of it for some sort of reward. Payment is usually, drugs, money, cigarettes, or the promise of sex when a woman has been the victim of a compromise scheme.

## **THE OBSERVATION PROCESS**

Observation, naturally, is the first step in the "set-up" procedure. Manipulation cannot take place without a victim, and victims are not just capriciously selected. The likelihood of a victim is determined through a careful, close, silent study. Formalization of the study is nonexistent in that there is no written work. Information is gathered and stored in the minds of manipulators. From this information opinions are formed, theories are developed and characteristically categorized; then behavior modification procedures are developed.

Observation is done in four parts: (1) observation of body language, (2) listening observation, (3) verbal observation, and (4) reaction observation.

### **Body Language:**

The manner and method that we carry ourselves gives off messages. Manipulators read these messages and make determinations about us. For example, as mentioned before, inmates learn to read us by the way we walk, act, and talk. Of the three, walking is an inherited trait, the other two are acquired. Actions such as the tugging at the ear lobe, biting the lip or fingernails, the constant folding and unfolding of the arms at inappropriate times, not knowing what to do with the hands, excessive scratching, shifting from foot to foot when one should be standing still, or a washing motion of the hands are all actions that under certain conditions can give a variety of messages. The astute onlooker may conclude that you are unsure of yourself, that you lack confidence, that you dislike your job, that you are fearful, etc. Conversely, the steepling of one's fingers, leaning back in a chair and crossing one's legs, or leaning forward by bracing the face with your hands and resting the elbows on a desk or table can give the impression of ease. Our attire can also give body language messages. Unpressed clothing, a partial uniform, or buttons left open are indications of sloppiness and could be interpreted as inattention to detail; inmates may assume from this that you will allow the taking of liberties. Low cut blouses, miniskirts, and hyphenated walking motions may send a message of availability and lead to compromise attempts.

### **Listening Observation:**

"All my husband wants to do is sleep." The statement was made jokingly and innocently during a snack bar conversation with a friend. An inmate, in the process of delivering breakfast to the two women, construed the comment as a message to him of the woman's unhappiness at home, and subsequently began hiding love notes under her plate. Whether we like it or not, our conversations are monitored. By not being aware of who is listening or how our words can be interpreted one may very well provide the foundation for selection as a set-up victim. For example, if an inmate knows you are a hunter, or religious, or a nature enthusiast, he will style conversations around these topics in an attempt to befriend you. If, through your conversations, they know you have problems, the information may later be used as a wedge.

### **Verbal Observation:**

In this process the confinee engages you in conversation. He may make subtle allusions to the rule infractions, tragic experiences, sex, etc. He very carefully monitors your movements and facial expressions. He looks for signs of approval or disapproval; is the conversation making you uncomfortable? Or whether or not he can feed our ego. Jokes reflecting the sensual side of life, stories of sad experiences and injury situations provide gauges of your feelings on such matters.

Reaction Observation: Sometimes a very fine line will exist between reaction and verbal observation because verbal observation very often brings about a reaction. If an inmate asks you for a favor your response tells him something about you. In verbal observation there may simply be an expression that delivers the message-here the reaction is very slight. On the other hand the reaction can be strong, vehement, and prolonged. Reaction observation in this sense has force. Other forms of reaction observation that deliver messages to inmates are: your methods of command, how you respond to emergencies, how easily you anger and whether or not you like our job. When the observation phase is complete, a bank of knowledge has been acquired that determines selection of a victim. Once a consensus has been reached, the information is thoroughly discussed at "bull sessions" and a course of action for implementation of the manipulative process set.

### **SELECTION OF A VICTIM**

Victims of inmate manipulations are selected intentionally and accidentally.

#### **Intentional Selection:**

When inmate observers notice an employee who appears extroverted, friendly and naive, a suspicion is born that presupposes a weakness in the individual. The assumption is made that these characteristics could be manipulated, so an intentional observation procedure is created to verify the suspicion. Although experience and longevity are not prerequisites for selection, they are helpful qualities, and new employees who have not acquired an understanding of the prison environment are usually intentionally observed.

#### **Accidental Selection:**

A new employee or an employee of experience can very often display an impression of confidence, good judgment and strength. Manipulators shy away from people possessing these qualities because behavioral manipulation is difficult. Employees grouped into this category are also circumvented because the characteristics are firmly embedded in the personality. Occasionally, manipulators inadvertently discover a weakness in one of these people and an accidental selection occurs.

Any trait possessed by an employee that inmates can construe as a weakness can result in that individual being selected as a victim of a set-up. To illustrate: In one of our institutions an officer observed an inmate on the yard attempting to roll a cigarette. A strong wind kept blowing his tobacco away until eventually it was all gone. The officer felt sorry for the inmate and gave him a cigarette.

They talked a moment and then he gave him another, then the full package. This officer was a veteran of sixteen years service. During his career he had been approached by many inmates-some were very sophisticated and cunning, yet he never succumbed to their demands. So, one wonders; why this time? What was different?

It was later discovered that he had financial problems. He made the mistake of sharing these problems with inmates who had befriended him. Three hundred dollars had been placed in his lunch box just prior to the end of his shift. At home he discovered the money and kept it. Inmates were now provided with a lever to use against him.

## **TEST OF LIMITS OR FISH TESTING**

### **RULES BENDING-ASKING FOR THINGS**

During the observation period a number of ideas and theories are developed. Assumptions are made about the employee's ability or inability to function under stress, his or her level of tolerance, and how effectively that person will take command. However, before any conclusions can be drawn, these ideas and feelings about the victim must be tested.

Tests proceed at a quarter-step pace so as not to alert the victim, and they include such things as; requests for supplies and materials, asking for favors, circumventing rules, preying on sympathy, attempting to engage the staff member in intimate conversations and pitting one employee against another. The intention of the test of limits is to see how far the victim can be pushed before taking action. If the employee allows a great deal of license, the testing process is interspersed with support pledges to ward off suspicion of the proposed set-up.

Testing is a subtle, slow reading process designed to verify things about an employee that up to now were only assumptions. An inmate who has come to believe that befriending you makes it harder for you to say "No," will test his theory by asking for cigarettes, gum, pens or pencils. If you give them freely he continues the process. If you hesitate he backs off and tests you in other ways. He determines by your reaction to his tests what his attitude toward you should be, the things you like to talk about, how observant you are, and a host of other things. In short, he "pegs" you for what you represent to him, and he will be amazingly accurate in his final opinion.

### **THE SUPPORT SYSTEM**

Support in "set-up" situations can be offers of help, promises of loyalty, agreeing with ideas and philosophies, and telling the victim his

or her approach to inmates is better than that of any other staff member. Pledges of devotion, faith in the individual and complete trust are also common approaches. The main idea here is to develop a strong, trusting friendship. The following is an example of how this phase of a set-up can be used:

"Good morning, Officer Smith. This is Inmate Jones. You know, the fellow I recommended to replace me because I'm becoming the orderly in the hospital."

"Oh, yes," Smith said, "How are you? I'm sorry I didn't remember, but I've had a lot on my mind."

"That's OK, I understand," the prospective clerk said. "Is it OK if I work for you? My friend said you're the best officer in this whole system."

"Well, I try to be fair," Officer Smith, said.

"Fair!" the former clerk exclaimed, turning to Inmate Jones. "Let me tell you how fair this man is. He doesn't write 'popcorn' beefs. He talks to people. This is probably the fairest man in the system, and because he's fair he's got an administrator on his back who likes to see inmates suffer."

"Oh, darn, I left my cigarette in my room. Mr. Smith, could you ... "

Smith gave them each a cigarette and one for later.

"Wow, see what I mean?" the former clerk said to Inmate Jones.

"That God Damn administrator wouldn't do this. He'd say, 'Suffer, Sucker.' This guy is the best officer in the joint and they treat him like he was one of us. Now you treat him right! He ain't like the rest of these cops."

"Well, thanks," Officer Smith said, "and you're right. They do kind of look down on me, but I don't see you guys as convicts-you're human beings. True, you've made a mistake, but you're paying for it, so why should I make you life more difficult?"

"That's great, and if Jones doesn't do a good job for you, I'll personally kick his ass," the inmate said.

"Oh, I'm sure he will," Smith continued, "If you recommended him, he's got to be OK."

"One thing is for sure," the former clerk said. "We convicts won't treat you like some of these cops do ... By the way Jones, Officer Smith's wife is a fantastic baker," he continued jokingly, "I'll bet he forgot those cookies he was going to bring in ... "

This excerpt is from an actual set-up case history and shows the effective use of the "Support System" and the "We/They" syndrome. The employee was made to feel he was something special, that his peers didn't understand him, and that where he couldn't trust the people he worked for, he could trust the inmates.

The officer brought the cookies in, which were later used as a lever against him in an effort to get him to bring in drugs. Officer Smith complied out of fear of exposure and the possible loss of his job. He was later caught and terminated.

### **EMPATHY AND/OR SYMPATHY**

Empathy is the projection of one's own personality into the personality of another in order to better understand that individual. It is also an intellectual identification of oneself with another. Empathy can be the projecting of one's own personality into an object or specific situation within which one shares an intimate understanding or an associated identification. This is usually accomplished with the attribution to the object or situation of one's emotions, responses, etc. For example, a woman with children could empathize with a person whose child is taken in death with a greater depth of understanding than a woman who has not experienced motherhood.

Sympathy on the other hand is a sameness of feeling without necessarily having had the experience that induced the feeling. Pity or compassion for another's troubles affirms the sympathetic feelings. Empathy and sympathy are close associates but with one or two major differences. In empathy, you can understand and identify with a person's problem without feeling sorry for them. In sympathy, you cannot. An illustration of the difference between the two terms might be found in the following dialogue between two inmates:

"You have three children and no wife, and I have three children and no wife." Their circumstances are similar. They share a level of understanding unique to the two of them, so they have empathy for one another. If they begin feeling sorry for themselves, or one for the circumstances of the other, they might work themselves into a sympathetic state.

Empathy and sympathy are very common and necessary tools of a set-up. Inmates using these tools on a staff member will first find a level of understanding that they and the employee can identify with-financial problems are a good example-then they seek sympathy from this person to gain entry into his or her emotions. Inmates schooled in psychology of the streets know that it is easier to take liberties with a person when each has shared feelings on a deep personal level, then with those people who maintain anonymity on these issues.

Setting someone up by the use of empathy and/or sympathy is very effective. Consider this actual example:

An inmate who had come to know about a correctional officer's problems through the use of empathy discovered he was the father of a mentally retarded child whom he dearly loved. The inmate told the officer that he too was the father of such a child, but that his child was in poor health. Having learned during the observation phase of his set-up that this officer was a man of profound emotion, the prisoner maintained a daily commentary on the progressively worsening condition of his child. "Unless Little Joey gets a certain type of treatment that I cannot afford, he will die!" The inmate told the officer.

Because he understood the problems of raising such a youngster, and because he felt sorry for Little Joey and his father, the officer aided the inmate in an escape so he could see the child one more time before he passed away. The inmate lived close by and promised the staff member he would return before the morning count. "After all," the confined man said, "If you're kind enough to let a father hold his child one last time, there's no way I will let you down." Needless to say, the inmate never returned.

### **PLEA FOR HELP**

"A friend in need is a friend indeed," and inmates use and believe in this cliché. A friend will help another friend build a new life. Personal satisfaction and the feeling of a job well done are the rewards. An inmate who has expressed faith in an employee will confess that he has been a failure all his life, that he lacks confidence, and he wishes to change his life-style. He will discuss family, religion, money, and elicit sympathy for a life gone awry. He will say, "and your unique abilities are the only things that will rehabilitate me. I need your help."

This is a delicate thing to handle. If the inmate is sincere he must be helped. It's part of our jobs. How, then, can you assure that he is making an honest request as opposed to setting you up. The truth is you can't be assured. But what you can do is discuss his request for help with other employees in front of him, keeping everything out in the open. People who are trying to deceive you don't want this openness. They have to be careful what they do and say lest a more experienced employee detect the deception.

Beware of confidentiality: There is nothing so confidential that you cannot tell someone if you're selective in the person you choose. If the "keep it under your hat" request is a set-up, the inmates involved, knowing you share with your supervisor or a trusted friend, will drop you and go in search of another conquest.

### **THE WE/THEY SYNDROME**

Recently one of our staff members attended an after work hours party. Imbibing a bit too much, his conduct was less than professional.

The following day inmates overheard other employees discussing the man's behavior, using expressions like: Stupid, lacking in good judgment, and that the man has an alcohol problem. They not only told the employee what was being said about him, but who was saying it. The inmates said, "They're wrong about you. They don't know you like we do. We know those things are not the real you. We don't feel that way." Hence the effective use of the we/they syndrome.

The controversial staff member took the bait and was caught in their net. He remarked to the inmates that, "The 'sons of bitches'" talk about him all the time. "Other people," he said, "do the same thing, why don't they talk about them?"

This situation provided the inmates with the foundation for a "set-up" which eventually culminated in the staff person bringing in whiskey and later being escorted off the premises.

We/they situations are perhaps the most subtle of the "set-up" phases and always pit one staff member against the other.

### **OFFER OF PROTECTION**

Consider the following conversation: Inmate to staff member:

"With the amount of writing you have to do, you should have a Selectric Typewriter. (2) I'm surprised they don't give you one. (3) After all, your material goes throughout the entire state, and as a representative of corrections, your stuff should look as professional as you appear to be."

**Staff Member:** (4) "I know, you're right. I put in a request for one, but they always come up with these lame excuses as to why they won't give me one."

**Inmate:** (5) "They do the same thing to us. (6) Tell you what. (7) Let me have the next important thing you need done and done right. (8) I know an inmate who works in an office where they have a Selectric, and I'll have it done for you. (9) You got that coming. (10) You treat us prisoners like human beings-not numbers. (11) You seem to understand that we are paying for our mistakes, and that we're here as punishment not for punishment. (12) If anyone says anything, I'll just tell them I took it upon myself to do this. (13) I won't even mention your name."

**Staff Member:** (14) "Well, I don't want you to get in trouble but... OK." This conversation actually took place, and it was part of a "set-up." Conversations like this are very common in corrections. Most of the time the inmate is sincere. But, what happens when he's not?" What if he's using the situation as a foundation for a "set-up?" Let's analyze this. Assume that you are the person with whom the inmate is conferring.

See how many steps to a "set-up" you can identify.

Remember, he has observed you. He knows your limitations. He has already toyed with your emotions. In short, he knows you quite well. Also, the fact that he felt free enough to suggest or imply that you would buy into something a little on the dishonest side shows he has done his homework.

When the conversation began you will notice that sentences one and two in the first paragraph make the subtle suggestion that you are not being treated properly by the people you work for.

Sentence three uses the "support system." It is designed to compliment, build your ego, and make you feel a little disgusted because your talents are not given the importance they deserve.

Sentence four shows the staff member is taking the bait and talks about "they" derogatorily.

Sentence five uses the "we/they syndrome" as the inmate seeds thoughts that will eventually "turn" his victim.

Sentence six, seven, and eight go back to the "support system." The inmate is doing you a favor. Again comes the subtle suggestion that you are not being dealt with fairly by your peers.

Sentence nine: "You got that coming," is a way of saying inmates like you as a friend, and they won't treat you as badly as the people you work with.

Sentence ten and eleven utilize both the "support system," the "we/they syndrome," It sets you apart from your fellow employees. It preys on your emotions, and, again, it builds your ego.

Sentence twelve and thirteen use the "support system," the "we/they syndrome," and has the subtle inclusion of an "offer of protection." The inmate is willing to take the blame for something you ask him to do. There is another very interesting trap here: In sentence fourteen you accepted the inmate's offer. He has learned by "fish testing," that you will "look the other way" to improve job performance-a trait you see as a strength and he sees as a weakness.

In this example the "offer of protection" is barely noticeable, but it is never the less there.

A more graphic example of an "offer of protection" can be found in situations where the offer is presented by instilling a feeling of fear.

In an area where an enclosure exists, inmates will point out to the victim how easy it would be for someone to force them into the forbidden spot, and possibly harm or kill them. This is followed by rapid assurance that they will not let that happen to you.

The victim is usually grateful for the concern and is willing to become friendlier than before. . As the friendship between the victim and his or her protectors becomes stronger, inmates feel free to take greater

license with the individual. A touch system is developed to give the outward appearance of an even stronger bond.

## **ALLUSIONS TO SEX**

### **(IF THE VICTIM IS FEMALE)**

The manipulation of human behavior is an extremely complex procedure. Its psychological processes alone require years of study. Yet, there seems to be inherent in mankind an ability to gain from his fellow by preying on his emotions, adding to or taking from his pleasures, increasing and decreasing body tissue needs, or the distortion of facts and information.

From childhood we learn to manipulate our parents, later our brothers and sisters, and then our acquaintances. But the greatest manipulation is between men and women, particularly where the motivation is sex.

Sensual gratification in most situations is manipulated by principles who devise techniques that even though rejected, may not necessarily be offensive and, conversely, there are others who, in order to satiate his drive, develop methods that are devious, forced, and have criminal intent.

Controlling the urge for sex in the prison community is now, and always has been, one of our greatest problems. Our lack of control has resulted in homosexual relationships and forcible rape. The central concentration in these cases is usually from one prisoner to staff member.

When one prisoner manipulates another prisoner for sex, the methods are direct and swift.

When a prisoner manipulates a staff member for sex, conditions and situations must be carefully set up and implemented so as not to create suspicion until the employee is maneuvered into position for the demand. This is usually done by a prisoner who develops an overly familiar friendship with the staff member. The con-wise prisoner creates an image of himself that is in direct opposition to someone seeking sex on an animal level, and the victim develops a trust and naiveté that leaves him or her vulnerable to proposition first, insistence second, and finally, force.

In set-up situations where the proposed victim is a female employee the prisoner makes allusions to sex at any point in the set-up process where he feels their friendship will tolerate such references.

In the early stages, allusions to sex are directed to the employee but away from the prisoner. For example: In a recent case, a prisoner said to a female employee with whom he had established a friendship, "See that inmate over there?" The staff member acknowledged; "Well, he's a sleeze, he asked me last night if I was having sex with you!" The reference is directed away from the manipulator.

Having made the statement, the prisoner promptly assures the victim that he put the over-inquisitive fellow in his place. The allusion is designed so the employee's anger, if any, is placed away from the person making the statement.

How the employee responds to the information is of great importance to the originator of the statement, because it determines the next step in the set-up process.

If she makes no comment at all, he assures a freedom to make further allusions to sex. If her comment is philosophical, i.e., "When a man is in confinement statements like that are common and expected," the inmate assumes the woman has a basic understanding of the needs of men in confinement and he feels safe in continuing the process.

If her response is for further details, the inmate formulates the opinion that she is anxious for further discussion on sexual matter. But, if her response is cold and indifferent, for example: "I need that inmate's name and number so I can report him to my supervisor, and, if what you say is true, I will also arrange your work hours so that you are only here during the time students are in class. I don't appreciate talk like that, nor do I appreciate hearing about it!"

This reaction will have the effect of closing the subject and depending on which phase of the set-up is being utilized; it can also conclude further attempts at manipulation.

In cases where the inmate sees the victim as responding in a positive manner, his allusions to sex will eventually be directed less and less "out there," and more and more toward himself as the person in need of attention.

Institutions where female employees are exposed to inmates on a one to one basis should take a serious look at the procedure. Any inmate assigned to work with a woman under these conditions, even those with good intentions, will eventually receive pressure from his peers. They will make statements like, "We know you don't just talk during that hour the two of you are alone. What's going on?"

An inmate gains respect and status from the prison population if it is thought that he has successfully compromised an employee.

The pressure to confide an inmate situation is greater than he can handle and a false rumor is originated.

Employees knowing that a female is alone with an inmate for long periods of time have also started rumors. Statements like, "I wonder what's going on in there?" have developed into, "Something is going on in there!" As the suspicion is transferred it gains in distortion and force, and has resulted in some employees resigning their jobs.

This kind of exposure is unfair to the employee and in one case resulted in a divorce. The woman's husband, also an institution employee, allowed his emotions to build on a rumor. He couldn't rid himself of the feeling that rumors have some foundation in truth or they don't start. Arguments developed between the two of them, until separation became inevitable.

### **THE TOUCH SYSTEM**

Touching is applied to both male and female employees, but more so to females. Touching of male employees usually consists of hand shaking, pats on the back, or placing one's hand on the shoulder.

The touching of females is less obvious and greater caution is exercised. This will usually begin with the flicking of a dirt speck from the woman's clothing, or the straightening of a coat or blouse collar. From this it goes to touching her shoulders in an attempt to pass by. This is a well-timed procedure and is usually accomplished when the inmate and staff member are alone. The touching becomes more and more frequent and more and more prolonged. If the staff member has registered no complaints to the prolonged hands-on process, an accident occurs. The inmate trips, and in the attempt to regain footing, the female's breasts are touched. He apologizes, and the incident, it seems, is forgotten. However, the woman is closely observed for signs of approval or disapproval. Also, a period of time is allowed to pass to see if she reports the incident to her supervisor s. If not, the touching gets more serious.

If a "set-up" victim develops a curious expression that indicates doubt of the validity of any phase in the process, inmates fortify themselves with stories designed to gain the employee's sympathy, and to take their minds off any previous concerns.

### **THE RUMOR CLINIC**

A well placed rumor will create doubt in the minds of everyone, even the people who openly profess disbelief, and the "street psychologist" takes full advantage of this human frailty. Seed thoughts that lead to the breakdown of professionalism are placed among the gossips-staff and inmates alike. Peer attitudes toward the victim begin changing as the rumor gains in force, and contacts with the individual become less and less frequent. The employee whom the rumors are

about feels isolated which provides members of the set-up team the opportunity of strengthening their bonds of friendship. "We don't believe the rumors," they say, and, "They are treating you just like they treat us!"

Inmates in one of our institutions began spreading a rumor that a certain officer was taking State supplies home in his lunch box. Because the officer had a spotless reputation for honesty, staff members claimed they didn't believe it. As the rumor gained in force, staff attitudes began changing and one evening the officer was challenged at the main gate and searched-nothing was found.

The officer was unable to face his peers in the days that followed because of the "Where there's smoke, there's fire" attitude and he went in search of other employment.

### **THE LEVER**

A lever is a device that will lift, pry, or force an object to respond through the proper distribution of pressure.

In prisons inmates create levers and the objects forced by these devices are employees.

A lever to use against a correctional officer was created once when the officer disciplined an inmate for not cleaning his room, but permitted his orderly to leave his living quarters unattended.

This inconsistency in the enforcement of rules told inmates that given proper conditions the officer would circumvent institution regulations.

A team of inmates who were not assigned to his area volunteered to work for him, stating they just wanted to keep busy. They worked hard, did an excellent job, and cultivated the officer's friendship. They knew the officer would find it hard to say no when small, seemingly unimportant rules were violated. For example, allowing inmates into his area who had no business being there.

They very slowly backed this employee into a corner that led to his bringing in bullets. The officer turned them in when they requested a gun, but it was too late. The evidence presented against him caused his termination.

The lever they had acquired involved forcible rape. Inmates told the officer they were keeping trouble makers in line to make living conditions more tolerable. They were just going to push the guy around a little. The officer "looked the other way." The inmate victim was badly beaten, then raped by six people. There were no reports. When the officer reported the gun episode, a large number of inmates exposed him saying he knew of the rape case all along.

## **SHOPPING LIST**

This is an exposure phase of a "set-up." The victim has responded so well to other portions of the operation that inmates feel comfortable in making open demands for favors or contraband.

Once demands are made, the victims now know they have been compromised. Inmates have acquired a lever to use against them should they hesitate meeting the demand, and for the inmates involved there is no turning back. The situation at this point could be very volatile and dangerous. They are prepared to use any means at their disposal to get their way-even the ultimate force. When the "set-up" reaches this stage, most employees comply with the demand. A few resign. An even smaller number take the risk of being injured or embarrassed when the lever is introduced, and they expose the inmates involved. This is a high-risk situation and the rewards are small.

Employees who meet the demand are usually told that no further request will be made of them. However, this is a ploy to make them feel pressure will be off when the request is fulfilled.

As additional pressures are placed on the victim, a personality change becomes obvious. The employee becomes abnormally quiet, socializes less and less with peers, and develops a worried expression. The job becomes a great burden, and reporting to work each day is an effort.

Shopping list demands for male employees are usually drugs, alcohol, money, weapons, and on a few occasions, homosexual favors. For female victims the request is almost always for sex.

## **THE STING**

The look of nettles is quite innocent; as a matter of fact, it's a very attractive plant. Yet, come in contact with it, and its sting is most uncomfortable.

A "set-up" is similar to nettles but with one major difference-its sting is very often lethal.

The Sting is the wrap-up phase of a "set-up." The victim has undergone all the stages, a lever has been established and the shopping list presented. Now the victim is given a choice, "Do as you are told or you will be harmed."

The use of force or the threatened use of force has caused some employees in Corrections to die, and many others to leave their jobs in disgrace. Force is the Sting. No one wants to be hurt, and most inmates involved in a set-up would rather not resort to the use of force, but as a last resort you can rest assured, they will.

Termination was the Sting for an employee at the California Correctional Center who supplied his inmate work crew with whiskey.

Injury by scalding was to be the Sting for a supervising cook at the Deuel Vocational Institution when he allowed inmates to manipulate him without reporting their actions. Officers rushed into the kitchen work area just in time to prevent inmates from tossing him into a 100 gallon vat of boiling hot water because he refused to supply them with drugs.

A suspension was the Sting for an officer who was coerced into bringing pornographic photographs into his area of supervision at the Folsom State Prison.

Death was the Sting for a woman at Paso Robles who was unable to recognize the manipulating process and became overly familiar with an inmate who demanded sex.

### **APPREHENSION OF A "SET-UP" TEAM OR INDIVIDUAL**

Apprehension of a set-up team or individual is extremely difficult. Hard evidence cannot be obtained during any of the set-up phases until the program calls for the inclusion of a lever, a shopping list, or the Sting. These three phases cannot be introduced without an obvious violation of institution rules or breaking the law. Evidence obtained prior to this is largely circumstantial or based on suspicion, and herein lies a barrier. Supervisors will not usually give credence that the case deserves, and any attempts to interrogate the prisoner's involved produces compliant behavior, but only temporarily. Interrogators become impatient in these situations because evidence is only suspect, and they attempt to get at the truth through prolonged or repetitive interviewing. In doing so the interrogator incurs the risk of uncooperative behavior without eliciting any information to substantiate the accuser's suspicions. The most complete and accurate information that they can hope to obtain, using the interview tactics, can be only further suspicion.

Use of the Polygraph in these situations can be helpful, but only in the fact that it will aid in substantiating the employee's accusations. The success rate, even then, can only be estimated at the 50 percent rate.

The Polygraph is based upon physiological responses and considers such things as changes in systolic blood pressure, galvanic skin responses, pulse rate, muscular tension, etc.

The unimpressive 50 percent success rate causes concern in placing proof of guilt because of the variables that can effect polygraph testing, relationship of operator and subject, prior indoctrination of subject-sometimes called "spinover", the ability of the person being questioned to control psychological and physiological

functions, and the interrogator's interpretation of data all have an effect on the rate of deception that can be detected.

It is obvious then that a victim can recognize the set-up process being applied and know beyond all reasonable doubt that he or she is being victimized. However, unless there is an actual rules violation it is extremely difficult to point an accusing finger.

Another problem that arises when set-up situations are suggested by an employee is staff attitudes.

There is a tendency on the part of all staff—even those experienced in recognizing this deceptive process—to downplay its importance. There is a tendency of the victim to fear criticism, or being labeled "paranoid" by his/her peers, for reporting situations based only on suspicion. There is a tendency of supervisors to disregard reports of this nature and do nothing. Finally, there is the tendency of investigators to imply that the proposed victim is unsuited for correctional work.

What, then, can a person do, who suspects they have been selected as the victim of a compromise.

There are several things that can be done to assure the employee of protection without fear of criticism, and anyone of the protectors listed below will have the effect of drawing the set-up process to a swift conclusion. It is the responsibility of the employee, however, to decide which protector is applicable to his/her situation.

## **PROTECTORS**

When a pilot is guiding his airplane down the runway on take-off, the aircraft will eventually reach a point of no return. The pilot is committed. He must get the plane into the air. If something goes wrong at this point there isn't enough existing runway to stop, so he either becomes airborne or crashes.

The same is true of a set-up. It, too, has a point of no return, and once that point has been reached there is no 'turning back; both staff and inmate are committed. Both parties are guilty of rule infractions, and neither wishes to be exposed.

An inmate who is caught attempting to secure favors is punished, but his punishment is far less severe than that of the staff member. Employees who are exposed are usually terminated and sometimes even prosecuted. Or, an employee refusing inmate demands could be harmed or killed.

However, a set-up need not go to this extreme. It can be stopped at any time before it reaches the point of no return without harm to the victim.

The secret of set-up prevention can be found in the definition of professionalism. Your application of the familiar and unfamiliar friendship concept will decide whether or not an inmate feels free enough to take inappropriate license with you.

**Protector Number One** is understanding what a professional is and acting like one.

**Protector Number Two** is learning to recognize the steps to a set-up and taking proper action, "Nipping it in the Bud," so to speak.

**Protector Number Three** is to let someone know you're being victimized, and to let the inmate responsible know you told. For example, suppose an inmate with whom you have become friendly asked you for a cigarette. It's a small request, no big thing, so you give him one. If he is testing you he now knows you give in to people you like. He will ask you for another, then one more for a friend, and eventually a whole pack. If he is not deliberately testing you, he may decide to start because you gave in so freely.

To digress a moment, it is not easy to say no to a person you have befriended, or to someone you are trying to help. Interestingly, the two smallest words in the English vocabulary-yes and no-are the hardest to use, and in the prison setting you will probably use no more than yes.

There are actually three types of no: There is the no that says to the inmate, "If you keep at me I'll probably do it." There is the no that says, "I'm unsure of my ability to stay with the denial," and then there is the no that says just that NO! This no can be administered politely, but with firm command, and without generating animosity. Inmates appreciate knowing where they stand, and where you will draw the line.

Now, let's go back to the issue of telling someone you suspect you are being victimized. Why is it important to tell someone and to let the inmate know you told? Simply this: Any street psychologist knows that a secret between two people gives one or the other the advantage of taking liberties if the secret is to be kept. To illustrate, let's say an inmate asked you to bring in drugs. You refuse and elect to keep the incident to yourself. He construes your willingness to take action as a weakness and a silent approval. If no action is taken he will continue the pressure.

On the other hand, you might think, "If I tell my supervisor or a fellow employee every time an inmate asks me to do something a little off color I'm going to appear "paranoid." I'll be running to them all the time and they may feel I'm unable to do the job." This feeling is valid and true. Yet no action at all means the request will continue. "So," you say, "how can it be done?"

If you feel the incident is too minor to report and that your peers might feel you are overly suspicious, but you still have that "gut level" feeling of being tested, then talk it out with a friend and fellow employee in front of the inmate or with the inmate's supervisor.

For example, let's say an inmate volunteers to mop and wax your office. He is not assigned to you as an orderly, so you would be accepting a favor from him. You're a little uneasy because you fear he may want a favor in return, yet you don't want to imply the gesture is dishonest if it is not. Telling your supervisor that you suspect a set-up may cause him to respond by saying, "What, are you paranoid? That sort of thing is done all the time!" The solution, then, is 'simply to explain to the inmate that you appreciate his offer and the two of you will talk it over with his supervisor to assure you are not infringing on his time.

The importance of telling someone in front of the inmate cannot be stressed enough. If you are being victimized, the set-up practitioner doesn't want anyone to know or even suspect for fear of detection. When he knows you keep everything in the open the practice is concluded.

**Protector Number Four** -Informational Chrono or CDC 128-8: Record your suspicions and send a copy to the offending inmate. A written document is more effective than verbal action because it brings everything into the open. Staff members researching the inmate's file are alerted to the inmate's capabilities and setting someone else up is extremely difficult for the responsible party.

Inmates don't care to have illicit actions recorded because a pattern of their behavior develops that can affect their future, e.g., one recorded suspicion will not really harm the inmate, but several by different authors can. Under these conditions, hearing representatives can assume rehabilitation is not occurring. Also, recorded information has the effect of stopping a set-up immediately.

A sample informational chrono could read as follows:

"Inmate Doaks, B-0026, has recently requested a series of small favors and has been inquiring into my personal life. Although, he has not violated any institutional rules or policy, his requests seem headed in that direction. To date he has jokingly hinted at my giving him cigarettes, gum, pencils, and he has asked about my financial problems. I neither appreciate nor desire this attention, and if it does not cease, I will take stronger action."

**Protector Number Five** -Behavior Chrono or CDC 128-A:

In the set-up testing process inmates violate minor rules to find out what your tolerance level is. These violations may not be serious enough for strong disciplinary action, but they may be serious for an informational chrono.

In that case you would want to use a CDC 128-A.

A sample of how this tool can be used is as follows:

"Inmate Smith, 8-3974, comes to my office on a daily basis requesting favors such as ... He is not assigned to this area and I have told him on several occasions not to come here. He refuses to heed my warnings so on this date I gave him a direct order. Failure to comply this time will result in a CDC 115."

**Protector Number Six** -CDC 115 Disciplinary Report: This form is used when the inmate request is an obvious violation of the rules. It is an excellent exposure tool and can be designed to fit any violation whether administrative or serious. An example of this report is as follows:

"On December 01, 1978, at approximately 11 :00 AM, Inmate John Doe, 8-0007 requested that I bring in a bottle of wine by smuggling it ,through the main gate of the institution in my lunch box and presenting it to him when I assume my post in D-unit. He stated that my failure to comply would result in a statement from him and other inmates attesting to the fact that I have already smuggled in cookies and candy. He said he has evidence in his cell and exposure would result in the loss of my job. It is true that I made an error in judgment and on occasions shared items from my lunch box that I did not care to eat. I am willing to accept whatever disciplinary action is entailed as a result of my mistake, but that does not alter the fact that inmate Doe is in violation of a Director's Rule, and I am citing him for that violation."

This is an actual report and it makes one very important point: Not all rules violations or mistakes in judgment result in criticism or termination of the employee.

In this case the hearing officer complimented the staff member for admitting his mistake and stated the incident would make him much a better employee.

## **CONCLUSION**

There are twelve prisons in the State of California, and at a recent training officer's conference, the set-up process was seen as a major problem in each institution. Employees are lost and sometimes harmed, not because they are dishonest but because they are inexperienced and naive, and they fall into subtle traps.

In 1976 a survey of people in Corrections who were exposed to the set-up process was conducted by this writer. A sampling of 655 victims throughout the California prison system revealed the following: Length of service has no direct bearing on the criteria for selection nor does education or experience. New employees are especially susceptible because they lack understanding of their new work environment and because they very often view minor infractions of rules as "nit-picking" and "not all that important." Older employees become vulnerable because they become too comfortable in their jobs and assume the attitude that "no convict can get to me."

It is not easy for prison employees to remain alert, careful, aware that some-not all-inmates are constantly seeking to victimize or compromise them, and to maintain a high level of professionalism year after year without becoming overly suspicious, distrusting, and bitter, or relaxing to a point that these qualities diminish.

Maintaining a pleasant personality within the confines of a society where riots occur frequently, where stress is a daily companion, and where unpredictable acting out behavior is a constant problem, is an accomplishment some people never achieve. They either lose their pleasantness in order to enforce rules or disregard the rules in order to remain pleasant. The challenge in Corrections is to meet daily institutional needs in terms of plant operations and prison population control and at the same time develop your own mental and emotional health. Although retaining your professionalism under all conditions is not the panacea one would suppose it to be, it is a firm platform upon which one can stand to achieve it.

You will not be victimized if you understand and apply professional-ism in your daily routine; you will retain a healthy outlook. You will be pleased with each day's accomplishment and your job will become more interesting and exciting as each day passes.

## **CASE HISTORY**

**Profile -Staff Member:** Subject is a 34-year-old female Caucasian with less than one-year correctional experience. She is attractive and friendly. Her profession is academic teacher and reading specialist. She has a Master's Degree and is considered proficient and capable as an instructor. Her personality is stable, and her pleasant friendly classroom approach is seen as an asset. She is the mother of four children, and an active member of community affairs. Throughout this presentation she will be referred to as Mrs. Chase.

**Profile -Prison Inmate:** Subject is a tall, thin, white male about 28 years of age, with a lifetime history of acting out in a criminal fashion. He suffers minor brain damage from excessive use of drugs and his prognosis for change is poor. His long experience of being in and out of prisons has made him "con-wise" and he is able to appear trustworthy and desirous of improving his former life-style. He has been assigned to Mrs. Chase as a teaching assistant, and he will be referred to as Inmate Wilson.

### **Setting:**

The setting is an academic high school classroom in a California prison. Prison school rooms are usually designed so that instructors are clearly visible to security staff. However, in this instance, the room only had one window and included a back area for books and files. Anyone working in that area would be completely obscured from view.

Also, the reader should be aware that inmate teaching assistants are very often alone with the teachers in these classrooms for periods of one to two hours each day.

To further establish the setting, let's assume that you are Mrs. Chase. You are outgoing and friendly, possess a trusting nature and have a desire to help people find a better way of life through education.

You are about to begin your first semester of teaching prisoners and you are a little apprehensive. Your only knowledge of the criminal society came from a 40-hour orientation program designed for new employees. But, you are not too concerned because in the Past you've had to maintain classroom control over some very difficult students. "Inmates," you think to yourself, "couldn't be much different. People are people regardless of where you find them."

Your past experience has taught you that a pleasant attitude, individual attention, and a little understanding and kindness is the key to developing good citizens. You are convinced that if these techniques work outside a prison, then there's no reason why they shouldn't work inside one. You are confident of your ability to handle almost any situation. On the surface everything is as you expected it to be, so you are anxious to begin the semester.

This description could fit any number of teachers hired by the Department of Corrections. However, this one is a profile of an academic instructor whom inmates selected to be the victim of a set-up.

At the outset the reader should be aware that Mrs. Chase suspected she was being victimized and reported her suspicions to institutional authorities. She was instructed to report all inmate activities and attention given her and told that as soon as evidence could be obtained substantiating her suspicions the inmates involved would be arrested. Her teaching assistant and her students were closely observed, and experienced staff members agreed that she had been selected as the proposed victim of a compromise.

Mrs. Chase is one of the few victims of a set-up who was able to observe the process unfold and almost attain maturity without being harmed, or without having suffered the loss of her job.

Even though she knew she was being victimized there were times she doubted the process was real.

"The acting, the sincerity and the subtle, very believable situations presented," she said, "were convincing enough to make me believe that the inmates had my best interest at heart."

As this case is developed it will be broken into sections showing each phase of the set-up. These phases are usually intermingled and

separating them without losing the slow, subtle approach is at best difficult.

**Selection of a Victim:**

In order to get to her classroom it was necessary for Mrs. Chase to cross the main prison recreation yard. As she proceeded to her area inmates would subject her to a series of "cat calls." Being the only female instructor she had formed the habit of walking with her male counterparts, and when she heard the calls she would jokingly say to one of the men, "Inmates are calling to you again."

Inmates, being unable to hear her comments, interpreted her slight smile and slight hint of embarrassment as being appreciative of the attention. They surmised that she was friendly, warm and naive. They were aware that she was a new employee, and assumed that her lack of experience with prisoners would make her an ideal set-up candidate.

**The Observation Process:**

At this particular institution teachers are permitted to interview and select their own inmate teaching assistants. Mrs. Chase selected Inmate Wilson because she had observed him in a prison college class and felt he was capable of performing teaching assistant duties. She summoned Wilson for an interview and offered him the job. "Do you really want-me?" he asked. Her affirmative response caused him to surmise that she liked him, and he placed greater importance on the relationship than she had intended. He made this assumption because Mrs. Chase had expressed concern for him when, he engaged in a series of self-"put downs" as a result of a speech he had made at his prison college class.

In the days that followed his selection as teaching assistant, Wilson subjected Mrs. Chase to all phases of the observation process and formed the opinion that she was deeply interested in his welfare, that she was a woman of deep and profound emotions, that she leaned toward the "underdog," and that her feelings for him exceeded that normal bounds of friendship. To test these theories he incorporated the help of friends, and situations were set up to confirm or deny the assumptions.

**Test of Limits, of Fish Testing:**

Wilson invited his friends to visit the classroom on occasions when no students were present, to see if Mrs. Chase would allow the visitation. Even though they were not assigned to Mrs. Chase's class, a couple of Wilson's friends had voluntarily worked for her. Because they had performed what they considered to be favors, it was felt she would have difficulty turning them away. Having proved this theory correct, the visits became more and more frequent. Also, conversations during these visits attested that Mrs. Chase was indeed a warm, overtly friendly person, who had a desire to help prisoners become better citizens.

At this point the set-up team incorporated the use of a "runner." His task was to ask for small items at first, and larger items later, if his first requests were honored. He was promised payment in drugs.

The runner's first request was for school materials. Because he was not a student, Mrs. Chase refused. He later approached her on the yard as she was going to class and requested a cigarette. She gave him one. When Mrs. Chase informed authorities of the transaction she was told that he would approach her again the following day and each day' thereafter until she refused. Acting on this advice she refused his next request with the admonition that a disciplinary report was in the offing if he continued to bother her. He tested her again, she did not report him as she indicated, so the tests continued.

Other inmates involved in this set-up conducted other types of tests and they will be discussed under the headings to which they applied.

It should also be noted that the set-up team members were not strangers to Mrs. Chase. They had either worked for her or they had been students of hers at an earlier time.

#### **Support System:**

Mrs. Chase was complimented on a rather frequent basis by members of the set-up team, but most frequently by her teaching assistant, Inmate Wilson. On one occasion he said to her, "I've never said this to anyone else in my life, but you are the best teacher I've ever seen. You're not like these other instructors; you explain things so they are understandable."

Other members of the group complimented her abilities as a teacher, the condition and decor of her room, and they volunteered to mop and wax her floors.

The support system is on-going. Everyone enjoys a compliment, and inmates know how to give them. So, from the beginning of a set-up to 'the point where the victim suspects something is wrong, this kind of support is offered.

#### **The Plea For Help:**

"I don't know why you bother with me, Mrs. Chase. I've been a failure all my life. I have no confidence in myself and that speech I made was really bad. You would be fighting a lost cause, but I need your help," Wilson told her during one of their alone periods.

Mrs. Chase refused to allow him to wallow in self-pity, saying, "You're wrong, you are a capable person, the speech you made was excellent, and if the work you produce outside of prison is as good as your work here, you can do anything anyone else can do. What you need to do is stop feeling sorry for yourself and stand on your own two feet."

"I want to do," Wilson said, "but I'm not sure I know how, Maybe, if you're willing to work with me, I can get over these feelings of inadequacy. A lot of people have tried to help me in the past and got nowhere, but I really believe that you could do it. I have a great deal of faith in you."

Mrs. Chase indicated that she would be willing to help in any way she could, but that the bulk of the effort would be his to shoulder.

As time passed, Mrs. Chase and Inmate Wilson had many conversations of this nature. Wilson began to construe her attention toward him as becoming emotional and perhaps even sensual. Mrs. Chase, on the other hand, had no such feelings and being new to the prison environment, she was not aware that her attention could be analyzed in this manner.

Practitioners of set-ups learn to become aware when a particular phase of their operation is wearing thin, and Wilson began to suspect he had taken self-pity as far as it would go. Through this phase he had learned a great deal about Mrs. Chase's feelings and emotions. He was relatively certain that he knew the types of things that would deepen the relationship he felt was developing. "It is time," Wilson thought, "to go on to other things."

#### **Empathy and/or Sympathy:**

The friendship between Mrs. Chase and her teaching assistant had grown to where they shared on a more personal level. They talked about their families, financial matters, and personal problems encountered through living. In other words, they empathized. Mrs. Chase had been divorced and Wilson was having problems with his girlfriend. The things that had happened in Mrs. Chase's life Wilson could identify with because he had had similar experiences. These similarities have the effect of forming a bond between two people because each could understand what the other has been through.

When two people undergo a divorce there is a lot of heartbreak. There is also a tendency for a person who has been through this process to console someone in the throes of it. Very often the consoling is demonstrative. Wilson understood this human feature. He felt Mrs. Chase would feel deeply sorry for him if he had such a problem, and he hoped she would demonstrate her sorrow.

One day he said, "I don't know what to do. My girlfriend sent me a letter saying she's leaving me. I even have a child by her. I love her, and I love that baby. I'll go crazy if I lose them. Besides, the baby is a bleeder and I'll go out of my head wondering if something has happened, and never be able to know. I don't know what's wrong with me. It seems like everything I touch turns to dirt!"

Mrs. Chase's heart went out to him. As he suspected, she was sorry for his experience, but there was no physical demonstration. She told him, "These things are always very difficult, especially for you because you're in confinement and I truly wish I could help you."

Once again Mrs. Chase reiterated her earlier statement that this was a time for him to display his manly strength and stand on his own two feet. He assured her he would try, but implied he might need her help. She understood. Because of her concern for him, Wilson felt that the relationship had deepened even more.

As the days passed, Wilson was able to maintain his composure. He did, however, have an occasional relapse, which required some consoling. But for the most part he handled the situation quite well. He also managed to maintain a line of communication that supplied information about the baby.

Wilson was able to use his estrangement as a means of gaining sympathy for two or three weeks before it began to outlive its usefulness. In the meantime, Mrs. Chase was given a training assignment that kept her away for several days. She returned to find Wilson in an extremely emotional state of anxiety. "What's the matter?" she inquired.

Wilson found talking difficult and almost lost his composure. "While you were gone," he said, "my baby passed away. I loved that child. You can't live with, protect, and nurse a child that's a bleeder without developing a very special kind of love."

Mrs. Chase was deeply concerned. She consoled him as best she could, but what can one say to someone suffering such a close personal loss?

Wilson continued his rendition of the facts, as he understood them that led to the baby's death. He said, "I feel so helpless, so confined, and I can't even apply for a temporary community leave to attend the funeral."

Mrs. Chase was confused; she knew that prisoners could be released long enough to take care of such emergencies. "Why can't you go?" she asked. "I can't attend and see my child one last time because I have enemies in that area of the state that have pledged to kill me," he told her.

Author's Note: Even though Mrs. Chase had been told by authorities that she was being primed for a compromise situation, and she had been reporting the activities of the set-up team, she began to wonder if her staff contact was advising her correctly.

When reporting the baby's death, she said, "I would really like to believe that your suspicions of a compromise are correct, but Inmate

Wilson's expressions, his emotions, and his sincerity were very real. don't believe a person could act that well."

Authorities assured her that the child was not dead and that this situation was all part of a plan leading to a request for favors. She returned to her classroom with feelings of doubt.

Each day for two or three weeks after Wilson had informed Mrs. Chase of the baby's death, he had periods of depression. He felt guilty over not attending the funeral, and he was remorseful because he had been such a poor father. He sought her assurance that he was guilty over not attending the funeral, and he was remorseful because he had been such a poor father. He sought her assurance that he was capable of carrying on in life.

When Mrs. Chase submitted her next report, she indicated her relief that Wilson was not being deceptive. 'I believe,' she said, "that the baby really died. His states of depression are too real, and he has been writing notes indicating that he intends to take his own life."

Once again her staff contact gave the assurance that the child was alive. He also told her that the suicide notes were only for her eyes, and that the inmate intent was to elicit an overt emotional response from her.

Again, Mrs. Chase wanted desperately to believe her staff contact but doing so required effort.

In order to give Mrs. Chase a more valid assurance that Wilson was being deceptive according to a prescribed plan, her staff contact outlined the steps of a set-up and told her what Wilson had in mind for his next operational phase.

**Allusions to Sex:**

"While preying on your sympathy, Wilson will now begin making references to sex," her staff contact told her. "He believes that your feelings for him are so deep that you will allow the taking of this liberty, and that if you do he will be convinced that you wish his physical attention."

Mrs. Chase displayed very little response to this admonition. She seemed deep in thought and changed the subject. The following day Inmate Wilson called Mrs. Chase's attention to a certain inmate and said. "Watch out for that fellow, he's a sleeze. He came to my living area last evening and asked if I was 'getting any' from you.

Having made the statement and observed her reaction, he quickly assured her that he promptly put the inmate in his place, and that he knew she was not that kind of person. Mrs. Chase elected not to react to or give Wilson's allusion to sex the attention he expected, and she began realizing that Wilson may not be sincere in the "nice guy" image he was trying to project.

When a set-up reaches this stage it is a common practice of inmates to space their references to sex. They must allow some time to pass so the victim doesn't become suspicious. The victim is distracted from dwelling on the sex allusion by pledges of support and we/they conversations.

### **The We/They Syndrome:**

"You know, Mrs. Chase, we think they gave you the worst room in the school. You really keep it looking nice, but a teacher with your capabilities should be treated better than this." Several different members of the set-up team made statements like this to Mrs. Chase. They attempted to seed the thought that administrators were not treating her, as they should.

Once the idea of unfairness from supervisory staff is established, the process is further developed by making the victim feel that other, less capable teachers are getting far better consideration from administration.

On one occasion Wilson indicated that Mrs. Chase shouldn't be made to feel subservient to the school office secretary, that several of the teachers were not as capable as she, and that they didn't maintain upkeep on their classrooms as well as Mrs. Chase, yet they had the better rooms.

Inmate Wilson had also observed an occasion when Mrs. Chase reported the actions of an unruly inmate to her supervisor and he took no action. Mrs. Chase was uncomfortable with his inattention so Wilson suggested that they (administration) were not concerned with her welfare, that she was being treated like an inmate, but that she didn't have to worry because he would not allow inmates to act out in her classroom.

### **Offer of Protection:**

Very early in this set-up process Mrs. Chase had some difficulty controlling black inmates. She ordered one of them to behave himself or leave the room. He refused at first, called her a bitch, then did as he was told.

Her teaching assistant promptly informed her that inmates like this were in the majority at this institution, and that if he were not around she could be harmed. He then volunteered to escort her wherever she went. "Is that OK with you?" he asked. She stated, "Do whatever makes you feel comfortable." So Wilson became her escort and protector.

The offer of protection is an extremely important phase of a set-up. The situation described above provides an opening for the offer but the connotation is obliging. The victim must be made to feel the need for protection. She must desire it and be grateful for receiving it. Instilling this kind of feeling in the victim is not easy. It must be done with great

care, so the victim suspects nothing. This is usually a staged event and it incorporates the use of fear.

Mrs. Chase was conducting class one morning when an unassigned inmate entered her room, seated himself where his actions could be clearly observed, and began rubbing his groin in a highly suggestive manner.

Mrs. Chase was not aware that this was part of the testing process, that she was being observed for her reaction, or that this inmate was acting under orders from her teaching assistant. She reported the incident to her supervisor, and he took no action. This provided Inmate Wilson the opportunity of reiterating his offer of protection. He knew that Mrs. Chase felt uneasy and alone, especially since staff action was nonexistent. He said, "I wish I had been here, that never would have happened. There is no doubt in my mind that if given a chance a guy like that would harm you."

As mentioned at the beginning of this case history, the room assigned to Mrs. Chase had an area where she would be obscured from the view of custodial staff. That area or back room provided Wilson with the tool he needed for the instillation of fear. He continued his conversation, "Do' you realize that one of these crazy inmates could force you into that back room, and neither your whistle or your screams could be heard? But don't worry, I won't let that happen."

The offer of protection was completed. It was needed and necessary and Mrs. Chase was comforted knowing Wilson would look out for her. Little did she realize that in the set-up plan Wilson was going to be the inmate to force her into the backroom.

### **The Touch System:**

The same day that Wilson made the offer of protection, he was certain that Mrs. Chase's feelings for him had reached their highest level. He reasoned that her affection for him would allow the touching , process to begin, but he still must remain cautious. His ultimate goal was to request sexual favors, and he felt she had responded properly to all the phases, and that in the final analysis she would grant his re-quest. He still realized he could be wrong in his interpretation of her responses. He was anxious, but not anxious enough to expose his intentions. That evening, as Mrs. Chase prepared to leave the class-room, he began the touching process by helping her adjust her coat collar. He theorized that if she had no objections, which she didn't, he would advance the touch system in the evenings to follow.

### **The Lever:**

The lever, as you recall, is some type of rules violation that can be used to threaten or coerce a staff member into bringing in contraband or providing inmates with favors.

The lever in Mrs. Chase's case was established very early in the set-up. She began her career in Corrections as in intermittent teacher,

and as such moved from classroom to classroom. During this time most of the inmates involved in the attempt to compromise her had been her students, and they had assisted her in a variety of classroom cleaning tasks. When she attained permanent status and was assigned her own room, they again performed such functions as washing and waxing floors, rearranging furniture, etc. Also, the reader should keep in mind that teachers were permitted to give prisoners a variety of school materials, but no one bothered to outline for Mrs. Chase which materials were permissible.

She had ordered four drawing pencil sets from state supplies and only two sets arrived. Because they were a necessary teaching tool, she augmented her supply by purchasing two sets out of her own funds. Two of these former students were engaged in drawing projects so she loaned a set to each of them. She was not aware that this particular item was not to be given out, plus she made the mistake of telling these inmates that she purchased and brought them into the institution. The set-up team now had a lever to use against her when the time came for them to demand her favors. Use of the lever is a simple process. For example, each phase of a set-up is designed to establish an overly familiar relationship with the proposed victim. The theory is that when favors are requested they will be granted because it's difficult to refuse a friend. If it develops this way, then use of the lever of force are not necessary. If the request is refused, the victim is reminded that he or she introduced illegal contraband into the institution; if this evidence is produced, the employee will be terminated. If the victim still refuses, and, depending on how desperately the favor is desired, the employee may undergo force.

Mrs. Chase was not subjected to the last three phases, i.e., use of the lever, the shopping list, and use of force because the inmates involved were arrested before they had the opportunity to use them.

The circumstances of the arrest are as follows: One afternoon the school administrator informed Mrs. Chase, in front of Wilson, her teaching assistant, that he intended to change her room and monitor the students attending her classes; and that this change would develop rather soon. Wilson was now forced to accelerate the set-up plans so he decided to skip the remaining phases and make his demands. With the aid of team members, a prison made knife was placed in a book in the back room. The plan now was that during the first break on the next school day he would find some pretext for getting Mrs. Chase to enter the back room. He would then follow and request sexual favors. If she refused he would acquire the knife and her chances would be to submit or be stabbed-perhaps even killed.

Fortunately, the plan was not allowed to materialize.

## **CASE HISTORY**

### **Profile-Staff Member:**

Subject is a 29-year-old white Caucasian of medium build. He is a Supervising Cook and has 8 years experience working in correctional institutions. He is known to be racially prejudiced, with a particular hatred for Blacks. His work record is good, but it is suspected that many of his disciplinary reports against black inmates have no basis in fact.

He is married, has two children and answers to the name of "Phil"

### **Profile-Inmate:**

Subject is a 23-year-old white Caucasian named "Harry." He is incarcerated for the crime of Grand Theft, and is considered by institutional authorities to be a gang leader. His work pattern is inconsistent and sporadic, and he has been known to encourage inmate sit-down strikes. He is not well educated but is considered "con-wise."

Subject displays symptoms of a psychopath, cannot work in harmony with other people, and does not profit from his mistakes.

### **The Set-Up:**

"The states God Damn Affirmative Action plan has done it to me again!" Phil said to one of his peers. "I work like hell for a promotion and what do they do? They give it to a Black. They've gone from extreme to the other. No one felt it was right when the Blacks were kept down; well, what about the Whites? I shouldn't be held back because of the color of my skin."

Having just received notice of a zero oral interview for a promotional step he wanted, Phil was bitter. He was expressing himself in loud tones without regard to who was listening.

Several inmates overheard Phil venting his feelings and eventually one of them engaged in conversation.

"I know how you feel," the inmate said. "It's because of the Blacks that I'm in jail" Phil regarded the inmate closely for a moment, then inquired. "What makes you say that?"

The inmate continued, "I was a cook on the streets. I lost my job and went looking for another. Each time I interviewed for a position they wound up hiring a minority. Blacks are taking over the cooking profession out there on the bricks."

"That's true", Phil said, "but what's that got to do with you going to prison?" The inmate looked at Phil as if he couldn't believe the question. "That's not hard to figure out," he told Phil, "if you don't work

you don't eat. I had a wife and two kids to support. I couldn't let them starve, and if all the jobs are going to the Blacks, there's nothing left to do but steal. Right?"

"Well, I'll be God Damned," Phil said, and as he continued to talk he became enraged. "Affirmative Action has sunk to a new low. Now they're causing people to go to prison. By the way, what's your name?"

"Harry," the inmate responded.

"Well, Harry, you can call me Phil. We white boys have to stick together. I guess that's the only way we're going to beat this thing.

"Phil didn't know it but his prejudice and hatred for Blacks had just caused him to be selected as the victim for a set-up.

Of all the diseases in the world, hatred is one of the worst, and has probably destroyed more people than any other affliction. Inmates schooled in street psychology are well aware of the destructive powers of hatred, and they are quick to cultivate the animosity if it can work to their best advantage.

Harry was not an educated man but he was smart enough to know that two men in exact agreement of a hatred feed each other's ego, and that a special bond is formed. The world against you and me attitude opens the doorway to empathy, sympathy and all other aspects of a set-up.

A bond formed out of prejudice must constantly be fed, so Harry supplied Phil with daily examples of how Affirmative Action was causing the white man to lose his identity, and Phil reciprocated with his own repertoire of bombastic material.

It wasn't long before Harry told Phil of an article he heard of in a somewhat radical publication that expressed views similar to their own. "Inasmuch as you are on the streets," Harry said, "Why don't you pick up a copy and we can read it together?"

Harry had been testing the friendship bond between the two of them. He noticed that when Phil assigned kitchen duties to other inmates he gave special consideration to whites. Also, when inmates were reprimanded for laziness, nothing was said to him and he was the worst of the lot. So he was relatively certain that Phil wouldn't mind his request for the magazine.

The article was everything they hoped it would be. They discussed the information, nurtured their hatreds, and agreed to one-day do something about the Black situation in America. As they read and shared their opinions, it seemed that Harry was always out of cigarettes and found it necessary to "bum" from Phil. During one of their conversations, Harry said, "Would you lend me a package of

cigarettes until I can get to the canteen? I hate to be asking all the time. I'll have money on the books soon and be able to pay you back." Phil placed little importance on the request and gave him the cigarettes. Harry also asked if he could take the magazine article with him to share with some friends. "I'll return it to you," he said.

Phil's response was, "Fine, go ahead."

Sometime later, Harry called Phil's attention to yet another article on Blacks, only this one was in a very heavily radical publication and Phil was in doubt as to whether or not he should buy it.

"We don't care about all the other trash in those magazines," Harry said.

"We may be prisoners but we're loyal Americans. Loyal enough," he continued, "to want to get rid of the Blacks." That was all Phil needed. He bought the magazine and, like the other one, he loaned it to Harry.

When Harry displayed this publication, other inmates wanted to know where he got it. He answered, "From Phil, the supervising cook."

"What's he doing with a magazine like that?" they asked.

"Didn't you know?" Harry looked surprised, "Why, that guy's a radical son-of-a-bitch!"

The thought was seeded and rumors began to fly. As more and more inmates told the story it became distorted and Phil, according to the rumor, was a former Storm Trooper from the American Nazi Party.

The rumor eventually spread to staff, and although no one believed it, friends began avoiding him. As Phil began feeling isolated, ignored by his peers; he became bitter.

Harry was astute enough to sense the bitterness Phil was feeling, and began relating things he claimed staff members were saying:

"I overheard Officer Jones today and he believed the rumors about you. He said all you cooks were radical, otherwise you wouldn't write disciplinarians on staff for snitching a little food every now and then. He doesn't realize that you have to report on things like that-it's your job. He doesn't know you like we do. If he knew how kind and generous you really are, he wouldn't talk that way. I guess custody treats you cooks just like they treat us inmates. Right?"

"You're right," Phil agreed. "If those uniform people would stay the Hell out of this kitchen, everyone would be a lot better off."

"By the way, Phil," Harry said, "Could I bum another pack of cigarettes from you? My money still hasn't arrived. I'll pay you ... "

Phil was still mad from hearing about Officer Jones. He handed the cigarettes to Harry without even thinking.

As the rumors gained in force and black inmates heard about the racially prejudiced cook, a great deal of animosity began building among black inmates assigned to kitchen duty.

One afternoon a black inmate cook refused to take an order from Phil, stating that, "No Honkey radicals are going to tell me what to do!"

Phil repeated the order, but this time with the admonition that the offending inmate comply "or be locked up!"

The black inmate assumed a fighting stance and challenged the cook to "get it on." The situation became a standoff. Phil didn't know what to do. He wasn't a fighter. The inmate, on the other hand, was not only a fighter but a weight lifter as well. He glanced around for a custody officer, but there were none. The inmate was blocking the doorway, so there was no way out. Phil began to show his fear. Suddenly, Harry and a friend of his stepped in front of Phil and told the inmate to "back off." They assured the black man that Phil would take no action, that he would tell no one, and that the whole incident would be forgotten. An agreement was reached with the provision that Phil would give him no further orders. Peace was restored.

Turning to Phil, Harry said, "Where were those God Damned cops when you needed them? That guy could have killed you! you're lucky we were here."

With a great sigh of relief, Phil thanked them and said, "That's one I owe you. I'm sure glad you were here."

Harry's attitude was polite and reassuring when he said, "It looks like those cops don't care about you. One of them is supposed to be in this kitchen all the time. Well, you don't have to worry. As long as I'm around, no black man is going to harm you."

"You know," Phil, said, "I'm going to assign you guys to jobs back here. You won't have to mop any more floors. If you are back here where I work, I won't have to worry about that guy."

"You're OK, by the way," Harry said. "I don't want to leave. Emotions are still a little hot. Have you got any more cigarettes?"

Phil gave Harry several packages. "You got these coming and more", he said as he reached for a handshake.

In the days that followed, Phil noticed that each time he entered the vegetable room, the inmates would stop working and stare at him. They would hold their trimming knives across their chests and all conversations ceased. This odd behavior worried him. He decided to share his uneasy feeling with Harry, and did so.

"That's interesting," Harry said. "Tell you what; tomorrow, when you go into the vegetable room, I'll go with you and we'll put a stop to this nonsense."

The next morning, Phil noticed Harry talking to black inmates. Although he couldn't hear their conversation, he thought it was odd for a person who was extremely prejudiced to be in such close association with them.

"Maybe," he thought, "Harry is trying to find out the reason for the behavior in the vegetable room". The thought comforted him. It was time to make the rounds and inspect each kitchen area for cleanliness. The vegetable room was first on the list, but he decided to wait for Harry to finish talking. When Harry finally joined him, Phil asked, "What did you find out?"

"Later man," there was an odd commanding tone to Harry's voice. Phil had the feeling he was being told to shut up.

They stepped inside the vegetable room. All work stopped, the knives went to "port arms," and no one smiled or spoke.

Phil heard the door slam. He looked around for Harry and discovered that it was he who slammed the door. The look in Harry's eyes was frightening. Fear began to overtake Phil.

"What's wrong in here?" he demanded.

The vegetable room work crew had now encircled him. They were brandishing their knives in a threatening manner, and they were closing in.

On Harry's command, the group stopped. Harry was smiling. He said, "We're friends, ain't we Phil...?" Phil said nothing.

"Friends do favors for other friends, don't they?" Still no reply.

"We need a favor, Phil. You would save us a lot of time, trouble, and nastiness if you just granted it. All we want to do is have a party. We need some way to release our tensions. Oh, we could riot, but people get hurt in riots. We don't want to hurt anyone, so you could do us a favor, the institution a favor, and staff a favor. You can prevent a riot. You'll be a hero. Now what do you say?"

"How?" There was an uneasy distrust to Phil's voice.

"It's easy," Harry said, "You can't have a party without booze. All you have to do is bring two large bottles in your coat when you come to work tomorrow. No one will ever know. We'll never ask you again and you will have prevented a riot-saved somebody's life even."

"I can't do that, I'll lose my job!" Harry was yelling. "You don't know the trouble you're in! You think we're playing games? You're in trouble already. You'll do as you are told or these people will kill you! If you're thinking you'll leave here and report us, I'll have your job! Everyone here

is a witness to the radical material you've been bringing in, and I've got all those contraband cigarettes in my cell. Plus the fact that we have friends on the streets that will snuff you in a hot minute!"

Harry paused to let Phil absorb what he had just said, then in a softer voice, he continued. "Now, bring the stuff in tomorrow. Place it behind this storage bin and you'll have no further problems with us. Let him go!" Harry commanded.

That evening at home, Phil was quiet, sullen, deep in thought, and when he did speak to members of his family he 'snapped' at them. He refused to tell his wife what was wrong, and when she asked him why he had written a twenty-five dollar check, he told her to mind her own business. He had never spoken to her that way before.

Author's Note: Phil is trying to decide on a course of action. The point should be stressed that to date he has not committed any major offense. True, he used poor judgment, but reporting the incident would bring everything out in the open. If he exposed his tormentors he could expect the following:

- A. All responsible inmates would be disciplined.
- B. He would not lose his job.
- C. His peers would know by his action that the rumors about him were unfounded.
- D. He would be much wiser, and the likelihood that inmates could dupe him in the future much less.
- E. He would be a much better employee.
- F. He would be made to realize that inmates threaten to have friends harm staff members off grounds very frequently, but it never happens.
- G. Finally, administrators would interview him because of his poor judgment. When they felt assured he profited from the experience, they would compliment him for exposing the incident.

The next day Phil placed the contraband where they told him to. As the day progressed, he kept to himself. He was quiet and obviously worried. In his thoughts he remembered the inmate promised that no further requests of this nature would be made, but somehow he felt no comfort in the thought. He had a feeling in the pit of his stomach that made him want to vomit.

Harry had not reported to work for three days and Phil was not about to report him. As a matter of fact, he hoped never to see him again. He wanted to forget Harry ever existed. But that was not in the plan. Harry showed up that afternoon.

This time Harry had a written list of things he wanted. He didn't have to insist. Phil knew he was in too deep to refuse.

On the way home, Phil thought, "Where will it all end?"

It ended the next day. Officials had become suspicious of Phil's sudden personality change and his worried expression. They placed him under surveillance and arrested him as he was placing the contraband behind the storage bin

## **CASE HISTORY**

### **Profile-Staff Member:**

Subject is a 35-year-old Correctional Sergeant who has been promoted to Correctional Counselor. He is of Italian extraction, speaks with a slight accent and has 14 years correctional experience as a custodial officer. He is known to be a firm supervisor who expects the best effort of his men, and he is viewed by both staff and inmates as being fair. He came into the correctional field with a high school education and attended college after work. He achieved an AA Degree, then continued with upper division courses until he graduated with a B.A. Degree in Social Science. He is short, stocky and not given to idle conversation. His name is Elder.

### **Profile-Prison Inmate:**

Subject is a 23-year-old inmate, also of Italian extraction, who has been incarcerated for the crime of Murder. He is a first timer and has served three years of his sentence. He has a fourth grade education, is learning a trade and is not viewed as a behavior case by the institution. His build is medium. He is average in height and has a limited vocabulary. When given job assignments he is known to be a hard worker, polite and respectful to staff and he is active in prison sports programming. His name is Jones.

### **The Set-Up**

As a newly appointed Correctional Counselor, Mr. Elder was assigned an office in a housing wing where 125 inmates were living. In this new role he had the responsibility of making Board Reports and dealing with inmate problems. His former duties as a custodial sergeant were more regimented than those of a counselor and he had difficulty adjusting to the new routine. He was too 'hard' they said, and other counselors encouraged him to become more understanding with inmates. As a sergeant his function was easy because he understood control techniques. He interpreted the request of his peers to be more

understanding as meaning counselors should not control inmate actions, so he began pretending not to notice minor rule violations. "Besides," he told himself, "enforcing rules is a custody function."

In the prison community inmates categorize employees: Some are hard, some are soft and some are mellow. Hard employees go strictly by the 'book'. Soft employees allow people to walk on them; but mellow employees are people who have put it all together. They know exactly when to use each approach. Some employees can never achieve this middle ground. They are either hard or soft, but they can't be both. Mr. Elder was one such person. In custody he was hard. As a counselor he had become soft. Inmates began to notice his inability to adjust to this new job and began testing him.

Inmate Jones approached Mr. Elder one day and asked if he could mop and wax his floors each evening. "I'm the type of inmate," he said, "Who liked to keep busy. It makes time go faster." "But," Mr. Elder said, "You already have a job. "I'm finished each day around noon," the inmate responded, "and there's nothing to do but loaf and I've got too much energy for that. Besides, I like to do nice things for people. It would be a favor to me if you accept my offer." "Ok," Elder said enthusiastically, "You asked for it, you got it."

Jones was an excellent worker. He waxed and polished and always maintained a pleasant attitude. Elder really liked him. The two men formed a mutual respect for one another and each evening after work they would engage in long conversations. They talked about everything: current events, wars, personal problems and even their girlfriends.

One evening during a lull in the conversation, Jones indicated he was out of cigarettes. Elder promptly shared his. After all, it was the least he could do in return for everything Jones had done for him. Soon, borrowing cigarettes became a habit. Jones said, "It embarrasses me to be out of smokes so much," but Elder convinced him it was OK. "You ought to just give me a whole package, then I wouldn't be asking so often," Jones said jokingly. "Hell, why not?" and Elder gave him the package. The giving of one package led to another and, before long, Jones had twenty packages of cigarettes in his room.

Jones suddenly stopped reporting for work. Thinking something was wrong, Elder went to his room. The two men had been on a first name basis for a long time now. They shared several things in common, and it wasn't in keeping with Jones' life-style, not showing for work.

Arriving at the room, Elder said, "What's the matter there, big fellow? It's not like you to sit around doing nothing."

Jones was lying on the bed, starrng at the wall. He gave no indication of even hearing Elder. He seemed sad, like the weight of the world was upon him.

Elder tried again, "Hey, Friend, its me, your counselor."

"Oh hello, Mr. Elder. I'm sorry, I didn't hear you."

"Mr. Elder! What's all this mister stuff? You haven't been down to see me. I just came by to find out why."

Jones eyes had never left the wall, nor had he altered his position on the bed. Something was wrong all right-bad wrong!

"I want you down in my office at 3:00 p.m.," Elder said. "You need help and that's what a counselor is for. Be there! That's an order!" "You've got problems of your own, Mr. Elder. You don't need the addition of mine."

"That's an order!" Elder said again. Jones was reluctant, but finally agreed. In the office Elder sat poised to listen. It was an effort for Jones to talk. He kept groping for words, then finally lost his composure. It had been a long time since Elder has seen tears in a man's eyes. He wasn't sure of how to handle a situation like this, but finally said, "There's no problem that can't be solved. If you will just tell me what's troubling you, perhaps I can help."

After a long silence Jones said, "My mother passed away."

"I'm very sorry," Elder said in a consoling tone. "When did it happen?"

"Three days ago." Jones paused, then continued, "I didn't even get to show her how much I've changed. She would have been proud of me."

Elder felt a lump well up in his throat.

"It seems, when one bad problem develops, another follows close behind." As Jones spoke he went to the window. Gazing into nothingness, he finished his story.

"There is no one to care for my sister now. She's flying out here. I have no place for her to stay, no money to pay rent even if she did have a place to live. There isn't even anyone to pick her up at the airport. I just don't know what I'm going to do."

For a while there was no conversation at all. The two men seemed deep in thought. Finally, Elder spoke. "Look," he said, "I can pick her up at the airport and she can stay at my place for a couple of days. Maybe between now and then we can work out a better solution."

Jones gave a long, deep sigh of relief. It was obvious a burden had been lifted from him. He smiled for the first time that evening. "You

don't know what a help you've been, Mr. Elder. I can't thank you enough. If I can ever do anything for you ... "

Elder interrupted, "Well, one thing you can do is keep this under your hat. I'm not supposed to board relatives of inmates."

"Man, you can count on me. I won't say a word." Jones's obvious relief was reassuring. Elder felt comfortable, yet a little uneasy with his decision to help.

The girl introduced herself as Shirley. She was very pretty, about 18 years old and had a very nice personality. Elder was surprised. He had expected someone much younger. Oh well, not much could be done about it now. He picked up her bags and walked toward the car. On the way home he couldn't help but notice that she seemed much older than her years. 'Experienced' was the word that kept popping into his mind. He assured his conscience by concluding that some people are just precocious.

He gave her a tour of the house and she liked it, but indicated it needed a woman's touch. She immediately began to tidy things up and, before the evening ended, each room was a showcase. Elder liked her. Over the weekend there were many opportunities to talk, but Shirley kept busy and much of the conversation was between jobs. She made herself invaluable. She cooked, did the washing, and constantly cleaned things. Elder found himself thinking he would hate to see her leave.

By all appearances, Monday was going to be just a routine day: Board Reports to get out, people to interview, same as any other Monday. Elder supposed he would work until around 3:00 p.m., then go see Inmate Jones and tell him how much he liked his sister. His mind wandered to Shirley, then back to Jones. He could see the family resemblance. He smiled as he thought about kidding Jones for not telling him Shirley was a beautiful woman, not a child as he had been led to believe. 'Perhaps,' he thought, "Jones doesn't know his sister is a grown woman. After all, he hasn't seen her in three years. She was only 15 when he went to prison."

Elder decided not to wait. He called Jones to his office. He was anxious to tell him what a wonderful person his sister had turned out to be, and that he would arrange for the two of them to visit.

Jones wasn't in his room. The unit officer told Elder that Jones was on a visit-his ex-wife, he thought. Elder decided to go meet her. He even considered inviting her over to see Shirley-a sort of family reunion. The idea was pleasing to him.

Looking into the Visiting Room he saw Jones and Shirley sitting at a table. No one else was there. The officer must have been mistaken when he said ex-wife. "Or," Elder thought, "Maybe she would be along later." At any rate, he decided to go in and say hello.

On his way past the Visiting Room admissions desk, Elder glanced at the guest register. "Inmates Name: Jones; Guest's Name: Edna; Relationship: Ex-wife."

Elder couldn't believe what he was reading. He was confused. He knew from reading Jones' file that he (Jones) had been married before, but that was Shirley visiting with him. There had to be some mistake. Standing by the table, Elder excused himself and said, "Shirley, I think there's been a mistake"

"There's no mistake," Jones said. "Sit down." His tone was rough and commanding. Elder sat down.

Jones continued, "I've got a list of things I want you to buy." He produced the list from his shirt pocket. Shirley or Edna, or whoever she was, hadn't spoken a word. Her facial expression was cold and calculating. She looked hard and angry.

Elder was tense. His eyes went from Shirley to Jones, then to the list. "Benzedrine, Tenuate, Dexedrine ... "

"These are drugs! I can't do that!" Elder was becoming excited. Jones told him to shut-up and keep his voice down.

Shirley spoke for the first time since Elder entered the Visiting Room. "Listen, you dumb bastard. You'll do it, or you won't have a job!" Looking at Jones she said, "You still got them cigarettes?"

"Yep, two cartons. 20 packages and he brought them in. Another thing," Jones continued, "Where did you get off sleeping with my wife?"

Shirley spoke again, "Now listen, you son-of-a-bitch, you get them drugs and you get them today, or I'll tell the Superintendent I'm living with you ... "

Elder regained his composure, stood up sharply and interrupted her demand. "Save your breath. I'll tell him myself," he said, and he stormed out of the room. Elder's report was complete in every detail. Jones was locked up, Edna was removed from the approved visiting list and the counselor was suspended with pay for fifteen days, pending investigation. He was later reinstated with the admonition that another display of poor judgment would result in a more lasting type of punishment.

## **CASE HISTORY**

### **Profile-Staff Member:**

Subject is a 26-year-old divorcee of Hispanic origin. She is the mother of three children, very religious, overly friendly, very trusting and deeply compassionate. She has 18 months service in Corrections and is a Vocational Secretary. She is tall, slender and considered attractive. Her personality is outgoing, she believes everyone can be a 'Born Again Christian,' regardless of their crimes, and her mission in life is to propagate her religious convictions.

### **Profile-Inmate:**

Subject is a 25-year-old male Caucasian who is incarcerated for the crime of Murder. He is intelligent, cunning and con-wise. He is a fourth termier who is known to be a manipulator. He is tall, nice looking, and works hard on his job assignments. He is married to a known prostitute. He has no children and openly expresses his hatred for the children of other people. His prison adjustment has been guarded in that he refuses to learn a trade or complete his education.

## **CASE HISTORY**

"One reason I turned to crime is I was deeply hurt. My wife wanted a divorce. We had three children and she wanted things for them and herself that I couldn't afford. So, in order to keep my family together I began stealing. This is my first time in jail and if I had it all to do over, things would be different." This statement was made by an inmate to a vocational secretary in one of our California Institutions.

The woman became empathetic with the inmate and shared that she too had three children and had only recently undergone a divorce. Both agreed that their former spouses left much to be desired and that supporting three children was not easy. "It is easier for you than me, because you are not in jail. My kids are starving," the inmate told her.

"What about welfare?" she asked. He said, "A neighbor lady is taking care of the kids. She has no money to feed them, she cannot get welfare because they are not her children nor is she their legal guardian." Because they shared a common problem, the two principals became close associates and a friendship born out of empathy was formed.

One day the inmate told her his youngest daughter had become ill. Each day thereafter he indicated the little girl's 'condition' was becoming progressively worse. Three weeks later the inmate failed to report for duty. In an attempt to find out what was wrong, the secretary called his unit. After staff members had left the vocational office he reported for work. He didn't greet the secretary as he normally did, nor would he look in her direction. She finally decided on a face to face confrontation and discovered the man was crying.

"What in the world is the matter," she demanded. After a few moments of trying to regain his composure, he finally confided that his youngest daughter had died of malnutrition, and he broke down again. The secretary, crying herself, tried to console him by putting her arms around him and placing his head on her shoulder. The scenario was highly emotional. The inmate finally backed away, saying, "Don't, if someone saw you doing this they would never understand, and you could get into trouble."

"To hell with what people think," she said.

"No," he said. "We have to be realistic."

Experiences like this are not easily overcome, so in the days that followed it was necessary for the secretary to accomplish a great deal of consoling.

After a period of time the inmate said, "I probably will not be seeing you after today. My son is ill, and I have no intention of letting him die." He produced a money order for one hundred dollars and continued by saying, "It's illegal to have this and if I get caught, and there's no doubt in my mind I will be caught, I'll go to outside court. My time will be extended, and I will be moved to another prison. But to save my son, I'll run that risk. It's a value judgment based on right and wrong," he said. "Sometimes the law is wrong."

Deeply concerned, the woman said, "There must be another way." "Well," he responded, "There's not"

After about an hour he said, "There is one other way I could get the money to my children and no one would be caught, but I wouldn't even consider asking."

"Tell me," she said.

"Well, if you really want to know, I've never done this sort of thing but I knew a guy who did. It's one of those one time only things.

"If I were to place this envelope in your purse without you knowing it, and you discovered it when you got home, all you would have to do is sign the money order and mail it. It's not like being dishonest because you didn't know it was there, so it's not a premeditated act. Your signing the money order would make it appear like a gift from a concerned person who didn't want to see a kid starve, and it couldn't be traced to the institution. But, no way would I ask you to do a thing like that. Besides, it's my problem, not yours. You ask me, so I told you."

Two days later he placed the money order in her purse. It seemed like a charitable act, a small thing, and the baby needed care, so she

signed the money order. Before mailing it she included a "To whom it may concern" note asking to be kept advised about the health and progress of the children.

A short time later he thanked her, said he knew of no other way, and assured her he would never again include her in his problems. He seemed obviously relieved knowing the child would be cared for. In his joy he said, "You know so much about me, I might as well tell you the real reason my wife divorced me." Hesitating and groping for words, he continued, "I'm not much of a man, because I can't achieve an erection. I'm sorry," he said, "I shouldn't be discussing a thing like this with you, it's too embarrassing." "No, no it's alright," she said, "You need to get it out. We're both mature people. Have you seen a doctor?". "Many," he said, "They tell me it's all in my mind. That's nice to know, but how does one overcome such an affliction?"

The money order was now a thing of the past and forgotten about. The new problem permitted deep personal discussion about sexual techniques, and as time passed the inmate shared that one doctor indicated the only thing that would help him was to find some patient, understanding woman. "But," he said, "I never ran into a person like you on the streets."

One day, just as the custody officer had made his rounds, and the inmate knew he wouldn't be back for over two hours, he said, "I'm going to do something that really isn't right. I hope you will understand, but I've got to know!" With that, he exposed himself.

"See that," he exclaimed, "I'm no man at all!" Appearing shocked, the secretary said, "Don't do that, you'll get us both in trouble!"

His voice was determined and urgent. He said, "That custodial officer won't be back for a long time, and you don't understand! I've got to know! You are probably the only woman that can make a man out of me. As much as I desire you, nothing is happening. If you would just touch me, I'm sure it would make a difference." He took her hand to place it on his penis, and at that precise moment the custodial officer walked in. For some reason, he had reversed his ordinary pattern. He arrested the inmate, reported the secretary, and she was escorted off grounds.

In the investigation that followed, the inmate stated he was not guilty. The secretary, he said, had paid him one hundred dollars for his sexual favors and he could prove it. His wife, a prostitute, came to the institution and presented a sealed envelope with the money order signed by the secretary, and bearing her return address. The inmate's wife stated that as a prostitute she understood the needs of men in confinement and if this former employee was willing to pay for sex, she had no objections.