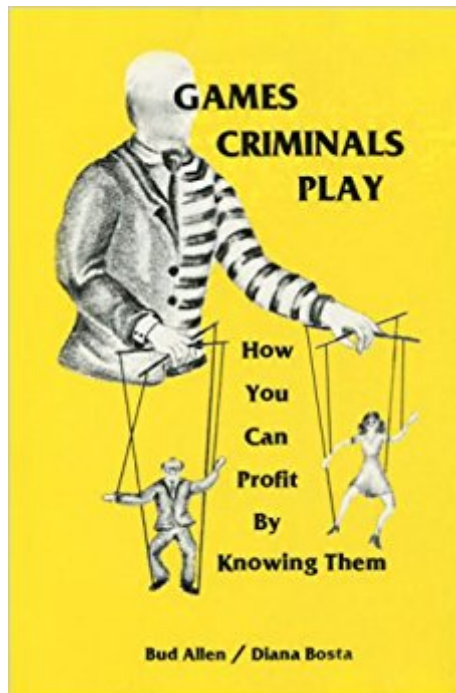




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Games Criminals Play: How You Can Profit By Knowing Them



Synopsis

Games Criminals Play

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Customer Reviews

Games Criminals Play

This book is valuable for anyone thinking of working in a prison. It offers two significant benefits. ONE: it articulates, in great detail, the risk of becoming a victim of manipulation by prisoners. It shows how to avoid this danger. TWO: Reading the book is an exercise in sorting out correctional staff's practice wisdom from their punitive fear mongering. ONE: when members of the public think of the risks of working in prison, they imagine physical violence. In my experience, more correctional employees are manipulated into breaking rules and violating laws than suffer physical attacks. As best I can tell, more employees are "walked off," than are beaten or stabbed. The risks of physical injury or death are real, but can be mitigated by simple precautions. Preventing manipulation requires much more subtle work. This book does a solid job of showing how crooks do it, and how employees can immunize themselves to this risk. Victimizers target potential victims by observing appearance and body language. They look for staffers whose dress and grooming betray discomfort in their own skin. They look for employees who are unhappy, frustrated, resentful, fearful. To check out these initial impressions, they test for willingness to let minor rules violations slide and to permit petty breaches of personal boundaries; using first names, brushing against the employee, floating sexual innuendos. If the employee does not put a stop to these probes, the grooming begins

in earnest. The staffer's unmet emotional needs are addressed. The employee with low self esteem is flattered. The victimizer lets him know how fascinating and wise the staffer is. The resentful employee is assured that management does not appreciate him the way the prisoner does. The staffer's sympathies are aroused by hard luck stories. The frightened staffer is assured the victimizer will make sure nothing happens to him. Then the employee is inveigled into moving from toleration of minor violations to committing violations himself. The employee who shared his sandwiches is induced to bring in extra goodies. He is asked to mail letters that would not get past the prison censors. He asked to make unauthorized contact with the prisoner's family. At some point the employee becomes afraid to let management know he has broken so many rules. He is isolated from other staff. Now the trap is sprung. The employee is blackmailed into bringing drugs into the prison or into performing sexual favors. One officer was so deeply compromised that he brought in a uniform, piece by piece, until the prisoner had a full uniform and was able to escape. The authors provide specific directions on how to keep from becoming a victim. The employee must set clear, firm, consistent limits. The employee must refuse to be isolated from the rest of staff. Most critically, if the employee has been sucked into this vortex, he must let administration know. To my knowledge, absent a major felony or security breach, the worst that happens to an employee who turns himself in is loss of some pay and a temporary demotion. Most often, the employee receives a reprimand or caution. Hiring and training a new employee is time consuming and expensive. Management generally prefers a sadder and wiser employee to an untested new one. The employee who fails to tell on himself winds up getting fired. He loses his job pension. If the violation is flagrant, he may be prosecuted. He is humiliated. It is an insidious process; I knew several employees whose overfamiliarity led to their dismissal. None had believed it could happen to them. None saw it coming, no matter how hard I, and other colleagues, tried to tell them. The authors' greatest strength is their empathy with the victims of manipulation. They grasp fully what it is like to start out wanting to do the right thing, but end up committing crimes one would never have imagined performing unprompted.

TWO The book does an excellent job of showing how correctional staff can be manipulated into breaking rules and into violating laws. Unfortunately, the book also fosters a punitive agenda. By inducing global, ultimately paralyzing, fear, the authors manipulate readers into betraying their own highest values. In this book, fear is promoted by omission. The authors say that staff are vulnerable to manipulation if they are too "soft," or too "hard," but all examples are of staff who are too permissive or lenient. There are no examples of staff whose harshness and rigidity masks an underlying sense of personal inadequacy, which a con artist can exploit. The authors state that not all prisoners try to manipulate staff; many are trying to turn their lives around. They then

provide only one example of a prisoner making an appropriate request of staff. That example is weak and ambiguous. It is not helpful. The authors clearly know their subject. None of their vignettes looks fabricated. All examples present scenarios a correctional employee can expect to face. I believe that had they wanted, they could have provided many examples of prisoners who relate appropriately to staff. The authors could have explained that these prisoners do not ask staff to break rules or laws. They do not make spurious offers to make the employee's life easier or ask the employee to run errands. Their interactions with staff are clearly part of the prisoner's effort to "turn his life around." Providing such examples would have helped readers distinguish between prisoners who are "programming," from those who are manipulators. The authors could have offered guidance on how to respond effectively to prisoners who are trying to make positive changes in their lives. It is true that a prisoner who presents this way may be an extremely clever manipulator; I believe the authors had the knowledge and experience to help readers tell which prisoners are sincere and which ones not when they ask for help changing for the better. Had they given as many examples of prisoners making positive changes as they did of prisoners manipulating staff, they then would have written a book that was balanced and genuinely helpful to staffers. Instead, they wrote a one-sided book, which instead of helping staffers deal confidently with prisoners, provokes fear; fear so pervasive that it corrodes the will. Here is one clear example. During orientation this book was used to justify telling new employees that we should have no empathy for prisoners. I had not yet read the book, When I did read it, I discovered that the presenter had misunderstood what it does say about empathy, but he had grasped its general tenor. I found the directive not to have empathy appalling, and shared this sentiment with several colleagues. To my surprise, they all agreed that it would be dangerous to have empathy with members of this population. In response, I asked: of what disorders is the absence of empathy a defining characteristic. My colleagues knew: antisocial personality disorder, sociopathy, psychopathy. They knew this full well. I was not telling them anything they did not know. The fear instilled in them by the Department of Corrections had driven them to abandon one of their core values. The Department had also made them less safe. If empathy is understanding what it feels like to be another person, would it not be safer to know what it feels like to be a prisoner than to insist on remaining ignorant of that perspective? If the authors had valued empathy for prisoners as much as they do for staff, they would have written a masterpiece. As it is, their book is an incomplete, middling effort.

My father is in corrections and has been for the past 20 years and it wasn't until a month ago that his friend recommended this book to him. I purchased it on for him and since then he has begun

reading it. He tells me it's a great book and very informative although he still hasn't finished it yet. If you are just getting into corrections, THIS IS A MUST READ. It will give you the insight you need to understand how to deal with any scenario they throw at you. If you've been in corrections for years then this book will improve on the skills you've had to develop while working around inmates. All in all this book should be issued to all officers working in a jail or prison. 100% Worth the money

I'd read excerpts from this book when first started in corrections 18 years ago during grad school. Now I'm in charge of the psychology department at a male state prison, and I intend to introduce my staff to this book. Even though I find it impossible to believe that an inmate in today's prisons can manipulate his way into a correctional officer's uniform and walk out the front gate, as described in this book, vulnerability to inmate manipulation (e.g., get you to bring in contraband, give extra privileges, etc.) is still a problem everyone needs to be aware of. I continue to hear of custody as well as non-custody staff getting walked out in cuffs for inappropriate behavior or relationships with inmates. This book should be mandatory reading as part of newcomer orientation for new staff and yearly in-service training for everyone else.

Great book! I bought this for my husband after reading numerous reviews from other correctional officers. My husband read this book before he started his training academy and they actually used it in class! This is the textbook for all correctional officers. Don't let the date fool you, this book may be old but it is dead on! I went through and read it also. As a wife who has to send her husband off daily to murderers and offenders, it gave me great insight on what he is going through and the people he interacts with for nearly 8-10 hours every single day! Get this if you're a CO or a wife or if you have a family member whose career is Corrections!

The authors have spent many years working with prisoners and in this very interesting book explain how convicts frequently seek to manipulate (set-up) their supervisors and what prison employees can learn to avoid entrapment. The book provides a useful set of case histories showing the empathy and sympathy hooks of first names, common interests, similar backgrounds and items such as the classic phrase, "You and your unique abilities are the only things that will rehabilitate me - I need your help" or "Only this time". The aim is to gain power over (turn) employees and manipulate them to obtain favours/material goods and raise status with other offenders. The authors aim to protect employees by making them aware of setup techniques. Fundamentally they require employees to be fair but formal with inmates, set a good example, and never speak or act on the

inmate level. When in doubt ask an experienced 3rd party and let the inmate know that you're doing it. The authors clearly say that not all inmates are manipulative but a large enough proportion are to repay taking precautions.

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