



THE FINAL RECKONING OF THE STANFORD PRISON SAGA

PART 5: AN ORCHESTRATED APOTHEOSE

In [The Aftermath of The Lifespan of a Lie](#), I painted a picture of the recent revelations aimed at toppling a science travesty without success. Psychology's indifferent reaction to the damaging revelations that the Stanford Prison Experiment is fraudulent set me on an endeavor to review the composed piece of art using narratological principles.

[David Eshleman's deepfake](#) illustrated that the reported guard brutality was only one person hamming his hazing experience. A doctored tape unveiled that nothing happened on Wednesday during the night shift. Some secret side-experiment was run by Zimbardo as the puppet master, suggesting John Wayne acted by proxy.

[John Mark's insubordination](#) focused on the instruction to act like a tough guard. But Mark did the exact opposite, justifying the conclusion that bad leaders are powerless to enforce their will on the unwilling. The details and experience he shared since 2007 were spot on, pointing at numerous flaws in the design and official narrative.

Specialist deceiver [Douglas Korpi stood trial](#). He is the conscience-ridden psychologist who came clean he faked his breakdown after thriving on his con for decades to fill his psychology practice. It turned out he staged his breakdown in cahoots with the staff.

In this episode of The Final Reckoning, the three plotlines of uncontrollable guards, suffering prisoners and apathetic prison management intertwine to a crescendo finale on the last night. Was Zimbardo confronted by his fiancée and brought back from the realms of roleplaying? Or was the alleged premature end a ruse to fool everyone?



Zimbardo's confession

Zimbardo, in his [response to Blum's article](#), zoomed in on his role as superintendent. He began the study as the principal research investigator. However, in a matter of days, he was transformed into the full-time prison boss. In his view, missing an independent observer was the major design flaw of the experiment.

Zimbardo goes on that a vivid illustration of this flaw was that he no longer acknowledged the suffering of the prisoners by Thursday night. His fiancée Christina Maslach witnessed the dehumanizing toilet run organized by John Wayne, which led to a major clash on how the situation had changed Zimbardo into an insensitive superintendent. Maslach's wake-up call made Zimbardo realize he had become his role. The epiphany returned him to the level-headed man he was. Around midnight, he decided to end the experiment prematurely.

Notwithstanding, Zimbardo's epiphany feels too scripted to fit the plotline. Psychologists losing themselves in their simulation role while observing students play prisoners and guards seems science fantasy. Is it an obtrusive ploy to substantiate that people can become overpowered by the situation?

As far as I have been able to ascertain, no one has entertained the idea of a planned ending with a fabricated falling-out. Perhaps people find the speculative notion of a choreographed climax by esteemed psychologists inconceivable. Well, I considered it, especially after [guard John Mark hinted](#) at a forced crescendo. When [Richard Yacco \(#1037\) attested](#) that the staff told him around 8 p.m. on Thursday they would end the experiment the next day, alarm bells started to ring.

Just a reminder, [Zimbardo confessed](#) a crucial detail at the end of the so-called simulated sodomy scene in his response, "Fortunately, I had earlier decided to terminate the experiment the next morning." This statement demolishes his official account of a midnight termination after the falling-out — clear testimony to a pre-ordained instead of a premature end.

If Zimbardo planned the end, it would obliterate the Stanford Prison story. However, relying on Zimbardo's admission of pulling the plug earlier on Thursday is too easy. Where would the fun be in that? Besides, demonstrating the fabrication of this so-called study rests on irrefutable proof.

Down the rabbit hole we go.

The late arrival of #416

To fully grasp what materialized Thursday, let me first properly introduce a lead character. Clay Ramsey (#416) — the prisoner in the promo video with David Eshleman — was the only student prisoner who entered the simulation during the week. [Wednesday around 9 p.m.](#), Ramsey got a call from Zimbardo's secretary. She said we have an opening for you and made it sound like a job. She asked Ramsey if he could make it by 11.30 p.m.

As a side note, the evening call corroborates the 9 p.m. departure of Levin (#819). The staff brought [prisoner #416 in to replace him](#). Or perhaps Ramsey was Korpi's replacement, filling his vacancy two days later. Conflicting versions are floating around.



Anyway, blockbuster screenwriters bring in new dramatic characters to gain emotional traction to a scripted climax. Did producer Zimbardo do the same? Let's see.

Ramsey picked up his things and walked voluntarily into a simulation run by the Department of Psychology. He was arrested in the lobby and deloused but never charged with anything. Come Thursday morning, Ramsey sensed the situation and quickly realized he was physically out of his depth. Dismayed to discover that he had willfully trapped himself, [Ramsey wanted out](#). From that moment, his only goal was to get out by whatever means possible.

Probably unfamiliar with the three exit strategies — medical, psychiatric, or parole — Ramsey took matters into his own hands. When he saw there was no supervision, he [started to refuse food](#). He began his hunger strike at lunch and refrained from eating till the end around Friday noon.

Ramsey used the omission of his parent's signatures on the forms to assert he was inside illegally on a void contract. Playing the legality card pissed off day shift guard Terry Barnett, who thought Ramsey was unmanageable, disrupting all order and the prison routine.

Later that Thursday, substitute Ramsey bore the brunt of the night shift bullying. His persistent denial to eat his sausages thoroughly annoyed Eshleman. But no matter what John Wayne tried — attempting to force-feed Ramsey and even threatening there would be hell to pay — Ramsey would not budge. He knew [the guards were powerless](#).

Instead, Ramsey simply meditated on a droplet of water on his tin plate, detaching himself from the vilification while realizing there was nothing the guards could do to hurt him. In frustration, the night shift repeatedly threw the would-be hero in the Hole, where he spent several hours that last night. While inside the closet, he had a [religious experience](#) staring at the light for hours.

Ramsey's hunger strike was purportedly the last act of rebellion. Even so, his is testimony in the NBC Chronolog video is more than curious. The scripted dialogue with David Eshleman about losing himself in prisoner #416 within hours inside the simulation smells off. Was #416 under instructions to cause a commotion?

Parole Board mayhem

One of Thursday's main events was the second Parole Board that convened at 3.30 p.m. The four remaining students not seen on Wednesday were allowed to plead their case. In went Clay Ramsey (#416), Paul Baran (#5704), Jerry Shue (#5486), and last but not least, Sarge Tom Williams (#2093). These four sacrificial lambs tried to pass ex-convict Carlo Prescott's tribunal. He was the simulation consultant and chair of the board.

Ramsey is first in pleading he is in prison illegally on the contract he signed as a minor. He demands a lawyer to get him released, or he will continue his hunger strike. Zimbardo then asks Ramsey the leading question if he is willing to forfeit his pay for parole. Ramsey consents because the money is not worth his time inside the prison.

Baran is next and gets charged with constant and gross insubordination, flares of violence and inciting the other prisoners. While on the docket, Baran acts subdued and timid, displaying little of his bravado to seduce the board to let him go. He will give up his pay, believing he has earned his freedom.



Then jokester Shue makes his case. The board charges robust Shue with general non-cooperation for lack of compliance with the orders given. Smirking, Shue tells the board with defiant confidence that he is reluctant to give up his money to get released.

Last in is Sarge Williams, who had been living out of his car for the last month. Since he strictly followed the rules from day one, he requests parole to use his time more productively. Williams is unwilling to give up his pay for parole. If he did, the days in the basement would have been even more a waste of time.

The second hearing was very similar to the first on Wednesday. Rather uneventful. However, different reports circulate on when the board met. According to [the journal papers](#), the Parole Board was one of the most remarkable incidents. During the meeting described as taking place after four days [Wednesday], Zimbardo asked the five prisoners eligible for parole if they would forfeit pay for parole. Three of the five said yes.

[On Zimbardo's website](#), all prisoners who thought they had grounds for being paroled were chained together and individually brought before the Parole Board on Thursday. The [slideshow narrative](#) also refers to one meeting on Thursday morning.

Strikingly, there was not just one board meeting with five prisoners. Warden Jaffe's log and Zimbardo's book clearly state two hearings, each with four prisoners. On Wednesday, Gee was the only one to decline the offer to duck pay for parole. On Thursday, Williams and Shue would not part with their money. In total, three of the eight prisoners rejected Zimbardo's indecent proposal.

How inappropriate the loaded question was becomes apparent from the public [article in the New York Times](#). The authors left the most remarkable incident out — it contains not a single word on the Parole board's question.

Now, why these irreconcilable discrepancies, specifically in the journal papers? And that for one of the most remarkable events! Is this sloppy reporting, sheer negligence, or was data manipulated? Whatever the answer, the Parole Board is a shambles.

The surreal board baffles

The question of relinquishing the money makes little sense when you think about it. Imagine asking convicts the same question. Unsurprisingly, they would jump at the opportunity. That is what you get when you incarcerate innocent students against their will.

Critically, does the Parole Board make sense? On Sunday, the prisoners got arrested, were charged with a crime, and then detained. They were not sentenced and convicted. Parole Board hearings are held for inmates serving time in prison, not for someone accused of a crime locked up in a police cell. Holding a Parole Board for prisoners in jail having to make a guilty or not guilty plea defies logic. The Kafkaesque scene confused the hell out of them.

How confusing the out-of-place board actually was shows the bizarre spectacle during the first Parole Board. Carlo Prescott asked Rowney (#4325), "Why are you in prison? How do you plead?" Rowney pleads not guilty. Prescott explodes and fulminates that Rowney is implying the arresting officers are liars. Prescott's reaction left Rowney baffled and intimidated.



Moreover, Zimbardo has made a big deal out of the prisoners being unperturbed after the Parole Board meetings. The prisoners were resigned and obedient. He attributed this to a broken will. Except the confrontation was surreal, called a double bind. And their timid behavior makes perfect sense if you are trying to get out on good behavior. Then you put on your best behavior.

The hearing in a jail setting is straight out of Kafka's *The Trial* — a catch-22 scene scenario-writers conjure up. The artificially scripted hearing helps grasp the Thursday releases of Rowney (#4325) and Yacco (#1037) while their parole hearing was on Wednesday. Did the researchers plan their paroles to prevent undesired dents in the dramaturgy?

This appears to be the case. In the postmortem directly after the first meeting, Prescott proposes letting a couple of prisoners out at different times to see if the prisoners can figure out how to get out. Releasing some soon would also give hope to the rest. Rowney and Yacco were released the next day, as Prescott suggested.

Planning a premature closedown

[John Mark has always been emphatic](#) about Zimbardo forcing a dramatic finale and then end the simulation as quickly as possible. He believes the simulation never intended to run for the whole two weeks. Throughout the study, Zimbardo knew what he wanted and then tried to shape the experiment — by how it was constructed and the way things played out — to fit the conclusion that he had already worked out.

Was Mark pointing at a smoking gun? His insistence is gripping. Why else did Zimbardo make everyone believe the guard behavior had deteriorated to such an abysmal level that continuation was no longer ethically justified? We know the simulation didn't run amok. Instead, it was running aground. By Tuesday, the guards were rehashing tired old counts. The daily scheduled routines quickly grew monotonous and matter-of-fact. Most of the time, the guards were keeping to themselves.

What's more, the job recruitment ad for the prison of life study said 1-2 weeks. The simulation was never scheduled to run for two weeks. And the psychologists knew from the Toyon Hall pilot that locking students in a basement is an accident waiting to happen. In the pilot, from the word go, the participants started to act out. That simulation lasted less than one day.

Additionally, a choreographed climax makes perfect sense. Scripted success stories must go out with a crackling bang. Psychologists forced to abandon their experiment heightens the drama. Zimbardo did use hyperbole when he wrote in *To control a mind* that the planned two-week investigation into the psychology of prison life had to be ended after six days because the inhumanity of the "evil situation" had totally dominated the humanity of the "good" participants?

No wonder the press immediately jumped on the sensation. Except, the media never bothered to verify the validity of a premature end. They just printed what Zimbardo fed to them in his news releases. On the Saturday after the end, the San Francisco Chronicle ran the enticing headline "Prison Test — An Ugly Success." The article opened with a shocking line to feast your eyes on as researcher, "A psychology experiment at Stanford University on the dynamics of prison life was terminated a week early yesterday because it had worked too well."



Let's face it, such dramatization worked like a charm. But is it true?

On the inductive trail

Initially, the idea of a planned end sounded too much like a classic conspiracy theory, but Mark's remarks about a crescendo ending and Zimbardo attesting to terminating his experiment earlier on Thursday made me look for further clues. You know what they say, where there's smoke, there's fire.

Moreover, in *The Menace Within*, Richard Yacco (#1037) revealed that when he left with his parents after visiting hours, the staff told him they would end the experiment the next day. Yacco corroborated Mark's crescendo notion and unsuspectingly pointed at the same smoking gun.

Zimbardo felt compelled to react to Yacco's disclosure in the [letter to the editor](#) I have mentioned before. He claimed that he did not decide to end the study until midnight after his dramatic interaction with Christina Maslach.

Yacco's revelation contradicts the theatrical ending of the simulation around midnight. Therefore Zimbardo's response is to be expected to nip rumors of foul play in the bud. And his defense strategy worked wonders. No one followed up on a possible planned ending. Now, ten years later, Zimbardo might think he is out of the woods. However, the veneer had already cracked.

Notably, an emeritus feeling the need to correct the experience of participants is very peculiar. Mind-blowing is Zimbardo contradicting himself seven years later in his response when he claims he terminated the experiment well before the trumped-up camel humping.

So suppose Yacco is right? Then his testimony in 2011 will be the final nail in the prison coffin. All I had to find was further corroboration. On the scent, the first hint of a possible planned end I could dig up was [Jaffe telling Korpi](#) on Monday night that the simulation would be a maximum of two weeks, probably less. Hardly solid proof since Jaffe was likely thinking about the intended maximum duration of the simulation.

The next clue came from Tuesday's staff meeting after visiting hours. [Zimbardo contemplated](#) letting two prisoners go. He was already planning the two releases that followed on Wednesday. The next day, Prescott proposed paroling a couple of prisoners. Roney was allowed to leave the next day, followed by Yacco. Were the planned prisoner releases by the staff a prelude to a fake premature ending?

More circumstantial evidence is given by Gorchoff during his debrief on Wednesday morning. [Gorchoff stresses](#) that bringing in a Priest on the weekend is weird because there will probably be no Sunday.

Next, the Wednesday evening [interview Banks had with Glenn Gee](#) (#3401). Banks explained that they were attempting to re-enact the Toyon Hall pilot with its mickey mouse set-up. Then Gee remarks, "You said it was a 24 hours study. I guess this will be a six-day study." How did he know the study would end on Friday or was he merely guessing?

Still, inconclusive evidence will not sway a jury. Even the [abrupt arrival of the KRON](#) video crew from the local TV station on Friday morning is hardly solid proof. And I was adamant not to speculate



unfounded accusations based on cherry-picked anecdotes. That would be equivalent to researchers conspiring to confirm their conclusion. I needed to take a different approach.

The false falling-out

The incontestable evidence of a planned end lies in the evening quarrel between Zimbardo and Maslach. After all, that made Zimbardo return to reality and terminate the experiment around midnight. Did they have a heated falling-out, or was the confrontation made up?

To answer this rather thorny question, I went over the reported scene. On stage is whistleblower Christina Maslach — Zimbardo’s fiancée, who he later married — in the starring role she eloquently depicted in [*My Role In the Stanford Prison Experiment*](#).

Maslach met a guard waiting to begin his evening shift at 6 p.m. The guard was very pleasant, polite, and friendly — a really nice guy. Later on, she finds out it was notorious John Wayne. Around 11 p.m., she witnessed a parade of prisoners in chains with paper bags over their heads for the regular bathroom run before lights out. What she observed made her stomach turn. Nauseated, feeling physically sick, she ran out, no longer able to watch the suffering students.

Zimbardo went after her, asking her what’s wrong? They got into a huge fight. Maslach feared the man she loved would become someone she no longer cared for and respected. She went haywire and emotionally confronted her husband-to-be that he was hurting those poor boys, desperately trying to open his eyes.

Zimbardo felt ashamed about what he was doing to those poor boys and came to his senses. Clearheaded, he said ostentatiously, “You’re right. We’ve got to end the study.” He ended the simulation around midnight, realizing the prison study had transformed him into a stony-hearted person befitting an evil superintendent.

End scene. Black screen.

Maslach’s account demonstrated that the titillating build-up of suspense over the week resulted in Zimbardo conquering neigh insurmountable situational forces that had turned him into his alter-ego. With help from his beloved, the victim of circumstance returned as a hero to beat overpowering social pressures — an epic internal battle between good and bad!

Separating the chaff from the wheat

The late-night clash between the two lovers is too good to be true. So let me unravel the falling-out scene, starting with the guards never invented the prisoner chain gang. The psychologists devised the chained bathroom run before the study began. They wanted to uphold the prison’s illusion because the bathroom facilities were outside the confines of the prison yard. [Craig Haney attested](#) they didn’t like the prisoners to think they were just in the psych building at Stanford.

Next, Eshleman’s shift began at 6 p.m., and Maslach spotted him at 11 p.m. The two chance encounters involving John Wayne — before he came on duty and starting the bathroom run — are more than 5 hours apart. What are the odds? So I checked Zimbardo’s book.



Zimbardo mentions that the last toilet run of Thursday night started at 10 p.m. He repeats this in his response to Blum's exposé. Maslach recollects that at 11 p.m., the prisoners went for their bathroom run. But when Ramsey (#416) got out of the Hole around 11 p.m., he returned to bed and felt he had won. These three accounts in the same book do not add up. What is fact, and what is fiction?

Critically, the three events — the bathroom run, the falling-out, and pulling the plug — need to be cleared up to get to the bottom of what occurred. The [daily schedule](#) provides some clues. The bathroom run was planned daily at 8.30 p.m. with lights out at 9.30 p.m.

[Le Texier went through Jaffe's](#) notebook that he kept on the daily schedule. The entry is, "Aug. 19. Again, basic schedule followed pretty closely." If we were to believe Maslach's recollection, she saw the prisoners two and a half hours later than programmed. Such a deviation conflicts with Jaffe's notes. And an extra run is impossible. The official account is that after lights out, toilet privileges were denied. Prisoners who had to relieve themselves had to urinate and defecate in buckets provided by the guards.

The [recorded video](#) of Thursday evening — with four students doing the infamous leapfrogs that Zimbardo magically altered in simulated sodomy — further helps piece the puzzle. The recording shows no more than one hour of verbal pranking by the night shift after visiting hours. There is no break.

At the end of the video, Eshleman locks the prisoners in, ordering them to get to bed and turn the lights out. Ramsey is still in the Hole. Indisputably, the scheduled bathroom run had already taken place before the recording started. The visit to the facilities was well before 9 p.m., in line with warden Jaffe's notes.

I also found a [log in the archives](#) recounting the main events of day 5. Following lights out at 10 p.m. with Ramsey still in the Hole, the last recorded event is "Curtis Banks brings 416 back to cell after an hour:- orders him to take his sausages to bed with him." This account concurs with the reported three hours of bullying Ramsey after visiting hours and him returning to his cell around 11 p.m. Moreover, it confirms that no later than 10 p.m. the prisoners were in bed.

Looking for more nuggets

Thus far, all the evidence flies right in the face of Maslach's stilted account. There is no way that the lovers-quarrel took place after a bathroom run. That run had taken place hours earlier. With their alibis blown to pieces, is the premature termination of the simulation still tenable?

I delved deep into the bowls of the archives, where I found conclusive proof. The night shift did a [final prison study evaluation](#) by answering twelve questions. Mysteriously, they started well before the alleged midnight ending. [On tape](#), sidekick guard Chuck Burton is the first to share his experience by answering the evaluation questions.

George Loftus is next. The inconspicuous guard starts his recording with it is 11 p.m. on August 19. He answers the evaluation questions and elucidates his experience. The tape ends with the final evaluation interview Eshleman had with Jaffe at 1.30 a.m.



Incontestably, the night shift began their final evaluation shortly after lights out at 10 p.m. While Zimbardo and his fiancée were preparing to get at each other's throats, the prisoners slept, and the night shift was wrapping up. They knew their watch had ended.

So how could the night shift jump the gun while Zimbardo was eagerly awaiting his awakening? Simple, the portrayed return to reality is a fib. Zimbardo needed a drama-dripping apotheosis for his prison production that substantiated things had run out of control. What better way to control such a plot than make one up with your fiancée?

It seems the whistleblower blew it. Richard Yacco remembered correctly that the staff told him the study was to end the next day. Zimbardo's slip of the tongue in his response was the truth. The end of the simulation was ordained well in advance. The confrontation and reawakening were a pure piece of fiction.

Now the actual end

Zimbardo has always postulated that everyone in the mock prison had become so deeply absorbed in their roles that he had to terminate the experiment around midnight. Except he did nothing of the kind. Although the simulation was over for the night shift, he kept everyone else in the dark. The play for pay was by no means over.

Prisoner Ramsey (#416) continued his hunger strike on Friday morning, and both guards and prisoners attempted to force-feed him. Late Friday morning, the presumed lawyer came to interview the five remaining prisoners. How he was contacted the night before, however, is utterly perplexing.

In the [slideshow narrative](#), some parents requested Zimbardo to contact a lawyer or public defender during visiting hours after the Catholic priest had suggested the idea to them. Zimbardo called the lawyer recommended by the parents.

The [New York Times article](#) contains a slightly different version. One of the mothers stopped by the superintendent's office before visiting hours. She handed him the name and phone number of her cousin, who was a public defender. She said that a priest had called her and suggested the need for a lawyer's services. The staff called the lawyer.

In *The Lucifer Effect*, Zimbardo writes that Hubbell's (#7258) mother is called by the participating priest [Father Eugene Cahouet] to contact a lawyer. She calls her nephew Tim, a lawyer in the public defender's office. Tim, in turn, calls Zimbardo.

Evidently, as time passed by, Zimbardo has made up three different accounts. Take your pick. Any will do because they are all distorted. Tim Bruinsma was not a lawyer or public defender. He was a [second-year law student](#).

Nonetheless, the five remaining prisoners saw Bruinsma on Friday. They report harassment that seemed akin to camp and fraternity behavior. Bruinsma then explained the possibility of bail, which caused great anticipation of getting released. After he finished his interviews with the prisoners, Zimbardo triumphantly proclaims, "The experiment is over. You are free to leave today."

Outside, the KRON TV crew was waiting to film the craved return to freedom.



Let's have some fun

Four of the nine initially arrested prisoners survived the psychological onslaught. They made it to the ostentatious moment of release. These prisoners were [less affected by the prison](#) atmosphere. How did they cope and manage to stay the course? Zimbardo never incorporated their experience in the published papers.

The first mechanism they applied to deal with adversity is humor. It is an [effective mechanism](#) to avoid mental illness used by prisoners of war. While Ramsey meditated Thursday evening, the other prisoners did the silly stunts that Zimbardo has often recited. All through the evening, the prisoners were having fun.

For instance, Eshleman ordered all-American Whitt Hubbell (#7258) to walk like Frankenstein and say that he loves Williams (#2093). Compliant, Hubbell assumed the pose with locked knees and arms outstretched, plodded a few yards, and uttered, "I love you, 2093." Williams got reprimanded for laughing and ordered to do ten push-ups. He did so with a smirk on his face.

Jokester Jerry Shue (#5468) is another fine example. He defied the abusive prison system by making fun of the guards and downplaying their verbal abuse with a smile on his face right till the moment of release. It [helped him keep his spirits up](#). He saw that others derived their sense of identity and wellbeing from the situation rather than from within. That is why they broke down, having nothing to hold on to.

[Shue also maintained](#) the perspective of being part of an experiment. In his eyes, the prison was worthless. There was no punishment and no rehabilitation. Just feeble attempts to break people down by demanding blind obedience and having the prisoners do meaningless chores.

Distancing to play the part

The second method of coping was roleplaying. Take Williams, who believed life is playing roles on top of your basic self. He reacted to the atmosphere by consciously impersonating the compliant prisoner #2093, as long as that [role did not conflict with his core](#) being. Since he was untouchable, he never felt dehumanized. No wonder that he [told his father on Thursday](#) that he believed the simulation would be worse.

Williams decided to follow the orders to a T unless they were against his principles, which earned him the nickname Sarge. His servile and correct behavior earned him a place at the bottom rung as the prisoner's scapegoat, at least [in the eyes of Gee](#) (#3401).

The previous month, Williams had slept in the back of his car. So the simulation was a long relaxation period with good meals and plenty of sleep during the daytime. He observed two kinds of prisoners. The rambunctious having fun became depressed once they realized they were not allowed out. And the prisoners that simply tried to make the best of things under the conditions.

Whitt Hubbell (#7258), who believed [Sarge was too goody-goody](#), certainly falls in the second category. Hubbell portrayed a more down-to-earth prisoner. Despite being a smart aleck, he could [stick it out for the money](#) knowing the simulation was never more than two weeks.



Hubbell initially thought they were going to a proper jail, but he could see through the blindfold when he was taken down to the basement of Jordan Hall. The illusion of going to prison was lost on him. Knowing where he was, he also maintained the idea he was part of an experiment.

However, the Monday morning rebellion led from cell #1 with Gee and ring leader Baran changed his mindset. From the chain of events that followed, Hubbell decided that he should stop behaving as if he was in an experiment and start to act like a prisoner to get rewarded and avoid punishment, just as he would have to in a real prison.

Ramsey (#416) took the roleplaying to the next level. He disassociated himself to enact prisoner #416. In his final evaluation, he remarked that #416 had developed, not himself. The person Ramsey had not integrated with prisoner #416. The number turned into a source of pride for finding a means to defy the guards by going on a hunger strike.

The power of the rebel

Paul Baran (#5704) was prototypical of the third way of coping — fight the system to feel in control. As a self-styled radical activist, he dealt with the simulation by earning the honorable title of the most defiant prisoner. Baran had a subscription to the Hole throughout the week, where he spent more time than all the prisoners put together.

Every guard reported on his unruly disobedience and gross insubordination till the very end. Baran told guards to fuck off, challenged guard Terry Barnett to a fight, and lashed out at guard Michael Varn. His modus operandi was to make wisecracks, provoke the guards and physically confront the system. He even [kicked a hole in the wall](#) of the solitary closet, hurting his toe in the process.

Baran's action can be attributed to his activist cause to expose the prison life study believing Zimbardo had ulterior motives to run the simulation. He thought the prison study was a government-supported project to learn how to deal with political dissidents. Baran saw the experiment as a two-week game and participated not for the money but to gain knowledge.

It appears all those that sailed through saw the mock prison was far from the real deal. These students never lost sight of being in a simulation — an experiment composed of similar students made the setting surreal. Some prisoners simply accepted the guards were like them.

The prisoners thought Stanford County Jail was [very unlike a real prison](#). For starters, the simulation was terribly overstaffed. The guards had nothing to do but badger and bully. [Non-stop guard supervision](#) was unlike prisons, where you have periods for yourself. And it was an unrealistic prison due to the excessive verbal harassment plus [total lack of threat of violence](#) from both sides. In short, Stanford Prison was nothing like what Zimbardo and his confederates tried to make us believe.

Finito, Basta!

The archived facts make it crystal that the experiment was not only staged. Students faking and pretending were minor compared to the imaginary scripted scene. The dramatic climax on Thursday night is an irrefutable concoction. Zimbardo's dissociative fugue — losing awareness of one's identity — is bunk.



Thanks to the smoking guns of John Mark and Richard Yacco, we now know what happened on that scripted last night. Undeniably, Zimbardo pulled the wool over everyone's eyes by pretending his fake epiphany. His awakening served the proposition that he also had been corrupted by the power of the situation. Such acceptance of blame both disarms critics of the experiment's ethics and suggests that we can trust him as a victim to give an [unvarnished account of the research](#). How wrong we all were!

The more discrepancies I unearthed, the more treasures on human nature I found — little golden nuggets on how people make choices and manipulate to create their own reality. So where do we stand on the Stanford Prison Saga? Indeed, did psychology's flagship study just get torpedoed? What to do with everything that has been disclosed? Answers and more in the next episode of the reckoning: *The Last Judgment*.