

## ***Lost in Manipulation***

### **Statement of Purpose**

The purpose of this film is to examine the general assumptions that individuals make about others and how those assumptions affect social interaction. People believe that certain actions and words portray specific personality traits and they often treat those they have just met according to these perceptions. Nervous movements insinuate liars; tapping fingers mean impatience; smiles show confidence. None of these conjectures are based on proven fact and first impressions are rarely perfect. Do we really know anything about anyone else? People can use these misperceptions to their advantage, putting on an act to influence the thoughts and actions of others. Even those who seem to have character attributes associated with weakness can manipulate those whom have overestimated their strength into achieving their ends. Blind confidence can result in defeat when those who possess it ignore signs of possible threats. Misperceptions within systems of power lead to error and failure for those who do not understand their true relative positions. The hierarchy of relationships in social interaction is defined by those within the relationships themselves -- realities are determined by individual perceptions of the interaction.

Weakness is a character trait that is closely associated with anxious movements and quiet timidity - whenever people think that they sense weakness in others, they treat them with pity or scorn. Those with disabilities and nervous ticks are often seen as inferior or easily manipulated and are overlooked by society as irritants. No one sees them as threats or sees them as intelligent beings. This film exploits the assumptions about these types of shy, nervous people and flips the negative connotations surrounding them back onto the other more confident personality types illustrated by the other characters. Criminal A uses anxious movements and limited speech to further the expectation that she is unimportant while her narrative shows the audience her emotions and manipulation tactics. Ana is overly confident, sure of herself and unprepared for failure. Her cocky attitude leads her to use Criminal A as her own personal assistant - she is the first to fall. Boris is the intelligent but awkward computer obsessed young man who is still too innocent and ignorant about the world to look beyond the facts placed before him. He almost ignores Criminal A altogether. The Spy immediately sees behind the false act, she has seen enough in her line of work to know that appearances are not what they seem. She plays up the lack of relationship between Criminal A and herself and adds on the manipulation of the others in the group. Detective Alan suspects that he is being lied to but he has no idea that someone like Criminal A could be behind the entire crime and the set up of the other criminals. No one is exactly whom she pretends to be.

### **Character Descriptions**

**Ana Katzen** (Grace): Ana is a confident cat burglar willing to help with the operation of stealing the Chiang Diamond. This character takes her job extremely seriously and is hesitant to wasting her time working on small crimes. Ana has experience breaking, entering, and stealing from

banks, government institutes, and homes of the rich and famous. Ana utilizes her skill to help move past security guards in a sophisticated, quiet manor. Her skill set and confidence helps her to be a helpful apprentice to the Spy.

**The Spy** (Ashley): The Spy's character remains unnamed throughout the story to illuminate the mystery around her character. She quickly becomes the ring leader of the crime in a take charge, dictatorial sort of way. The Spy's character is clearly experienced with high crime (possibly more comfortable with it than the others in the group). She is highly intelligent and manipulative, working closely undercover with Criminal A to commit the perfect crime and frame it on the rest of the "crew."

**Criminal A** (Rachel): Criminal A is a master manipulator. Her past is unknown and she has no name; she (along with the Spy) is the mystery figure. She leads the entire plot from behind the scenes, pretending to be a cowardly pawn in the crime which she created. She looks unassuming - casual clothes, overly large jacket - and seems to have a nervous tick or paranoid look about her. During her interview, she alternates between curling up in her chair away from the police investigator and leaning forward, opening herself up to observation, challenging the officer. Her personality should come across as anxious and nervous with an undertone of bravado - she is hiding something. In the final scene, Criminal A drops the facade and straightens up; her facial expressions harden and she takes on an aura of confidence, walking out of the police station as if she has every right to do so. Her personality expression is dynamic despite her true character never actually undergoing any change.

**Boris Ubermann** (Sam): Boris is a overly excited tech geek with a penchant for exclamation and excited jumping. He is looking forward to his first big crime, his first chance to prove himself and his advanced skill set. Though awkward, Boris is very confident in what he does and glows under positive encouragement. He will be dressed half-hazardly - lop-sided scarf, big sweater/turtleneck, ripped/stained pants - to match his eclectic personality. He is very defeated and afraid during the arrest, he goes willing, looking sick. Boris is more innocent than the other members of the "crew" and all of the other characters use this against him.

**Detective Alan** (Alex): Alan is a long time veteran of the force, who's seen his share of both brilliant and idiotic criminals pass through his station. He's cool, confident, and unconcerned with this recent gang of wanna-be gem thieves. He excels in the interrogation room and is used to watching his subjects crumble under his stern and unforgiving manner. He is used to being respected and almost feared by both his suspects and staff, and most other officers avoid getting in his way unless it is absolutely necessary. He is not known for his patience, adopting a very no-nonsense perspective towards life and work.

**Guards/Police Officers** (Matt/Phillip): extras/background characters

**Script:**

**Opening sequence:** (*subtle music playing*) short depth-of-field shot follows over Detective Alan's shoulder as he exits a car, shrugs on a jacket, and walks into the building. Shot fades in and out of focus (*will be done in post*) as names appear on the screen, and finally the title as Detective Alan enters the "interrogation room", sits down, and hits record on the camera). Cut to grainy shot from perspective of camera on tripod with "recording" overlay as it focuses on Rachel sitting in interrogation room.

Detective Alan: *off screen* - why don't we start from the beginning.

Criminal A: We can't rush these things detective. Let me tell my story the way it should be told or we'll sit here in uncomfortable silence for the next few hours. *glares at Detective Alan, who is behind the screen*

Criminal A: Behind every great crime is a crew with a diverse skill set, she had to have the perfect group to execute her plan. We were all chosen for a reason.

Detective Alan: You said "she" - is this the other woman we have in custody? Was she the leader? Did she force the rest of you to do this?

Criminal A: *blanches and then slightly smiles at the camera* No no no, detective, you are rushing me again! We aren't that far into the story yet! *twitches and looks down, close up on her pulling at her handcuffs, seems embarrassed by her outburst*

Criminal A: She was terrifying. We never knew her name; we simply referred to her as the Spy. Ana met her first. The Spy didn't do any leg work, she planned the mission, but she needed someone to actually go in and get the diamond.

Police: And that was Ana Katzen.

Criminal A: Ah ah ah, Interruptions! *looks down nervously, fiddles with handcuffs* But yes, that was Ana. She is quite the violent criminal - I bet she has put up quite a fight. She was always very protective of me. In fact, she's the whole reason I'm involved in this mess. Anyway *looks off screen, clenches hands*. Ana told me about how the Spy first contacted her, about how this all began.

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**Flashback to Ana meeting The Spy:**

*Setting: Parking Deck in the afternoon, hazy sky*

*Ana is walking toward her car, she suddenly stops in the middle of the deck and looks around.*

Ana: I know you're there, you've been following me all day.

*throws her arms out* Might as well get this over with.

The Spy: *The Spy walks out from the corner of the garage, arms down, relaxed* No need to get excited, I'm not here to kill you. Actually, you could say that I admire your work. I have a bit of a proposition for you.

Ana: *tensed to fight* Go on.

The Spy: *continues to walk toward Ana* I need something of importance and I need a *hesitates...* discreet partner to help me get it. You have a history of success with this sort of ... acquisition.

Ana: What's the pay out?

The Spy: That's nothing to worry about right now, but you'll be compensated for your contribution. This isn't a secure location. I need to pick up something first, I'll explain when we retrieve it.

Ana: *pulls out car keys* Fine. I'll drive.

*Both get into the car and begin to drive off. Scene cut to **Interview room Transition***

Detective: And Ms. Katzen told you about this meeting.

Criminal A: Yes, Ana wasn't afraid of the Spy. She was used to being the smartest person in the room; she never suspected the plan to fail, never suspected the Spy to frame us for everything. But that comes later.

Detective: You said that the the Spy was taking Ana to retrieve something necessary for the crime?

Criminal A: That would be Boris.

Detective: Boris Ubermann?

Criminal A: Who else?

### ***Flash to scene of Sam in Towers Dorm Room***

*He is under one of the computers, fiddling with something, looking like he knows what he's doing.*

Criminal A: *voice over* A strange one, that one. But Boris is very clever, best crime technician around - he could find his way into any security system.

*Enter the Spy*

*The Spy walks around the table Boris is working under. She twists one of the cords in her hand and knocks on the table. Sam starts and jumps up, smacking his head on the table.*

Spy: Hello again.

Boris: *nervously looks around*

Spy: *puts her hand up to placate him* Don't worry, no one else is here. I believe we talked earlier.

Boris: *relaxes slightly* Oh. *Starts to smile, bounces slightly* Is this about your project? Oh, I have exactly what you need. *Turns around and begins touching different pieces on the table as he speaks* -The equipment is all laid out and I've taken a look at the museum security and -

*Enter Ana*

Ana: A museum? *Sam jumps up, and glares at Ashley, betrayed* That's what this is about? I thought we were going after a bank or something *mumbles under her breath* a museum, Jesus.

Spy: *to Ana* Shut up. *looks over at Boris* Boris, continue. *Glares at Grace before gesturing to Sam.*

Boris: *Well swallows nervously, pauses, seems to gather his confidence, takes a breath* I have the security system figured out. I can turn all of the cameras off and get you into the building without much trouble. But we'll need an on the floor man to -

Ana: That's me, *then mumbles audibly* I'm here to steal whatever it is we need to steal, not that I even know what it is or why I'm even involved.

Sam: No, I mean we need another person to keep watch at the main entrances. *To Ana* We don't want you getting distracted or interrupted while you're trying to steal the diamond.

Ana: *Starts toward Sam* Excuse me, are you criticizing me? Wait - *pauses, comes to realization* A diamond. *turns to the Spy* A diamond? *mumbles* woah.

Ana: Well, if we need some kind of assistant to do the grunt work, I know just the person.

### ***Interview room***

Detective: I assume you're the one Ana called in.

Criminal A: Yes. I was supposed to be a background character. Nothing really important, I just did the necessary things that no one else wanted to do. Got no respect from any of them. *slams handcuffs* They treated me like a fool or a cripple.

***Flash to scene of Criminal A entering a room with a square table.***

*Ana and Boris are seated, the Spy is standing behind the table facing away from the entrance.*

*Voice over - But my feelings are beside the point. You want to know the facts.*

*Ana stands up as Criminal A enters and reaches for her hand, she leads Rachel to the table and sits next to her. Ana smiles to put her at ease.*

*Spy: Now that we're all here, let's discuss the plan. leans forward remember who is in charge here, everything must be done exactly as I tell you to do it.*

***Flash to the outside of Brittain***

*Spy: Voice over- First we have to scope out the location. Flash back to the meeting room. The Spy throws a folder full of papers onto the table. The Hussey Museum of Natural History. Ana reaches for the folder and begins looking through it. Flash back to Brittain - voice over - Ana will do a walk through for us to get used to the scene. Grace enters dressed in civilian clothes, she has a camera and acts like a tourist. She walks into the building and looks around the entrance way.*

***Flash back to meeting room***

*Spy: walks around the table and puts her hand on Boris' shoulder. Flash to Boris sitting in the planning room alone. He has several laptops set up and large headphones/an earpiece on. He is typing furiously. Spy's Voice over - Boris will hack into the Museum's security systems tomorrow night before any of us attempt to enter the building, he will keep an eye on the camera's while Ana is in the museum.*

*Boris: I can shut down all of the cameras in the area of the Chiang Diamond exhibit and put on a continuous blank security feed. That should keep us off the radar for about 10 minutes and give you looks at Criminal A then at Ana and Ana time to get in, get the diamond, and get out.*

***Flash back to Sam in the empty planning room***

*Boris: typing on computer, sound of keys clacking hits one key with force. smiles and cheers before looking down, embarrassed. We're in.*

*(We will be using screen replacement for this, as cameras do not pick up screens well. This won't be too difficult but is going to look a little strange when we first shoot it as the screen will just be a green image.)*

***Flash back to meeting room with everyone***

*Ana: puts her hand on the table and looks around at everyone. I'll sneak in through the entrance at the back of the southeast wing, there are only two guards there shrugs - easy.*

***Outside the back of the museum, i.e. behind Brittain Rec:***

Ana: *to Criminal A* Alright, we're set. You wait here, I may need your help on the way out. *Ana enters the museum, Criminal A sinks to the ground against the wall and sighs.*

*Cut to planning room:*

Ana: I can be in and out in 5 minutes. You *looks at the Spy* can pick us up outside the door. It'll all be fine as *cut back to Criminal A outside Brittain, Ana opens the door holding the diamond* long as no one tips off the guards. *A loud crash - Criminal A jumps up, Ana's face drops as Matt and Phil run up yelling "freeze", Criminal A kneels on the ground with her hands up looking terrified, Ana puts up a fight, yelling unintelligibly at the guards as they cuff her.*

***Cut to planning room:***

*Detective Alan busts in the door*

Detective: Put your hands where I can see them!

*Boris drops his equipment and looks toward the door, he holds his hands up and collapses in his chair.*

*Detective Alan drags him out of the chair and cuffs him*

Detective: You are under arrest, you have the right to remain silent, anything you say can and will be used against you in the court of law. *(gradual fade out)*

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***Back in Interview room***

Criminal A: And you know the rest, detective.

Detective: And you expect me to believe you were just some pawn? To some "spy" that you can't even name? I know what you're doing. You don't have to cover for Ana anymore. You're -

*Matt slams the door open*

Matt: Sir! Someone's taken the diamond from the vault!  
*shouting outside, we'll go crazy with distorting the foley for this*

*Detective Alan runs out of the room following Matt.*

*Criminal A glances around, straightens her back, smiles faintly and gets up, she shakes her hands and the cuffs fall off with a loud clank, she waves at the camera.*

*Over-the-shoulder follow shot of Criminal A retracing Detective Alan's steps from the intro sequence with the same music, back into a car. Criminal A gets in and checks the rear view mirror. The Spy is sitting there and smiles*

Criminal A: You caused quite the commotion back there.

The Spy: Anyone following you?

Criminal A: No, we're clear. Ana and Boris are taking the fall for this one, they don't even know our names.

The Spy: Good, then let's get going. Here, I think this belongs to you.

*Hands Criminal A the diamond. Criminal A starts the car. Hard cut to credits.*

*Statement of Purpose for Presentation:*

People have a tendency toward the subconscious judgement of others. They point out weaknesses and define importance based on appearances. The purpose of this film is to examine the general assumptions that individuals make about others and to analyze their validity, focusing on the effect that incorrect perceptions have on social interaction. Weakness is a character trait that is closely associated with anxious movements and quiet timidity - whenever people think that they sense weakness in others, they treat them with pity or scorn. This film exploits the assumptions about these types of shy, nervous people and flips the negative connotations surrounding them back onto the other more confident personality types illustrated by the other characters. Even those who seem to have character attributes associated with weakness can manipulate those whom have overestimated their strength into achieving their ends. The hierarchy of relationships in social interaction is defined by those within the relationships themselves -- realities are determined by individual perceptions of the interaction.

Video Link: [\*Lost in Manipulation\*](#)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lquK\\_av2hCI&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lquK_av2hCI&feature=youtu.be)