

PRISON LIFE STUDY: GENERAL INFORMATION

Purpose: A simulated prison will be established somewhere in the vicinity of Palo Alto, Stanford [sic], to study a number of problems of psychological and sociological relevance. Paid volunteers will be randomly assigned to play the roles of either prisoners and guards [sic] for the duration of the study. This time period will vary somewhat from about five days to two weeks for any one volunteer—depending upon several factors, such as the “sentence” for the prisoner or the work effectiveness of the guards. Payment will be \$80 a day for performing various activities and work associated with the operation of our prison. Each volunteer must enter a contractual arrangement with the principal investigator (Dr. P. G. Zimbardo) agreeing to participate for the full duration of the study. It is obviously essential that no prisoner can leave once jailed, except through established procedures. In addition, guards must report for their 8-hour work shifts promptly and regularly since surveillance by the guards will be around-the-clock—three work shifts will be rotated or guards will be assigned a regular shift—day, evening, or early morning. Failure to fulfill this contract will result in a partial loss of salary accumulated—according to a prearranged schedule to be agreed upon. Food and accommodations for the prisoners will be provided which will meet minimal standard nutrition, health, and sanitation requirements. A warden and several prison staff will be housed in adjacent cell blocks, meals and bedding also provided for them. Medical and psychiatric facilities will be accessible should any of the participants desire or require such services. All participants will agree to having their behavior observed and to be interviewed and perhaps also taking psychological tests. Films of parts of the study will be taken, participants agreeing to allow them to be shown, assuming their content has information of scientific value.

[The information form then summarizes two of the “problems to be studied” and provides a few more details.]

Thanks for your interest in this study. We hope it will be possible for you to participate and to share your experiences with us.

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Source: Zimbardo, P. G. (2008). *The Lucifer effect: Understanding how good people turn evil* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Random House.