



Con Man 101

CREW: A group of con artists.

THE DROP (aka Pigeon Drop): As seen in *The Sting*, the victim (or “pigeon”) is persuaded to give a sum of money to secure rights to a larger sum of money or more valuable object. In reality, the scammers switch out the valuable object and leaves the victim with something worthless.

THE FIXER: The crew member who provides back-up to the Inside Man and obtains props, constructs the set, and manipulates people to set the stage for the con to take place.

GAME THEORY: A branch of applied mathematics that study how people interact and make decisions in both cooperative and competitive environments. Used in economics, business, political science, computer science and other disciplines—even poker.

GRIFTER: One who obtains goods or money illegally by use of skill rather than violence. Also known as a con artist.

THE INSIDE MAN: The crew member in charge, who actually performs the con.

THE LURE: A crew member who seduces the Mark to get what they need.

THE MARK: The intended victim of a con. Also known as a sucker, chump, or patsy.

PIG-IN-A-POKE: A classic con that originated in the Late Middle Ages, when meat was scarce but cats and dogs were not. A suckling pig was sold in a poke (or bag), but when the victim opened it, they’d find the pork had been swapped with cat or dog meat.

THE ROPER: The crew member who identifies and lures in The Mark.

THE SPANISH PRISONER: A classic con that originated in the late 19th century, in which a con-man tells a victim he is corresponding with a wealthy person who has been imprisoned in Spain. The con-man extorts the victim for money to help secure the release of the prisoner, promising that he’ll be financially rewarded when the prisoner returns. Modern variants include the advance-fee fraud or Nigerian money transfer scam.