The Stanford Prison experiment is U.S movie directed by Kyle Patrick Alvarez and it was released in 2015. The film is an illustration of Philiph Zimbardo’s experiment in 1971 where students pretended to be guards on prisoners and act like them. Psychologists were focused on the struggle between guards and prisoners and the main question regarding this experiment is how any institution (in this case prison) can effect on human individuality?

This film begins with the choosing of experiment participants. Investors of this experiment are giving 15$ to each of volunteers in a day. Volunteers of this experiment have no idea what it is about they just know that they must be prisoners for two weeks and that they get paid. When they finally were taken into prison, everything begun to change and there are some unwritten rules which are proposed by the guards.

Guardians, especially John Vane, from the first moment starts to take control over others. Rule which suggested that no guard can touch prisoners has changed momentarily and from the first day of experiment, prisoners are getting feeling of helpless and they start to live in fear of guardians. Guardians are trying to have hegemony over prisoners, while the founders of this experiment are losing control over others. After 6 days of experiment, the investor of it shut down this experiment because of ongoing situation and hysterical conditions of prisoners.

The main purpose of this film and this real experiment was to show how people can change under different conditions and what they can do when they have power. Similar to Holocaust, prisoners do not have their names, just numbers here. Their personality and individuality was taken out in this jail and they are starting to believe that they have to obey the rules to survive which are given by the guards.

To sum up “The Stanford Prison Experiment”, it can be seen as an illustration of human being psychology in a different, unusual situations and how stressful it may seem when you feel helpless. Fortunately, this “prison stress” did not last for a long time and every “prisoner” understand that in the situation of “guards” they may act like them. From this perspective, human beings are able to act as situation gives them the possibility and nobody knows for real how any human can behave in a given situation…

Veronica Odilavadze