

The Phone Call

"Ron Hillyard's office, this is Dorothy."

"Dorothy, hi. My name is Kyle Bellamy. I've just come on board to work in Animation Development on Brian Glassman's staff. You folks sure do things different over here."

"I guess. I never worked on any other movie studio, so I don't really know. What can I do for you?"

"To tell you the truth, I'm feeling sort of stupid. I've got a writer coming over this afternoon for a pitch session and I don't know who I'm supposed to talk to about getting him onto the lot. The people over here in Brian's office are really nice but I hate to keep bothering them, how do I do this, how do I do that. It's like I just started junior high and can't find my way to the bathroom. You know what I mean?"

Dorothy laughed.

"You want to talk to Security. Dial 7, and then 6138. If you get Lauren, tell her Dorothy said she should take good care of you."

"Thanks, Dorothy. And if I can't find the men's room, I may call you back!"

They chuckled together over the idea and hung up.

Extract from «Art of deception» (p120)
Kevin D. Mitnick

La réciprocité (Reciprocity)	L'engagement et la cohérence (Commitment & consistency)	La preuve sociale (Social proof)	L'autorité (Authority)	L'appréciation / affection (Liking)	La rareté (Scarcity)
					

"Scott Abrams."

"Scott, this is Christopher Dalbridge. I just got off the phone with Mr. Biggley, and he's more than a little unhappy. He says he sent a note ten days ago that you people were to get copies of all your market penetration research over to us for analysis. We never got a thing."

"Market penetration research? Nobody said anything to me about it.

What department are you in?"

"We're a consulting firm he hired, and we're already behind schedule." "Listen, I'm just on my way to a meeting. Let me get your phone number and . . ."

The attacker now sounded just short of truly frustrated: "Is that what you want me to tell Mr. Biggley?! Listen, he expects our analysis by tomorrow morning and we have to work on it tonight. Now, do you want me to tell him we couldn't do it 'cause we couldn't get the report from you, or do you want to tell him that yourself?."

An angry CEO can ruin your week. The target is likely to decide that maybe this is something he better take care of before he goes into that meeting. Once again, the social engineer has pressed the right button to get the response he wanted.

Extract from «Art of deception» (p125)
Kevin D. Mitnick

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Mary H's Phone Call

Date/Time: Monday, November 23, 7:49 A.M.

Place: Mauersby & Storch Accounting, New York

To most people, accounting work is number crunching and bean counting, generally viewed as being about as enjoyable as having a root canal. Fortunately, not everyone sees the work that way. Mary Harris, for example, found her work as a senior accountant absorbing, part of the reason she was one of the most dedicated accounting employees at her firm.

On this particular Monday, Mary arrived early to get a head start on what she expected to be a long day, and was surprised to find her phone ringing. She picked it up and gave her name.

"Hi, this is Peter Sheppard. I'm with Arbucld Support, the company that does tech support for your firm. We logged a couple of complaints over the weekend from people having problems with the computers there. I thought I could troubleshoot before everybody comes into work this morning. Are you having any problems with your computer or connecting to the network?"

She told him she didn't know yet. She turned her computer on and while it was booting, he explained what he wanted to do.

"I'd like to run a couple of tests with you, he said. "I'm able to see on my screen the keystrokes you type, and I want to make sure they're going across the network correctly. So every time you type a stroke, I want you to tell me what it is, and I'll see if the same letter or number is appearing here. Okay?"

With nightmare visions of her computer not working and a frustrating day of not being able to get any work done, she was more than happy to have this man help her. After a few moments, she told him, "I have the login screen, and I'm going to type in my ID. I'm typing it now--

M...A...R...Y...D."

"Great so far," he said. "I'm seeing that here. Now, go ahead and type your password but don't tell me what it is. You should never tell anybody your password, not even tech support. I'll just see asterisks here--your password is protected so I can't see it.": None of this was true, but it made sense to Mary. And then he said, "Let me know once your computer has started up."

When she said it was running, he had her open two of her applications, and she reported that they launched "just fine."

Mary was relieved to see that everything seemed to be working normally. Peter said, "I'm glad I could make sure you'll be able to use your computer okay. And listen," he went on, "we just installed an update that allow people to change their passwords. Would you be willing to take a couple of minutes with me so I can see if we got it working right?"

She was grateful for the help he had given her and readily agreed. Peter talked her through the steps of launching the application that allows a user to change passwords, a standard element of the Windows 2000 operating system. "Go ahead and enter your password," he told her. "But remember not to say it out loud."

When she had done that, Peter said, "Just for this quick test, when it asks for your new password, enter 'test123.' Then type it again in the Verification box, and click Enter."

He walked her through the process of disconnecting from the server. He had her wait a couple of minutes, then connect again, this time trying to log on with her new password. It worked like a charm, Peter seemed very pleased, and talked her through changing back to her original password or choosing a new one--once more cautioning her about not saying the password out loud.

"Well, Mary," Peter told her. "We didn't find any trouble, and that's great. Listen, if any problems do come up, just call us over here at Arbuckle. I'm usually on special projects but anybody here who answers can help you." She thanked him and they said goodbye.

Extract from «Art of deception» (p131)
Kevin D. Mitnick

La réciprocité (Reciprocity)	L'engagement et la cohérence (Commitment & consistency)	La preuve sociale (Social proof)	L'autorité (Authority)	L'appréciation / affection (Liking)	La rareté (Scarcity)
					

Anna appeared at the door, her hair covered in the red paisley cowboy scarf she always wore when dusting. "Phone call," she shouted to him.

"Somebody from work."

"Who?" Steve shouted back.

"Ralph something. I think."

Ralph? Steve couldn't remember anybody at GeminiMed named Ralph who might be calling on a weekend. But Anna probably had the name wrong.

"Steve, this is Ramon Perez in Tech Support." Ramon - how in the world did Anna get from a Hispanic name to Ralph, Steve wondered. "This is just a courtesy call,, Ramon was saying. "Three of the servers are down, we think maybe a worm, and we have to wipe the drives and restore from backup. We should be able to have your files up and running by Wednesday or Thursday. If we're lucky."

"Absolutely unacceptable," Steve said firmly, trying not to let his frustration take over. How could these people be so stupid? Did they really think he could manage without access to his files all weekend and most of next week? "No way. I'm going to sit down at my home terminal in just about two hours and I will need access to my files. Am I making this clear?"

"Yeah, well, everybody I've called so far wants to be at the top of the list. I gave up my weekend to come in and work on this and it's no fun having everybody I talk to get pissed at me."

"I'm on a tight deadline, the company is counting on this; I've got to get work done this afternoon. What part of this do you not understand?" "I've still got a lot of people to call before I can even get started," Ramon laid. "How about we say you'll have your files by Tuesday?"

"Not Tuesday, not Monday, today. NOW!" Steve said, wondering who he was going to call if he couldn't get his point through this guy's thick skull. "Okay, okay," Ramon said, and Steve could hear him breathe a sigh of annoyance. "Let me see what I can do to get you going. You use the RM22 server, right?"

"RM22 and the GM16. Both."

"Right. Okay, I can cut some corners, save some time--I'll need your username and password."

Uh oh, Steve thought. What's going on here? Why would he need my password? Why would IT, of all people, ask for it?

"What did you say your last name was? And who's your supervisor?" "Ramon Perez. Look, I tell you what, when you were hired, there was a form you had to fill out to get your user account, and you had to put down a password. I could look that up and show you we've got it on file here. Okay?"

Steve mulled that over for a few moments, then agreed. He hung on with growing impatience while Ramon went to retrieve documents from a file cabinet. Finally back on the phone, Steve could hear him shuffling through a stack of papers.

"Ah, here it is," Ramon said at last. "You put down the password 'Janice.'"

Janice, Steve thought. It was his mother's name, and he had indeed sometimes used it as a password. He might very well have put that down for his password when filling out his new-hire papers.

"Yes, that's right," he acknowledged.

"Okay, we're wasting time here. You know I'm for real, you want me to use the shortcut and get your files back in a hurry, you're gonna have to help me out here."

"My ID is s, d, underscore, cramer--c-r-a-m-e-r. The password is 'pelican 1 .'"

"I'll get right on it," Ramon said, sounding helpful at last. "Give me a couple of hours."

Extract from «Art of deception» (p77) Kevin D. Mitnick

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The First Call: Ted

First, the social engineer dials an electronics chain store on West Girard.

"Electron City. This is Ted."

"Hi, Ted. This is Adam. Listen, I was in a few nights ago talking to a sales guy about a cell phone. I said I'd call him back when I decided on the plan I wanted, and I forgot his name. Who's the guy who works in that department on the night shift?"

"There's more than one. Was it William?"

"I'm not sure. Maybe it was William. What's he look like?" "Tall guy. Kind of skinny."

"I think that's him. What's his last name, again?"

"Hadley. H--A--D--L--E-- Y."

"Yeah, that sounds right. When's he going to be on?"

"Don't know his schedule this week, but the evening people come in about five."

"Good. I'll try him this evening, then. Thanks, Ted."

The Second Call: Katie

The next call is to a store of the same chain on North Broad Street.

"Hi, Electron City. Katie speaking, how can I help you?"

"Katie, hi. This is William Hadley, over at the West Girard store. How're you today?"

"Little slow, what's up?"

"I've got a customer who came in for that one-cent cell phone program. You know the one I mean?"

"Right. I sold a couple of those last week."

"You still have some of the phones that go with that plan?"

"Got a stack of them."

"Great. 'Cause I just sold one to a customer. The guy passed credit; we signed him up on the contract. I checked the damned inventory and we don't have any phones left. I'm so embarrassed. Can you do me a favor? I'll send him over to your store to pick up a phone. Can you sell him the phone for one cent and write him up a receipt? And he's supposed to call me back once he's got the phone so I can talk him through how to program it."

"Yeah, sure. Send him over."

"Okay. His name is Ted. Ted Yancy."

When the guy who calls himself Ted Yancy shows up at the North Broad St. store, Katie writes up an invoice and sells him the cell phone for one cent, just as she had been asked to do by her "co worker." She fell for the con hook, line, and sinker.

When it's time to pay, the customer doesn't have any pennies in his pocket, so he reaches into the little dish of pennies at the cashier's counter, takes one out, and gives it to the girl at the register. He gets the phone without paying even the one cent for it.

He's then free to go to another wireless company that uses the same model of phone and choose any service plan he likes. Preferably one on a month-to-month basis, with no commitment required.

Extract from «Art of deception» (p61)
Kevin D. Mitnick

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The First Call: Andrea Lopez

Andrea Lopez answered the phone at the video rental store where she worked, and in a moment was smiling: It's always a pleasure when a customer takes the trouble to say he's happy about the service. This caller said he had had a very good experience dealing with the store, and he wanted to send the manager a letter about it. He asked for the manager's name and the mailing address, and she told him it was Tommy Allison, and gave him the address. As he was about to hang up, he had another idea and said, "I might want to write to your company headquarters, too. What's your store number?" She gave him that information, as well. He said thanks, added something pleasant about how helpful she had been, and said goodbye. "A call like that," she thought, "always seems to make the shift go by faster. How nice it would be if people did that more often."

The Second Call: Ginny

"Thanks for calling Studio Video. This is Ginny, how can I help you?"
"Hi, Ginny," the caller said enthusiastically, sounding as if he talked to Ginny every week or so. "It's Tommy Allison, manager at Forest Park, Store 863. We have a customer in here who wants to rent Rocky 5 and we're all out of copies. Can you check on what you've got?"
She came back on the line after a few moments and said, "Yeah, we've got three copies."
"Okay, I'll see if he wants to drive over there. Listen, thanks. If you ever need any help from our store, just call and ask for Tommy. I'll be glad to do whatever I can for you."
Three or four times over the next couple of weeks, Ginny got calls from Tommy for help with one thing or another. They were seemingly legitimate requests, and he was always very friendly without sounding like he was trying to come on to her. He was a little chatty along the way, as well - "Did you hear about the big fire in Oak Park? Bunch of streets closed over there," and the like. The calls were a little break from the routine of the day, and Ginny was always glad to hear from him.
One day Tommy called sounding stressed. He asked, "Have you guys been having trouble with your computers?"
"No," Ginny answered. "Why?"
"Some guy crashed his car into a telephone pole, and the phone company repairman says a whole part of the city will lose their phones and Internet connection till they get this fixed."
"Oh, no. Was the man hurt?"
"They took him away in an ambulance. Anyway, I could use a little help. I've got a customer of yours here who wants to rent Godfather II and doesn't have his card with him. Could you verify his information for me?" "Yeah, sure."
Tommy gave the customer's name and address, and Ginny found him in the computer. She gave Tommy the account number.
"Any late returns or balance owed?" Tommy asked.
"Nothing showing."
"Okay, great. I'll sign him up by hand for an account here and put it in our database later on when the computers come back up again. And he wants to put this charge on the Visa card he uses at your store, and he doesn't have it with him. What's the card number and expiration date?"
She gave it to him, along with the expiration date. Tommy said, "Hey, thanks for the help. Talk to you soon," and hung up.

Extract from «Art of deception» (p54)
Kevin D. Mitnick

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Rosemary Morgan was delighted with her new job. She had never worked for a magazine before and was finding the people much friendlier than she expected, a surprise because of the never-ending pressure most of the staff was always under to get yet another issue finished by the monthly deadline. The call she received one Thursday morning reconfirmed that impression of friendliness. "Is that Rosemary Morgan?"

"Yes."

"Hi, Rosemary. This is Bill Jorday, with the Information Security group."

"Yes?"

"Has anyone from our department discussed best security practices with you?"

"I don't think so."

"Well, let's see. For starters, we don't allow anybody to install software brought in from outside the company. That's because we don't want any liability for unlicensed use of software. And to avoid any problems with software that might have a worm or a virus."

"Okay."

"Are you aware of our email policies?"

"No."

"What's your current email address?" "Rosemary@ttrzine.net."

"Do you sign in under the username Rosemary?"

"No, it's R underscore Morgan."

"Right. We like to make all our new employees aware that it can be dangerous to open any email attachment you aren't expecting. Lots of viruses and worms get sent around and they come in emails that seem to be from people you know. So if you get an email with an attachment you weren't expecting you should always check to be sure the person listed as sender really did send you the message. You understand?"

"Yes, I've heard about that."

"Good. And our policy is that you change your password every ninety days. When did you last change your password?"

"I've only been here three weeks; I'm still using the one I first set." "Okay, that's fine. You can wait the rest of the ninety days. But we need to be sure people are using passwords that aren't too easy to guess. Are you using a password that consists of both letters and numbers?"

"No."

We need to fix that. What password are you using now?"

"It's my daughter's name - Annette."

"That's really not a secure password. You should never choose a password that's based on family information. Well, let's see., you could do the same thing I do. It's okay to use what you're using now as the first part of the password, but then each time you change it, add a number for the current month."

"So if I did that now, for March, would I use three, or oh-three."

"That's up to you. Which would you be more comfortable with?"

"I guess Annette-three."

"Fine. Do you want me to walk you through how to make the change?"

"No, I know how."

"Good. And one more thing we need to talk about. You have anti-virus software on your computer and it's important to keep it up to date. You should never disable the automatic update even if your computer slows down every once in a while. Okay?"

"Sure."

"Very good. And do you have our phone number over here, so you can call us if you have any computer problems?"

She didn't. He gave her the number, she wrote it down carefully, and went back to work, once again, pleased at how well taken care of she felt.

Extract from «Art of deception» (p74)
Kevin D. Mitnick

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May Linn’s Phone Call
Place: A regional office of the Social Security Administration
Time: 1 0:1 8 A.M., Thursday morning
"Mod Three. This is May Linn Wang."
The voice on the other end of the phone sounded apologetic, almost timid.
"Ms. Wang, this is Arthur Arondale, in the Office of the Inspector General. Can I call you 'May'?"
"It's 'May Linn'," she said.
"Well, it's like this, May Linn. We've got a new guy in here who there's no computer for yet, and right now he's got a priority project and he's using mine. We're the government of the United States, for cryin' out loud, and they say they don't have enough money in the budget to buy a computer for this guy to use. And now my boss thinks I'm falling behind and doesn't want to hear any excuses, you know?"
"I know what you mean, all right."
"Can you help me with a quick inquiry on MCS?" he asked, using the name of the computer system for looking up taxpayer information.
"Sure, what'cha need?"
"The first thing I need you to do is an alphadent on Joseph Johnson, DOB 7/4/69." (Alphadent means to have the computer search for an account alphabetically by taxpayer name, further identified by date of birth.)
After a brief pause, she asked:
"What do you need to know?"
"What's his account number?" he said, using the insider's shorthand for the social security number. She read it off. "Okay, I need you to do a numident on that account number," the caller said.
That was a request for her to read off the basic taxpayer data, and May Linn responded by giving the taxpayer's place of birth, mother's maiden name, and father's name. The caller listened patiently while she also gave him the month and year the card was issued, and the district office it was issued by.
He next asked for a DEQY. (Pronounced "DECK-wee," it's short for "detailed earnings query.")
The DEQY request brought the response, "For what year?"
The caller replied, "Year 2001 ."
May Linn said, "The amount was \$190,286, the payer was Johnson MicroTech."
"Any other wages?"
"No."
"Thanks," he said. "You've been very kind."
Then he tried to arrange to call her whenever he needed information and couldn't get to his computer, again using the favorite trick of social engineers of always trying to establish a connection so that he can keep going back to the same person, avoiding the nuisance of having to find a new mark each time.
"Not next week," she told him, because she was going to Kentucky for her sister's wedding.' Any other time, she'd do whatever she could.
When she put the phone down, May Linn felt good that she had been able to offer a little help to a fellow unappreciated public servant.

Extract from «Art of deception» (p127)
Kevin D. Mitnick

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Sarah’s Call

"Human Resources, this is Sarah."
"Hi, Sarah. This is George, in the parking garage. You know the access card you use to get into the parking garage and elevators? Well, we had a problem and we need to reprogram the cards for all the new hires from the last fifteen days."
"So you need their names?"
"And their phone numbers."
"I can check our new hire list and call you back. What's your phone number?"
"I'm at 73 . . . Uh, I'm going on .break, how about if I call you back in a half-hour?"
"Oh. Okay."
When he called back, she said:
"Oh, yes. Well, there's just two. Anna Myrtle, in Finance, she's a secretary. And that new VP, Mr. Underwood."
"And the phone numbers?"
"Right Okay, Mr. Underwood is 6973. Anna Myrtle is 2127."
"Hey, you've been a big help. "thanks."

Anna’s Call

"Finance, Anna speaking."
"I'm glad I found somebody working late. Listen, this is Ron Vittaro, I'm publisher of the business division. I don't think we've been introduced. Welcome to the company."
"Oh, thank you."
"Anna, I'm in Los Angeles and I've got a crisis. I need to take about ten minutes of your time."
"Of course. What do you need?"
"Go up to my office. Do you know where my office is?"
"No."
"Okay, it's the corner office on the fifteenth floor—room 1502. I'll call you there in a few minutes. When you get to the office, you'll need to press the forward button on the phone so my call won't go directly to my voice mail."
"Okay, I'm on my way now."
Ten minutes later she was in his office, had cancelled his call forwarding and was waiting when the phone rang. He told her to sit down at the computer and launch Internet Explorer. When it was running he told her to type in an address: www.geocities.com/ron-insen/manuscript.doc.exe.
A dialog box appeared, and he told her to click Open. The computer appeared to start downloading the manuscript, and then the screen went blank. When she reported that something seemed to be wrong, he replied,
"Oh, no. Not again. I've been having a problem with downloading from that Web site every so often but I thought it was fixed. Well, okay, don't worry, I'll get the file another way later." Then he asked her to restart his computer so he could be sure it would start up properly after the problem she had just had. He talked her through the steps for rebooting.
When the computer was running again properly, he thanked her warmly and hung up, and Anna went back to the Finance department to finish the job she had been working on.

Extract from «Art of deception» (p222)
Kevin D. Mitnick

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