Pitch:

I am a proud US Army Veteran. Served 8 years and was dual MOS qualified as a Fire Support Specialist and a Combat Engineer. As a fire support specialist, I was assigned to an active duty infantry battalion and deployed to Iraq in July of 2009. I left active duty as was assigned to the Army Individual Ready Reserve to be called upon in case of emergency. After approximately a year I re-enlisted in the Army Reserves and reclassified to Combat Engineer. In the reserves, I was mainly assigned as a mentor for new enlistees to the unit. As a mentor I taught the new recruits proper military drill and ceremony etiquette.

After leaving the military I wanted to follow the structure and path that I had already started, so I applied with the Idaho Department of Correction, and after a month of on-the-job shadowing, and a month of training at the Idaho POST campus, I got started on that path. In 2020, after 4 years with IDOC, and with the changes to the world due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I started to want to do more in the facility so I applied to be the full-time central control officer for my institution. I was accepted and held that post for two years. In that time I gained a lot of administration experience, I was in charge of coordinating institutional count times and due to an institutional upgrade to Windows 10, I ended up in charge of rebuilding a digital database for our facility in under 2 days, which contained a record of all residents in the facility, their assigned housing units, their jobs and any trainings that they had obtained due to our institution being a working facility.

In 2021 after 2 years of working central control, and seeing many staff leave to follow other career paths, I chose to do the same. In November 2021, I left IDOC and began attending Boise CodeWorks, which is a local Full-Stack Software Development boot camp. With a wife and kid depending on me to get through school quickly, I couldn't go the normal school route, and the boot camp style fit perfectly with that. I chose software development because I've always been fascinated with computers and tinkering with code. I spent many years as a teenager and into my early 20s tinkering with LUA code through games like Garry's Mod and World of Warcraft. I also worked on a server administration tool for the game Rust in 2014 which was written in the AutoHotkey scripting language. I've enjoyed working on the applications I've created while attending CodeWorks and my aspirations are to eventually be able to transfer over into software engineering and maybe someday work on something that coincides with my life-long love of video games.

1. Tell me of a time when you had to step up and demonstrate leadership skills.
S: I was working solo in a housing unit in my correctional facility when I suddenly had fire alarms going off and had residents who were running out of the building soaking wet. I entered one of the housing tiers, and saw a fountain of water falling from above one of the bunk areas.
T: I knew I had to get the unit cleared out, and get the water shut off, then had to get maintenance staff to come in, check out the damage, and get to work on repairs, as quickly as possible as it was a housing unit and residents needed places to sleep.
A: I immediately activated emergency response team, and notified the shift commander of the situation, at the same time that I instructed residents housed in the affected tier to head outside and up to the visitation building, in order to make sure that those residents who had gotten wet were not outside in the cold, and getting sick. I then got maintenance workers to shut off the water flow to that tier, and come in to assess the damage. I got estimated work and repair times, and relayed that to the facility administration.
R: It ended up taking 3 full days, but the damage was fixed, and the tier was once again usable. All residents got reassigned to empty bunks in other units until the damage was fixed, and then were returned to their assigned bunks on the initial tier.

2. Tell me about settling into your last job. What did you do to learn the ropes?
S: My last job was as a Correctional Officer. That environment is very stressful, and very technical. Depending on the custody level you work at, there could be a million things that go wrong in a day, or there could be nothing that goes wrong.
T: One of the biggest things that I did in my prior job to get used to it was make sure I did everything. For the first month after the POST training, you are assigned to work with a "seasoned" officer who has completed their probationary period, and preferably worked at the department for longer than a year.
A: During this time, I made any officer I was paired with do the bare minimum. I did all the count times, I dealt with any minor issues that came up. If something required a bit more finesse, then usually the other officer would take care of it.
R: At the end of my initial month, when I was beginning to get assigned to units solo, I had already gained some rapport with the residents housed in each housing unit. That made my days go much better as the residents already knew what to expect from me, as I had made my expectations clear from the start.

3: Tell me about a time when an unexpected problem derailed your planning. How did you recover?
S: In early 2020, shortly after the Covid pandemic started, I was assigned as the central control officer for my institution. One of the systems we had been using for keeping track of resident workers ended up catastrophically failing due to a recent update from Windows 7 to Windows 10 on the facility computers. This system had been built on Microsoft Access and had not been maintained in many years.
T: As this system held all the information for jobs, pay rates and training that our resident workers needed, it was sudden, and needed to be replaced with something that most of our staff

could pick up and run with in a short matter of time.

A: Over the span of two days, the Security Lieutenant and I worked together to build out all the pieces that we had lost in Microsoft Sharepoint (IDOC had recently adopted Office 365 and we used the web version of Excel) and even created some efficient working paths to make use resemble the original system as best as we could.

R: I was able to recover a majority of the Work Projects information that was vital to our off-site work crews, but the rest of the database had been a loss, so the Lieutenant and I ended up having to go bunk by bunk from a paper copy of a count sheet and rebuild all the information that was needed. When I left IDOC almost two years later, this system was still being used by our facility staff.

4: Give me an example of a time when you had to have a difficult conversation with a frustrated client or colleague. How did you handle the situation?

S: With IDOC, staff who were regularly assigned to housing units were assigned everyday tasks that they were responsible for, along with their regular unit duties. Float officers, or officers who didn't have a regularly assigned housing unit, were expected to do their best to assist assigned staff with their normal unit duties in order to help the assigned officer also be able to complete their daily duties. I was assigned to a unit for one day as a float officer, and a regular unit officer was being very passive aggressive with me. Not actively being rude, but making a scene when I was around. As I was conducting an hourly unit check, I asked the officer in question about something that I had seen on a tier, and asked how they usually handled that situation, as to not change expectations that the unit residents had come to get used to. The officer answered in a very aggressive tone and said that they would "handle" it.

T: At this point I knew there was a problem, so I asked the unit corporal (supervisor) to come into the officer's station and to please act as mediator. I would normally try to avoid supervisor intervention, but with the situation already being somewhat aggressive, I decided to err on the side of caution.

A: When the officer returned to the officer's station, I asked them to explain what was bothering them. They said they were frustrated that I was just doing the unit duties and thought that I should be doing more. I clarified that as a float, I was doing my best to take the general duties off their plate, so as to help them be able to focus on the tasks they were assigned, and that if they felt like they needed more help, or thought that I was not doing enough, to tell me and I would do my best to fix the situation.

R: In the end, the supervisor wasn't needed, and the other officer realized that they couldn't expect something from me that they hadn't communicated prior. I was doing my tasks to the best of my ability, and if they needed more help, all they needed to do was ask and I would be more than willing to help.

5: Tell me about your proudest professional accomplishment.

At the end of a 12 hour overtime shift at IDOC, I was driving home via Pleasant Valley Rd, when I noticed a suspicious vehicle on the side of the road and the driver out of the vehicle, walking through the bushes. I pulled over down the road, grabbed a pen, and wrote down the license plate and vehicle information. At that point, I had planned on leaving to head home, but just as I got ready to leave the area, I noticed them run across the field, jump in their car and speed off. I

decided that was a little more suspicious so I decided to investigate. I pulled my vehicle into the same spot that theirs had been parked and exited my vehicle. Still wearing my IDOC uniform, I started walking around in the field near where I had seen the driver. After about 3 minutes of looking I thought that maybe they had seen a snake or something in the brush and that's why they had taken off running. As I turned back to my vehicle, I saw a white plastic shopping bag that had been wrapped around something very tightly, as if to be gift wrapped. I walked over, picked it up and felt it. There were multiple tube shaped items in the package. I then smelled it and picked up the faint smell of marijuana. After that, I took a picture of the location I found the package in, and returned to my facility. When I arrived back at the facility, I informed the investigation team of my discovery and asked if they would like to open the package with me. As we opened the package, we found 5 marijuana cigarettes, and some chewing tobacco in a tube. Pictures were taken, a report was written, and a separate report was filed with the Ada County Sheriff's Department. Approximately a month later I was informed that my report had led to an arrest of an individual who was being prosecuted for attempting to introduce illegal substances into a correctional facility.

5 questions for an interviewer

1. What does a typical day look like at this company?
2. What do the day-to-day responsibilities for this position look like?
3. What is your favorite part of working for this company?
4. How do you measure success in this position?
5. Is there anything about my background or my resume that makes you question my fit for this role?