

Gustavo Fring and the One Minute strategy

Credits: Velvet (reddest_velvet_ on Discord)

The strategy:

Juan Bolsa calls Gus to a meeting.

He quickly explains to Fring how the twins want to take revenge on Heisenberg due to him betraying Tuco, which led to his death.

Gus takes note on how Bolsa only calls the betrayer by the alias Heisenberg, and decides to portray his relationship with Walter as a temporary partnership that he knew basically nothing of.

He strategically lies, saying he never knew Walt by the name of Heisenberg to make himself look less guilty while also explaining that his business arrangement is merely temporary.

We wonder what business Gus is talking about? Walt turned down Gus's offer in Episode 301.

Bolsa glances at Tio and the Cousins, who are getting more and more impatient. Bolsa gives them a subtle nod -- a petition for calm. Then, he begins to speak for them:

BOLSA (CONT'D)
When Don Salamanca lost his ability to walk, Tuco took over for his uncle. He was a key man in our organization north of the border. He was loyal.
(off Gus)
This 'Heisenberg' -- Walter White -- he was one of Tuco's local suppliers. Until he betrayed Tuco.
(grim beat)
So, now you see... blood must be repaid by blood. Tuco's Cousins here... they have the right to exact vengeance. The Salamanca family, the cartel, everyone stands shoulder to shoulder on this.

DING..! Tio concurs. A somber beat. Canny Gus already knows all of this. However, as always, he keeps what he knows close to the vest. Addressing Tio and the Cousins:

GUS
Don Salamanca, Señors. I feel your loss deeply. Please accept my condolences. I have no issue with your right to vengeance. And I do not stand in the way of justice.
(beat)
But, I am presently engaged in business with this man. When our business is done, he will no longer be of any concern to me.
(beat)
Until then, I need him alive.

DING!-DING!-DING!-DING..! Livid Tio frantically rings his bell and grinds his jaw -- *wrong answer!* The Cousins stare coldly at Gus, who doesn't flinch. Bolsa calms Tio down. Motions to Gus -- *outside* -- then turns to his compadres:

This tactic initially just serves to stall the Twins, but when Bolsa mentions to Fring that he should finish his arrangement quickly and that the Twins might act out, he reanalyzes the situation and comes up with a strategy.

BOLSA
Of course you do. And I will advise them to be patient. But I recommend you finish your business with the man quickly. Or you risk losing the good graces of the cartel. That would be unwise.
(off Gus)
And those boys inside -- I cannot guarantee that they will listen. They are... not like you and I. For them, this is a holy mission... for Santa Muerte. And they tell me she must be appeased.

As Gus considers this, he looks up at the trailer window and sees...

...The Cousins, staring at him through the window, as coldly as Death. Off this foreboding portrait...

Gus, after around two weeks, gets Walter to cook again and immediately begins distributing his product throughout multiple other states. This not only serves as a way to cover up his previous lie but also as means to gather power.

No matter what the Salamancas do, it directly plays into Gus' hand. The longer they wait for Gus to finish his business, the more power he gains and thus the easier it is to carry out the strategy, the quicker they begin taking a more proactive approach the more Gus can paint them as aggressive and the deception is easier to carry out.

Eventually, the Salamanca twins show up at Los Pollos Hermanos as a way to "protest" for Gus' behavior. They stand there in silence to intimidate Gus' customer base and bring attention to his cover up business so that Gus rushes his deal with Heisenberg. What they don't know is that this was foreseen by Fring as it all plays into his scheme.

He waits for them to repeat this tactic one more time and, in the latter visit, while nobody's watching, he tells them to meet at a designated location at sunset.

During twilight, Gus explains to the twins that they cannot kill Walter. However, as a way to keep them satisfied, he gives them permission to kill the actual man who pulled the trigger on Tuco: Hank Schrader, Walter's brother in law. When the twins object, saying the DEA is off limits according to their superior, Gus retorts, claiming that this is his territory and that he can decide whether attacking the police is acceptable.

This meeting occurs in a private place, not only to conceal this tactic from any third party but also allowing Victor, one of Gus' top henchmen, to tail the twins. This is a perfectly safe action as Gus had ordered Victor to follow the twins through season 3 as a way to test them and see if it was a reliable course of action.

The next day, Hank attends to a meeting with his superiors. Thereafter he buys flowers for his wife and goes to his car. The Twins ultimately chose to attack him there, so Victor calls Hank and tips him off that two men are coming to kill him.

The call is untraceable and Victor speaks through a voice modifier. The fact that he's extremely accurate with the timing means he must be nearby, working as a safeguard in case anything with the strategy goes wrong.

Victor tell Hank that he has *one minute* to prepare. This is the perfect timeframe, given Hank has enough time for prepare to an ambush and move around with his car, but *not* enough time to escape or call for anyone.

The Twins eventually shoot at Hank from two directions, but given he's had time to prepare he reacts almost immediately, going in reverse and crushing one of the twins' legs (Leonel) and allowing Hank to take his gun.

Hank then retreats and ambushes Marco, the second twin, failing to kill him due to Marco's bulletproof vest but harming him. Marco shoots Hank down, goes to his car to take an axe out, and slowly walks up to him to kill him in a more brutal way. However, this allows for Hank to reload the stolen gun with a bullet Marco dropped, shooting him dead.

It is noteworthy that this is what occurred when the strategy suffered a huge disadvantage, given Hank was entangled in another legal conundrum which forced him to temporarily forfeit his badge and gun

I'll now explain why the flexibility of this strategy is so solid.

Gus wants to create a scandal with this shootout; something that will get the police outraged and the public on edge.

- If Hank had somehow managed to shoot down both of the twins without suffering severe damages, Gus could use the sheer impressiveness of the feat to label Hank as an American hero and spread his story through the media.

- If the two twins had killed Hank and left, Victor could still tail them and tip them off to the police. Given Gus and Victor's test regarding the tailing of the twins, Victor could follow them for a long time, prolong the suspense for the case and the killers' identity, and then tip them off to the police, solidifying the incident as a very tense ordered hit where the killers almost got away, only to get caught at the last moment with a shootout.

- If the three died it's certainly the worst case scenario for Gus, but this is where a second layer of the phone call comes in. Given it's the only tangible lead any agents have, they'd most probably leak the call to the press and Gus could twist the story's focus to be who exactly called Hank and why they did it.

- If one twin were to survive unscathed and escaped while the other went to the hospital and/or died, Gus could do what he did in outcome two.

Gus knows the twins, if found by the police, would go out in a shootout due to their pride and general cartel culture. This isn't the first time a Salamanca has died fighting law enforcement due to pride either; Tuco's example comes to mind.

I'll now get on to what exactly Gus did in the actual time in the aftermath of the shootout.

Gus waited for Leonel and Hank to be taken to the hospital and for their condition to be analyzed. Not only does he need to understand the situation before taking action, but it also gives him time to gather information about Juan Bolsa, his boss, who Gus plans to betray in the strategy's endgame.

Bolsa voices his suspicions to Gus, saying that his men wouldn't attack the DEA without permission, that someone gave them a pass, and that said person was Fring. Gus retorts deceptively, asking why he would do this. Without an answer and without proof, Bolsa is forced to use his connections to get information out of Leonel.

This, however, is contingent on Leonel waking up, something Gus will use later.

Gus calls Walter and asks him if the meth cooking process is going accordingly, purposefully pressuring Walter to lie. Gus knows Walter's out of the lab, and he obviously knows of the hit on Hank. Thus, he predicted Walter would be at the hospital and put his work schedule in jeopardy. He manipulates Walter into lying and to double down into further lies to make the reveal that Gus always knew the more intimidating.

At night, Gus decides to take action regarding the hospital situation by sending food from his restaurant chain "Los Pollos Hermanos" to Hank's family and coworkers, along with a ten thousand dollar bounty on *any* information regarding the case. He goes there to deliver the food personally. This all makes sense as he's a founder for the DEA as part of his money laundering strategy.

This extremely potent tactic serves six different goals.

From least to most important, the tactic:

- Serves as an information conduit for Gus. If any third party were to have any relevant information regarding the strategy, they could fall for this trap and tell the DEA, which would keep Gus informed and would help him to root out any problems. By talking to Gus' network first and foremost, he would be one of the first people to find out, greatly benefiting him.

- Boosts the magnitude of the issue as a reward for information would naturally make the case spread like fire, expanding the assasination attempt's relevance on the U.S. and Mexico.

- Greatly strengthens Gus' connection to the DEA, as he personally went and supported them during a time of crisis and low morale. It makes Gus look like a martyr, from literally feeding the administration's people to trying to gather information about the crime.

- Helps strengthen the deception that Gus had nothing to do with this incident and wants to find out what exactly happened. From the eyes of another cartel elite, it would just be Gus trying to keep a good poker face while sneakily trying to get new information out of the DEA's reach.

- Essentially shatters Walter's views regarding Gus. Throughout his entire business partnership, Walter tried to keep Hank's existence a secret from Gus, and he thought it worked. For Gus to come in so casually not only displays a tremendous dichotomy in general influence and knowledge of the other party, it also serves as a tremendous way to intimidate Walter, as Gus walks in and personally greets each member of the family. This will be elaborated on later.

- Distracts everyone involved in the case. By providing food and framing a narrative that would naturally boost morale, the DEA and Walter's family would be occupied eating, creating the perfect timeframe for Fring to tie the last loose end in the strategy.

It is extremely noteworthy how a lot of these tactics are holistically tied. For example, layer number one (a third party actually giving information about the attack) would make a newsworthy addition to the attempt, boosting layer number two (making the attack as infamous as possible)

While the tactic is set in motion, Gus sends Mike to the I.C.U. and has him kill Leonel by using an injection. It's unsure what he exactly injected with, but we can be fairly certain it was fully untraceable as an autopsy is performed and nothing comes from it.

After the last possible piece of evidence is discarded, the endgame of the strategy begins.

In his conversation with Walter, Gus makes sure to induce guilt into and emasculate the former, bringing up his cancer in a socially acceptable way by saying his last conversation with Hank actually led to them talking about Walter and his condition. After Gus hears Walter say there has been good news regarding his sickness, Fring mentions it was clear how much Hank cared for Walter. This already greatly affects Walter, but these feelings only shock him more in their second interaction.

Walter follows Gus to the exit of the hospital and asks him if he always knew who Hank was and his relation to Walt. Gus explains he investigates everyone whom he does business with, adding with the question: *"what careful man wouldn't?"*

This is very important as Walt, during season 2, compared himself to Gus saying they were both careful men. Walter tries to explain that Hank is not a threat to their business, but after getting no meaningful answer, he asks if all of this is a message. Gus, using his great acting skills and persuasive abilities, tells Walter that there was no message and that him coming here is merely part of his front.

Walter asks for any information Gus may have, and adds that he fears for his family. Gus reassures Walter, telling him that he hears Leonel is gravely injured and will likely fall dead to his wounds.

Gus then tells Walter to thank him and shake his hand. This is obviously to keep appearances but also helps further Gus' manipulation of Walter into submission.

Walt is sheepish, embarrassed to have been caught in a lie. He's also shaken.

WALT
You, uh... you knew my brother-in-law was with the DEA?

Given the relative lack of privacy, he keeps his voice low...

GUS
(nods)
I investigate everyone with whom I do business... What careful man wouldn't?

This is a callback to the first time Walt and Gus met -- when Gus told Walt he was not careful. Walt is chastened.

WALT
He is <u>not</u> a problem for us -- for our business.

Well, that's not exactly true, but Walt is on damage control. Gus gives him nothing -- no anger, no hope. He's completely inscrutable -- the definition of poker-faced. Which now prompts Walt to ask:

WALT
You here... is this some sort of message?

Gus frowns mildly -- *no message*.

GUS
I'm supporting my community.
(then)
I hide in plain sight... same as you.

Walt regards him, warily. Gus is impossible to read. Walt, forced to take him at his word, reluctantly nods.

GUS
Are we done?

Walt, desperate to talk to someone, <u>anyone</u> about what's going on, feels compelled to ask...

WALT
This attack on my brother-in-law. I -- I don't understand it... I don't... I don't know what it means... If you...
(MORE)

BREAKING BAD #308 "I See You" Writer's Draft 10/23/09 47

CONTINUED: (2) 37

WALT (CONT'D)
were to have any knowledge that you could share with me... I fear for my family.

GUS
I trust they'll be fine.
(then)
I'm told the assassin who survived is very gravely injured. It's doubtful he'll live much longer.

Off Walt, wondering how he can be so sure...

GUS
Now thank me and shake my hand.

Walt realizes Gus is being mindful, as always, of appearances. They must put on a show for the sea of cops mere feet away from them. Walt offers his hand.

WALT
Thank you, Mr. Fring.

GUS
(shaking Walt's hand)
You're quite welcome, Mr. White.

During these two interactions, Gus shows dominance over Walter to subdue him, acting as a safeguard for the strategy as he is the only person with enough information regarding the situation who could ever come to the conclusion it was Gus. This pays off, as even when Walter does reason out the strategy, he ultimately uses his leverage to strengthen his deal with Gus and to try to make their business relationship as fruitful as possible.

Juan Bolsa angrily calls Gus, trying to get anything out of Fring, who remains calm and collected, still keeping up with his lie.

Eventually, Juan—despite his power within the cartel and government (his brother being a police chief)—is shot down by federal agents in his own private domicile.

It's very possible these federal agents had more of a direct connection to Gus given Bolsa himself has personal connections to the DEA's enforcers and by this point in the show Gus himself is extremely powerful.

Gustavo was the one to tip off federal agents towards Bolsa's hacienda. This is the fruits of Gus's prior social engineering regarding the shootout and making it famous, since it forces the U.S. and Mexican government to retaliate against the cartel and appear competent so

that the public and cartel don't see it as a sign of weakness. This allows Gus to use Bolsa as a scapegoat for the DEA, killing his boss in an indirect way.

And how does this benefit Gus? Since Gus himself is in charge of all distribution and the U.S-Mexico border would be closed off for an extended period of time, Gus would, by virtue of drug manufacturing, take over Bolsa's role in the cartel: infrastructure.

Gus already has woven a complex distribution system for years, the DEA engaging in a war with the cartel helps separate Mexican and American drug markets, and manipulating Walt secures the best type of supply for Gus.

Essentially, this strategy allows Gus to have weeks if not entire months to monopolize the entire American drug market without being supervised by the Mexican cartel using the best drugs and distribution system in the country. By the time the cartel is able to make moves again (episode 13 of season 3, as proven by their first move being attacking Gus' supply system) Gus has already made his operations independent from the Mexican cartel, meaning the strategy is perfectly successful.

This is the strategy's first main goal. The second one is to use the main goal itself as a deceptive element in Gus' 20 year long plan.

By slowly beginning to monopolize the market, Gus is slowly manipulating Eladio Vuente to take offensive measures against Fring. This is all part of a very intricate process of logical manipulation to get Eladio to try and take Gus' perfect meth recipe, which would lead to Eladio hosting a meeting at his own hacienda, something Gus needs in order to systematically take down Eladio's cartel and finalize his double decade plan.

Essentially, Gus conceals the structure of the scheme to deceive two different factions.

Deceiving the DEA:

Cartel wants to take revenge on Hank for Tuco Salamanca —> twins attack Hank —> Hank survives, twins die —> people need reassurance —> the cartel mitigates the damages using Bolsa as a scapegoat

The only element left here is the phone call, which is untraceable, unrecognizable and ultimately leads to no exact conclusions able to be drawn. At most, the DEA could ultimately induce the attack was watched over by someone in the U.S. who wanted the market for themselves, but it narrows essentially nothing down.

Deceiving the cartel:

The twins want revenge on Walter —> Gus denies —> they begin to protest at Los Pollos —> Gus still denies —> they attack Hank —> they ultimately die —> the public is outraged and the DEA needs a scapegoat —> Juan is killed by feds

In this explanation, I assume that Juan didn't tell anyone about his suspicions. This is because Gus has leverage against Juan and the twins were under his control, him turning to

blame Gus without any proof would look like him trying to get the guilt off his shoulders. Juan mentions that he needs proof before going after Gus multiple times, which most likely means he hasn't even made a formal statement about his suspicions.

This is how I would rank the gambit's subcats as a strategy.

Logistics >≈ Complexity >≈ Fortitude ≈ Building >\>≈ Flexibility

This is how I would rank the gambit's subcats as a scheme.

Structure >≈ Integration > Effectiveness >≈ Adaptability

Reasoning out the strategy:

I'll now add exactly how hard it was for the only faction involved with the strategy that had any real chances to reason it out to abduce the scheme.

Here is Walter's abductive schema for the strategy's reasoning.

P1: Hank has been targeted in an assassination attempt by Tuco's cousins coming from Mexico.

P2: Hank's only interaction with the Mexican cartel was engaging in a gunfight and killing Tuco Salamanca.

C1: These cartel members were trying to kill Hank as a form of revenge for Tuco's death.

P3: Tuco kidnapped me and Jesse before dying. While at a safe house in the dessert, he explained to his cousins- Hank's assasins- that he wanted to be picked up and mentioned me and Jesse.

P4: Before dying, Tuco thought someone had ratted him out due to Gonzo's death, which he did not know off.

P5: Tuco thought it was Gonzo who did so, but the only proof he had was Gonzo not being incarcerated, a factor that also applied to Walter and Jesse, which Tuco only brushed off due to his "lie detector" tactic.

P6: After Hank killed Tuco, he must've followed basic police procedure and went inside of the shack, meaning he talked to Hector and explained he's from the DEA.

P7: Hector is lucid and able to communicate.

C2: Hector most probably assumed I was a DEA informant and told the cartel, which would explain why Hank appeared.

P8: Despite cartels being extremely intolerant of betrayal and especially regarding the police, I was never targeted. Instead, Hank was.

P9: Hank being targeted is almost improbable, given that going after a DEA agent is extremely counterproductive due to the police and since there was a person involved in Tuco's death who's hit would be far easier to execute and would have essentially no negative consequences for the cartel.

C3: Something or someone must've diverged the hitmen to Hank.

P10: Before the fight broke out, Hank received a tip from an anonymous caller saying that he'd be attacked by two men in one minute.

C4: This person wanted a gunfight to break out.

P11: After this fight, the DEA and Mexican government retaliated, applying more investigation and border security, cutting the supply of methamphetamine from Mexico to the U.S.

P12: Gus is a kingpin in ABQ who distributes and provides methamphetamine in the U.S.

P13: I am Gus' top meth cook and my product outclasses any other in the market.

P14: Gus Immediately approached the DEA and police right after the attack on Hank, offering a 10.000$ reward on any information regarding the case. An action that would, undoubtedly, bring a lot of attention from the public and thus, the police, to the case.

P15: Gus was seemingly sure that Leonel would die soon minutes before the Salamanca twin's passing.

Final conclusion: Gustavo Firing orchestrated the hit on Hank as part of a scheme to shield me and monopolize the American drug market to himself.

This is the only party who would as easily tie the scheme to Gus, but, by the scheme's structural virtue, Gus was able to induce conflict into Walter so deeply Heisenberg refused to try anything against him until later events.