Michael Scofield's Plan



Michael Scofield is the main character of the TV series Prison Break.

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Document Structure

1. Preparing the escape.
2. Executing the escape.
3. Preparing for life on the run if Abruzzi's plane fails.
4. Executing the post-escape plan.

Notes

This analysis covers only Seasons 1 and 2 of Prison Break.
I will not analyze Season 1 schemes that do not have a major impact on the escape plan.
I've also wrote the document in russian first so this one might look a little bit ai-ish since I translated it via ChatGPT.
Examples: framing Falzone; canceling the transfer to another prison; removing Haywire; making Haywire remember part of the tattoo; and causing a lockdown so the wall could be broken through.
I will divide the preparations into layers, written as L1, L2, and so on. Later I will refer back to these layers to make the plan and its execution easier to follow.

Preparing the Escape.

L1: Michael works for the company that designed Fox River. He has every blueprint of the prison, and he encodes all of them into the tattoos on his body so he can navigate the facility.
L2: He initially needs Prison Industries (PI) access so he can reach the infirmary route. To get PI, he needs Abruzzi's resources. To recruit Abruzzi, he needs Fibonacci, the witness who put Abruzzi away for life. Before entering prison, Michael sends Abruzzi's people a disguised file containing photos of Fibonacci and a paper swan. Inside prison, he gives Abruzzi another paper swan. Abruzzi's men connect it to the Fibonacci file, and Abruzzi gives Michael the resources he needs: PI access and influence inside the prison.
L3: Michael also needs alternate routes because PI will not give him enough time to complete everything. He must remove the toilet in his cell so he can pass through the wall behind it. The toilet is held by two bolts. He identifies a bolt on a particular yard bench that can be filed against the floor and turned into a fitting tool. Because he could not reliably remember the exact size by sight, he tattoos the required dimensions so he can compare them later.

L4: The only viable escape route ends at the infirmary. From there, the escapees can use a rope or cable to cross the perimeter fence. The route into the infirmary is blocked by an alarmed door, so they must come up through the floor grating. A pipe blocks that passage and must be corroded away with a caustic mixture. Michael needs copper and phosphorus from the prison's chemical area, carries them in toothpaste tubes, and pours them into the pipe. To give the chemicals time to work, he needs regular daytime access to the infirmary. He claims on his intake paperwork that he has diabetes. Because real insulin would expose the lie and harm him, he needs PUGNAc to neutralize its effects.
L5: Outside the prison are three possible roads: Fitz, English, and Percy. Michael must determine which one will be clear during the escape. To do that, he needs access to the roof through the corridors behind his toilet. The exact scheme for reaching the roof is created after he is inside the prison.
L6: For the final escape through the infirmary, the group must open the window and rip out its bars. Michael plans to tie a rope or cable from the infirmary bars to the nearby elevator mechanism. When the elevator descends, it tears out the bars and leaves the cable in place. The group then crosses the fence using the cable. They also take fabric from the infirmary to cover the razor wire and avoid being cut.
L7: Michael must test his cellmate to determine whether he can be trusted while Michael works behind the toilet. The test is designed inside the prison.
L8: Michael creates a tattoo that can be traced onto paper. In an abandoned section beneath the prison, he calculates how to break through a wall using a light projector already stored there. He uses his body to establish the correct distance and angle, identifies structural weak points, and turns those points into an unobtrusive tattoo pattern. He traces the pattern, drills the marked points, and brings down the wall. This creates more time, access to the roof, and a backup route if PI access fails.
L9: Michael also needs outside help: a special key card disguised as a debit card. The only practical way to bring it in is through a private visit from a wife or girlfriend. He cannot find a suitable visitor, so he finds Nika, a European woman who had been trafficked. He buys her freedom, making her indebted to him, and marries her so she can obtain a U.S. green card. He hides her phone number in the tattoo as a set of playing cards.
L10: Michael needs to know exactly how much time the escape window gives him. He combines a tape recorder with a gold watch inside the prison. The device begins recording at 9:00 p.m.; by measuring the interval between the first and second rounds of jangling keys, he

learns the patrol timing. The device is confiscated, as contraband usually is. From the blueprints, Michael knows where confiscated property is stored. He later reaches that storage area with the key card Nika brought him, retrieves the device, and uses it beneath the infirmary to calculate the total time available to reach the infirmary and cross the fence.

L11: The prison also confiscates Michael's black suit. Hidden inside it are a rope more than eighteen feet long and a black bag. These are needed in the eighteen-foot-high chamber beneath the room containing the pipe. The chamber has a water inlet and a drain. Michael identifies the valve that controls the water. He stuffs clothing into the black bag, uses it to block the drain, and ties the bag to the rope, which is secured to the upper grate. He then opens the valve from PI and waits the pre-calculated time for the chamber to fill. The rising water lets him reach the upper grate and inspect the pipe. Removing the grate pulls the rope, removes the bag, and drains the water, reducing the chance that anyone will notice. The rope also lets Michael and later the others climb between the chambers.

L12: Michael prepares a contingency in case Lincoln cannot join the PI crew. He sews a special pill into his own arm. Somehow he will pass it to Lincoln with a note telling him when to swallow it. Lincoln becomes seriously ill and is sent to the infirmary. Meanwhile, the PI crew deliberately damages a pipe so water sprays everywhere, they raise concerns about mold and are kept overnight. From there they climb through the flooded chamber, pass through the corroded pipe into the infirmary, collect Lincoln, tear out the bars with the elevator, and escape.

L13: If there is not enough time for any escape attempt, Michael jams a rat into an electrical switch. The resulting disruption postpones Lincoln's execution by about three weeks because of paperwork and procedural delays.

L14: If the pipe route fails, the only remaining route is through the psychiatric ward. To reach it, the escapees must travel about thirty-six meters, climb out of a grate, and cross an exposed area visible from three guard towers. The detailed scheme for doing this is developed later.

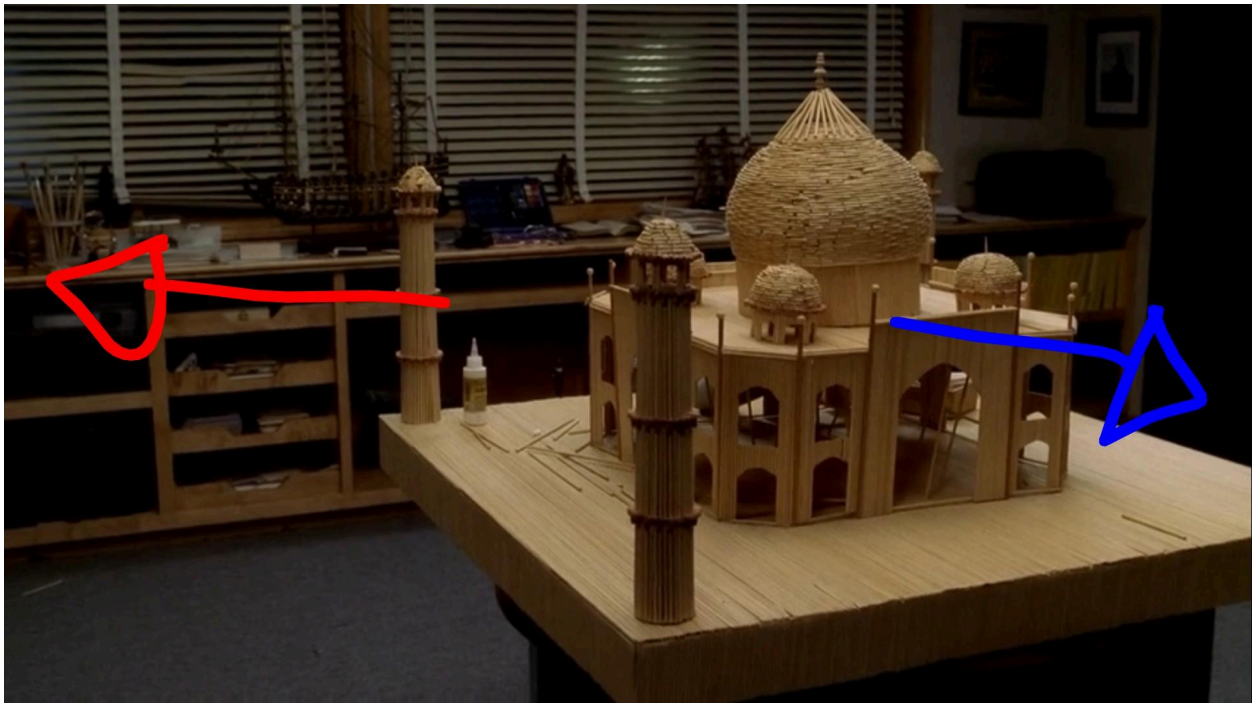
L15: Everyone except Michael disguises themselves as psychiatric inmates. They use bleach to turn their blue uniforms white so they resemble psych-ward uniforms and are not shot on sight. Michael wears a guard uniform obtained inside the prison. Because disguises alone are not enough, he triggers a fire alarm in the psychiatric ward through a keypad connected to it from the tunnels. The system requires a code. Michael blows sand over the keypad, identifies the most frequently pressed keys from the residue patterns, and reconstructs the combination. The alarm evacuates the psychiatric

inmates outside, creating a crowd into which the escapees can blend when they emerge from the grate.
L16: Once they reach the infirmary, they must open its door either with a key or by another method explained later. The key-based method is developed inside the prison.
L17: The other method is to spend the entire prison stay building a romantic bond with Sara, making her fall in love with him, and eventually persuading her to leave the infirmary door unlocked as if it were an accident. Michael believes this can work because Sara is fundamentally compassionate and he investigated her background before entering prison.

Executing the Escape.

Related to L7: Michael first tests his cellmate, Sucre. Knowing Sucre has a girlfriend and communicates with her, Michael carves a bar of soap to look like a cellphone. He tells Lincoln to inform Bellick that Sucre has a phone, but disguises the tip by having Lincoln trade it for an extra week of yard time and one cigarette per day. This tests whether Sucre will expose Michael. Sucre does not, proving he is the ideal cellmate.
Related to L2: Michael gives Abruzzi the paper swan connected to Fibonacci's location and refuses to break even after Abruzzi has two of his toes cut off. Abruzzi is successfully recruited, and Michael gains the needed resources.
Related to L5: Michael gains access to the room where Warden Pope is building the Taj Mahal model. The room has two doors. Door A is the official entrance, monitored by Pope's secretary, who records when Michael enters and leaves. Door B leads toward general population. Michael uses the arrangement to create a scheme for discovering which road outside the prison will be clear. He has Abruzzi steal a guard's keys and make a duplicate for Door B. Michael then enters through Door A to work on the Taj Mahal and uses technical language to persuade Pope that the model's foundation must be held in place overnight, so Pope permits him to stay. At the correct time, Door B is unlocked from the outside by Abruzzi as he passes. Michael slips through Door B, returns to his cell, goes through the toilet passage, and reaches the roof. As Michael predicted, Bellick is not told that Michael has permission to stay in Pope's office. During the count, Bellick notices Michael is missing and raises the alarm. Another officer checks the Taj Mahal room, fails to see Michael in the concealed angle where Michael later positions himself, and reports

him absent. This brings police vehicles to the prison, allowing Michael to observe which road they do not use.
The first image shows the layout: the blue arrow marks Door B and the red arrow marks Door A.



The door A is shown in the image below:



The door B is shown in the image below:



From the roof, Michael sees that the police are not approaching from Fitz Street. Fitz therefore becomes the escape route. He returns through the pipes and hidden rooms to the Taj Mahal room at the right moment. The officer assumes he simply failed to see Michael behind the desk, and no one becomes suspicious.

Related to L14: When the primary pipe route fails, Michael must use the psychiatric-ward route, but Lincoln is under constant observation. While in Pope's office, Michael knows Pope needs the Taj Mahal that day, so he removes a support beam, ensuring Pope will summon him back. Michael brings a knife, threatens Pope, forces him to order Lincoln into the infirmary for the entire night, knocks Pope unconscious, ties him up, and hides him in a closet. To prevent the secretary from becoming suspicious, Michael activates something on Pope's phone so it appears that Pope is listening to a call. Michael tells her Pope does not want to be disturbed and is participating in a press conference.

Related to L15: Because the pipe plan has failed, Michael uses the psychiatric ward. The disguise-and-crowd scheme works as planned: the group emerges from the grate in bleached uniforms and blends into the evacuation. Bellick has previously been tied up in the tunnels so he cannot expose them. At the entrance, an orderly recognizes John Abruzzi among the supposed psychiatric inmates and reports it to Michael, who is disguised as a guard. Michael asks whether the orderly has a sedative, distracts him, and injects him with it.

Related to L16: Michael's first option is to open the infirmary with Sara's keys. Earlier, he instructs Nika to meet Sara and steal them. Nika succeeds and passes them to Michael during a visit. Sara remembers the encounter, realizes what happened, and has the locks changed before the escape.

Related to L17: Michael's final remaining option is the romantic manipulation he has conducted throughout the season. He has deliberately built Sara's trust and affection by helping and saving her. He finally tells her that he and Lincoln are escaping and asks her to leave the infirmary door unlocked. She does.
Related to L6: The group then follows the final plan: they use the elevator and the rope or cable in the medical area to tear out the bars, cross the perimeter with fabric protecting them from the razor wire, and get outside. Charles cannot complete the crossing because he is elderly and badly wounded, so he tells them where five million dollars are hidden. The group reaches the plane, but it leaves early. They are now fugitives, and the next phase begins.
Not tied to the layers: Michael also sends Sara coded messages through origami cranes. When decoded, one message reads: 'Meeting - Sundown Hotel - Gila, New Mexico.' He later sends another letter identifying the meeting place.
Michael returning to the Taj Mahal room after checking the roads from the roof.

Preparing for Life on the Run if Abruzzi's Plane Fails.

Principle: Michael understands that the plane may fail, so he prepares resources outside the prison in advance.
L1: Michael needs to delay the police. Before entering prison, he anticipates that investigators will identify him as the mastermind and inspect his transactions. He therefore rents a storage unit and creates evidence suggesting that his post-escape supplies are stored there. This sends the police in the wrong direction and wastes their time and resources.
L2: For the first stage, the fugitives need money and clothing. Michael buries packages directly above the grave of a man named E. Chance Woods. He encodes the location in the tattoo phrase 'Ripe Chance Woods': 'Ripe' hints at 'RIP,' followed by E. Chance Woods. A storage building at the cemetery contains shovels. The buried packages hold clothing for several people, car keys, a special device whose purpose is unclear, money, and forged documents.
L3: Michael leaves a car in a parking area near the cemetery. It contains the rest of what they need.
L4: If all of those preparations fail and the outside resources are lost, the only remaining option is Charles's money.

L5: If Michael and Lincoln need to shake a tail, Michael uses the tattoo '38 12 1037.' '38' means Route 38. '12' is the distance to the place where they must send the car over the edge so police will find it. A barrier blocks the drop, and Michael removes it on site. '1037' means the radio frequency 103.7. Michael has pre-rigged the car to simulate their deaths: it contains planted blood, and tuning the radio to 103.7 triggers an explosion. The police still need to find the vehicle, so Michael creates a deliberate phone trail. He knows investigators will search his transactions, storage units, vehicles, phones, and other prepared resources. Near the bridge, he leaves a message on a prepaid voicemail account: 'It's me. Link is with me. We're heading there. If you can't make it, call back...' He times the message so police trace the signal while he and Lincoln are approaching the bridge. This draws the police to the exact place and time where they will find the crashed, exploded car. Pig blood planted inside produces a superficial B-negative type result similar to human blood, encouraging investigators to believe Michael and Lincoln are dead and buying them time.
L6: If Michael and Lincoln become separated, they reunite at Bolshoi Booze. The tattoo is written in a special style so that, when viewed upside down, it becomes the meeting coordinates. Lincoln knows the plan. The site is also the arranged border-crossing point, where Michael is to give nitroglycerin to a smuggler in exchange for passage across the border.
L7: Michael needs a hidden, cool place to store the nitroglycerin. He chooses a location beneath an Apache Desert Ghost plant so he can later retrieve it while posing as a worker. He tattoos the plant's name on his body.
L8: He creates a communication method through the website Europeangoldfinch.net.
L9: If none of the other resources work, Michael has a boat named after his mother, Christina Rose. He encodes the name as a tattoo of Jesus inside a rose: 'Christ in a rose,' which compresses into 'Christina Rose.' He reserves the boat through a woman who can later tell him where it is, and he hides the access code, 617, in the tattoo.

Executing the Post-Escape Plan.

Not tied to the layers: Michael creates an operation to rescue Lincoln's son, L.J. L.J. is in police custody and will be transported through the third floor. Lincoln calls him while posing as his lawyer and says: 'Listen up, L.J., this is real important. On the third,

look out for Otis Wright. Got that? On the third, look out for Otis Wright. Until then, keep your head up.' The phrase means that on the third floor L.J. should look for the Otis elevator on the right; 'keep your head up' tells him to look high enough to see the Otis sign. Michael and Lincoln need to enter the building, reach the elevator shaft, and neutralize the officer guarding L.J. Michael buys a toy pistol and paints it black so it looks real. He also buys a rope, intending to descend into the building and wait in the shaft until L.J. calls the elevator. The rescue attempt fails.
Related to L4: The supplies in Michael's car are stolen, so he switches to Charles's money. By reasoning from the growth pattern and age of the surrounding trees, he determines which house the money is buried beneath.
Conclusion: After that, Michael does not carry out any other schemes in Season 2 that are especially notable for this analysis.

Final note:

Michael also labels the steps of his overall plan with letters of the Greek alphabet.

Thank you for reading.