



Prison Chronicles: Manipulation/Deceit
The Pleasant breakdown

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Deceit and manipulation comes in many forms and disguises, and sometimes, what we perceive to be deceitful is not what it actually is. But, in prison, what you see is what you get; as long as you have your eyes open to see and recognize it.

Once the signs of claustrophobic fear of being in prison begin to level out, other things begin to take over the mind. That would be the time the mind begins its downward spiral into the abyss, depleting and defeating itself; giving up.

Art had a deceitful look about himself and carried himself in a very arrogant manner. One of those *my shit doesn't stink* sort of ways and since he and I worked in a vocational shop together for over two years, I thought we were cool enough where I felt we could talk, but I still kept an eye on him because that look, I cant say I totally trusted it on him.

I asked Art one day, "Say, Art, why the hell don't you laugh at anything? We sit around all the damn time joking about one thing or another, laughing and shit and your ass never laugh. What the hell's wrong with you, man?"



"Well," Art began, "I used to be heavy into drugs on the streets and those fucking drugs took away my funny bone, just stole my sense of humor from me."

On some level or another, we all are guilty of befriending denial and instead of telling people flat out to *stay out of my damn business* we lean toward denial. It's easier for some of us that way.

Personally, I wanted to kick Art's ass for lying to me because, how the hell can anything take away anyone's funny bone? That bastard had me looking at his arm for his funny bone; like it would suddenly appear before my eyes. Everyone else present laughed their ass off. I swear I thought I saw a smirk creep across Arts face, too, but I did not.

After twenty years of doing time, that old Art still did not laugh one time and I even stood off in a good distance and watched him with his small group of friends to see. Maybe he laughed in private with his friend's but-nothing. No smirk, no tee hee, hee or anything else of the sort that resembled the start of a smile or laugh.

Eight months later, Art was finally paroled and given his freedom and you know what? The guy still did not laugh one time, not even on his way out of prison.

Most people, once they are given their freedom and find out its over for sure, they have at least one laugh for the road; for making it through all the bullshit we have to go through, because having your freedom taken away will make a person feel, not only excommunicated from the rest of society but, also like an expatriate of the very country that incarcerated him/her, no matter who you are or what you did to be incarcerated.

Some go through great lengths to learn another language or choose a religion to be shielded by, knowing we would not make those choices in society, just to get away and distance themselves from imprisonment mentally. Others may choose some other form of mind stimulation to set themselves free from it all.

I believed Art was deceiving me with his act but then, I realized he was only deceiving himself.

You see, Art had denied his version of his crime for many years, but only admitted to committing it at the very end, hence, this is how he was found suitable for parole so he can rejoin his family in society.

Art had killed a man he claimed raped his former wife; the very woman who turned her back on him after he was locked up.

His version of his crime was that he and a guy fought, "the gun went off by accident."

After many years of deception and realizing the only way they would let Art out of his imprisonment was for him to own up to what really took place during the incident that brought him through the court system and ultimately to the prison system; which was the version the authorities wrote in their report of the incident, no matter what Art's, or anybody else, version was.

Things go the way the authorities say they went in the court of law and that is the very story every person facing a parole board must stick with and nothing different from it, no matter if you feel it is wrong to do so, or they will say you are minimizing, because not telling the whole truth-even if your version is true but slightly different from their version, your stay will definitely end up being longer than it has to be.

Old Art finally stepped up to the plate, revealed the version the police report stated; that he was a drug dealer, who used his own product and what happened occurred because the guy owed Art money.

When he went to collect, a fight took place between the two men. Art pulled out a gun and shot the man dead and because Art survived the confrontation, his prison ordeal and was eventually paroled, he was free to laugh.

In Art's mind; he went for the other version, his wife getting raped, verses what the police said transpired, was perhaps, he felt the first version would get him sympathy from the parole board; a man revenging the rape of his wife, right? Who would not sympathize with that? If you believe the parole board would/will, you would be wrong.

Art got that wrong. But, in his defense, the break up of him and his wife played a very vital part to that story being made up and Art thought by doing so, it would get him home sooner. But he was deceiving and manipulating his own mind.

Art played the game of deception and it worked against him.

The fact that his wife learned what he was doing, with his made up story; using her in something that never took place to help himself, she backed out of it.

That made the break up so specific and final; the fact that he tried to use her without her, supposed, knowledge. Then, or, but, he had to complete the deceit he began.

Even though the deception was a part of Art's game, in the end, he was still paroled but never smiled, not even to himself.

The question is can a person be so manipulative and deceitful that they can deceive and outsmart themselves for their own personal gain?

Would you fabricate a lie when, if true, the police already have their report you should go by, just to attempt to get out of prison early or as soon as you can?

I know, that was a devil's advocate question but what a gamble. Life is a gamble and if you choose to go that rout, it may not work out for you.

It took Art nearly 22 years to get out when he began with a 15 year sentence.

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