

Friendly Man, however, did not rest so easily. He regretted fleeing the scene and so turned around to shoot her. But first he hurried home to fetch his SLR camera and long lens, the better to see you with, my dear. Her photo could be a trophy, but which Man would have to shoot from afar, as not to be accused of interfering with police work. No permission need be sought from the subject because photographing anyone in a public place is fully legal. And no place is more public than the street.

Less than an hour later with long-lens SLR ready, Man returned to the park. But the Lollipop Cop was gone. She and her entourage had moved her sentry post closer to the center of downtown, where they continued until dinner time their moral crusade.

Sunday's headline read: "Operation 'Clean Sweep' Produces 29 Arrests by New London Police." An unlucky 13 were johns, Tammy was the sole jane, and 15 became civilian casualties of the War on Drugs. Of the 13 johns caught with their pants down, six hailed from out of town. The farthest was from Guilford, an affluent coastal community 33 miles away and known for its quintessential New England town green lined by historic colonial homes and a cutesy white clapboard church.

Monday's newspaper headline humiliated and made public the *coitus interruptus* of the john from Guilford: "Former State Senator Arrested in Sting." Mr Former Senator, age 66, had served two terms in the elite Connecticut State Senate. He may have cultivated his sexual proclivities during his senatorial years in Hartford, where the State Capitol is just three blocks from a streetwalker stroll in the decaying neighborhood called Frog Hollow. At home in Guilford, he also had served on the Board of Selectmen (the city council) and the Board of Police Commissioners. At the time of his arrest, among the current members of the Board of Selectmen was his dearly beloved wife.

In colonial times, Mr Senator would have been pilloried in the center of the town green. Surely his reputation among Guilford's gentry was besmirched. His wife, if she did not file for divorce, probably exiled him to sleep on the living room couch or, more fittingly, in the backseat of his car. The temptress Lollipop Cop may not altogether have ruined his life but, surely, she disrupted it and ruined his nights.

By Tuesday, for those for whom prowling on the street for sex and drugs was normal, life in New London returned to normal.



Heather at age 21

13 - HEATHER

The Seriously Serial Bank Bandit

I was conceived on Halloween in a cemetery.

Meet Heather Lois Brown, CT Inmate Number 241947, RI State ID 11222223, and MA Probation Central File Number 2780830. Seven bank tellers met Heather, and their meetings left them traumatized. In 2009, Heather robbed a bank a day for six consecutive days in three contiguous states. From her hideout in Connecticut, she made forays into Rhode Island and Massachusetts. Heather maintained a busy workweek maybe to achieve notoriety but really just to buy more crack. She pled to the judge, "When I take up crack, I take up handcuffs."

Handcuffed by Her Own Hands

"When I took up crack, I took up handcuffs," could serve as the epitaph on her tombstone. Honey-voiced and honey-brown-haired Heather

Brown did anything to get what she wanted, and the only thing she wanted was crack. She adhered to a simple moral code. Whatever got her crack was good, and whatever obstructed it was bad. An equal opportunity exploiter, she lied to and stole from all the shady characters of her nefarious underworld and her endless procession of jilted johns.

The johns could have sought revenge, but most just shrugged off her rip-offs and felt relief to be rid of her. A measure of moral strength is not how we treat those we have reason to love but how we treat those we have cause to hate. Johns were resigned to let Heather continue to defile herself. They hoped, give her enough dope, and she will hang herself.

A perpetual trickster, Heather polished her skills even in the courtroom. Off the streets and off drugs, Heather as the accused was a sweetie pie whose sob stories about her addiction often convinced judges to trim her sentences. By outsmarting us, Heather thought she demonstrated how smart she was. Yet no one revered her for her smarts.

Her first bank heist landed her in jail for 30 months, a lenient sentence considering her decade-long criminal history with 57 charges and 23 arrests. Considering also her bomb threat during that heist, which required evacuating the bank, cordoning off the block, and summoning the bomb squad. The drug underworld is populated with snitches who, seeking leniency in court, routinely rat upon each other. As chimed in rhythm and in rhyme by Brenda (*Chapter 10*), “The bitch is a snitch.”

Heather could act the role of the girl next door. That door may open to the bucolic rural village in which she was raised. Or it may shut out run-down New London in which she raised hell. Or it may lock behind her in York C.I., her only sure site of drug detox and rehab. Seesawing between recidivism and rehab, her weight fluctuated accordingly. Husky Heather’s only proven-effective weight loss program was crack. On drugs and on the streets, she withered away to an emaciated twig.

In jail and off drugs, she ballooned into one humongous mama. She served 24 months of her 30-month sentence. After two years off cigs and crack, but on sugar, salt and grease, 5-foot 7-inch Heather was released obese at 250 pounds. Initially she worked in a restaurant as a kitchen aide. Such menial labor can be safely delegated to ex-cons because their only thefts could be engorging on kitchen scraps. During that brief stint of gainful employment, Heather was still on probation so still subject to drug testing, so still off crack. But not for long.

Judith Martinez

Judith Martinez (1972–2016) was one of Heather’s street sisters. Born of Puerto Rican parents, Judith assimilated into the melting pot of Brooklyn. A heroin addict for much of her life, she presently was on a methadone program where clinics routinely test for illicit drug use. Judith’s urinalyses tested positive for cocaine three times in two months. Her drug counselor was weaning her off the methadone to soon show her the door, at which time Judith would treat her methadone addiction with heroin. Once a heroin addict, always a heroin addict, except when a methadone addict. Heroin is digital movies in 3D, while methadone is black and white TV. Heroin is all that addicts want from the world. Methadone is all that they get from the State.

JUDITH speaks, at age 27:

I tried cocaine at 14. My uncle used to sell it big-time. He used to give me eightballs, three grams. At age 16, I left home and stayed with my uncle and aunt. She was doing heroin. I tried it and liked it. I’ve maintained one bag a day for years. And I tried crack because my aunt’s sister used to get high on crack. And she was a prostitute. When I began prostituting, I wasn’t getting paid by money. I was getting paid by drugs. So I didn’t feel like I was prostituting.

I have two children in foster care. All I want is to have my kids back. [*cries*] It hurts. [*cries*] I want to be a good mom. [*cries*] But I feel overwhelmed. [*cries*] I feel so alone. [*cries*] I’m a fuckup. [*cries*] Right now, if I have no kids, I might as well go all the way out.

I like to get high. I like it. When I do heroin, I’m outgoing and affectionate. On coke, I’m the opposite. I don’t want to be touched. I don’t want no one to bother me. I get high every day. I sniff heroin. I go out at night to make money. And at night, I sniff cocaine too. I switched to heroin because I know if I smoked crack, I’d be out there 24 hours a day.

When she was “out there” working the streets, her boyfriend trailed distantly behind her, wary to scare away the johns. Instead of Judith’s boyfriend, johns should have been wary of Judith’s AIDS. With uncommon candor, she admitted she had AIDS, endemic among sex workers on IV drugs. A cloud of gloom clung to Judith, weighed on her shoulders, dragged on her feet. The virus was oozing from the abscesses on her face. A stench rose from her soiled clothes. Or her fetid sores. Or her dried tears. But Judith cries no more. “You gonna die anyway,” she said, “you might as well die high.” At age 44, she died not of AIDS but,

according to her death certificate, of “acute heroin toxicity.” Expressed in the vernacular, Judith OD’d. Judith indeed died high.

Burning That Bridge When She Comes to It

According to Judith, Heather stayed clean for four long arduous months while shacking up with a lonely and horny john more than 30 years her senior. Then Heather relieved him of several hundred dollars, and left him lonely and horny and broke. With his bundle of bucks, Heather headed for New London, straight into the beckoning arms of crack.

What triggered Heather? Was it envy? Greed? Lust? Gluttony? For Heather, seven deadly sins were not enough. All her mortal wounds led to self-medication and self-destruction. In one word, addiction.

Positing that all our actions stem from them, Aristotle enumerated seven human attributes, among them compulsion, habit, passion, and desire. Here too, all her motivations conflated into one word, addiction.

Back on crack, Heather stayed with Judith. Rather than risk failing a drug test, Heather skipped an appointment with her probation officer.

According to Judith, for two weeks Heather supported her habit by streetwalking. Despite her obesity. A streetwalker need not be pretty nor sexy, but need only be *there*. Even for hefty Heather, business was good. On the lam from her probation officer, Heather knew an arrest warrant would be issued. So after two weeks, working the streets was no longer a wise option because all the New London cops knew her through thick and thin as both skinny string bean and fatty porky pig.

Drug-Fueled Crime Spree and Crime-Fueled Drug Spree

“Early Monday morning,” said Judith, “she called her probation officer and told her that she had relapsed and needs to go into rehab.” Some rehab. An hour after phoning, Heather robbed the first bank of her bank-a-day six-day crime spree. Her modus operandi was established three years earlier by her seminal first heist: Bum a ride from some john unaware of his passenger’s illicit intentions. Arrive in bank parking lot. Enter bank, fetch withdrawal slip, write on back, “There’s a Bomb in this black bag. Give me 5 100 dollar bills. And no one gets hurt. Don’t alert anyone or we all die.” Next slither to teller window, place black bag on counter. Slip teller withdrawal slip. Withdraw money. Leave behind bag. Slink from bank. Get away in john’s car. Dump unsuspecting john. Head to nearest crack dealer. Buy crack, a case of Diet Coke, and rent

a room in sleazy motel. Hide away in hideaway. Smoke away the day. Watch self on the evening news. Smoke away the night. Watch self on the late night news. Smoke away the early morning. Get a two-hour snooze. Wake up bummed out and out of crack. Repeat as needed.

Heather replayed her scenario of her first heist from years earlier. Again a black bag. Again a handwritten note. “There’s a bomb in the bag. Do not alert anyone or we all die. Give me \$600 cash.”

When that first bank surveillance videotape depicting a hooded Heather was broadcast on the TV news, Judith’s phone began ringing. “Judith! Heather’s on the fucking five o’clock news!” And the police phones began ringing too. Because Heather ripped off and lied to and talked shit about everyone she met, everyone hated her and eagerly informed on her. Even Heather’s former cellmates and recently jilted boyfriend called the cops. Even Heather’s mom called the cops.

The cops feigned ignorance of the culprit’s identity in order to gather incriminating information also about her ilk. Smart cops, dumb ilk. So, after the first TV newscast, the cops knew where Heather had spent the night. They staked out Judith’s apartment, a half block from the former site of Le Club, the massage parlor where ten years earlier Heather briefly massaged young men’s pride and old men’s peckers.

Next morning, they knocked on Judith’s door. “We don’t care about your crack,” they said. “We just want to know where Heather is.” Judith really did not know. Unbeknownst to Judith, for that week of unauthorized bank withdrawals Heather had withdrawn to Hartford, centrally located among the diverse sites of her six heists. In theory, a jane can hitch cross-country and support herself at every rest stop. In practice, she is chained by her addictions. Thus Heather could not sequester herself in some backwoods cabin. Instead, she holed up in some drug den where every night she could delight in watching her encore performances on the local news. On Sunday, Heather took a bank holiday.

On Monday, she commanded the headlines when the cops, acting on a tip, apprehended her in Hartford. In her pocket were stashed a robbery note and driving directions to a nearby bank. She admitted to her captors that she was plotting bomb threat and bank heist number 7, which explains why the police report made no mention of her possession of any money or any crack. She was apprehended coming from her local crack house, so perhaps her crack dealer was the snitch.

Heather pled guilty to the four robberies in her home state, for which she was sentenced to 16 years. Massachusetts sentenced her to five years for her armed robbery there. Rhode Island sentenced her sternly to ten years for her single robbery there. It is unclear whether her sentences are to be served consecutively or concurrently. If served consecutively, 31 years total. Off drugs, the sweetie pie might qualify for parole after serving only 20 years. In sync with the clink, two decades in the penitentiary just may provide her with time enough to become penitent.

But wait! Off cigs and off crack and eating jail food laden with sugar, salt, and grease, Heather grossly puts on weight. And cooped up in the pen like a hen, Heather gains even more. During past incarcerations she gained ten pounds a year. So before she is granted early release from prison, morbid obesity just might release her to her grave.

Jailhouse Journal Jailed

Eleven years before her bank capers, as therapy in drug rehab Heather began to write the story of her life as a drug addict. As a 22-year-old, hers should have been a short story. Indeed, her drug counselor requested no more than ten pages. But Heather's lengthy rap sheet provided her with ample material to inscribe 50 pages, a memoir that she completed a year later as an inmate. Soon after release, when she was just another crack addict selling her body for a twenty, she sold the publication rights to her handwritten journal for \$40. She promptly redeemed the two \$20 bills for two rocks of crack. Upon leaving Heather's hands, the bank notes percolated into the underground economy. Her crack lasted her barely an hour. But her journal about life as a sex worker and a drug addict just might outlive her.

Having achieved fleeting notoriety as a serial bank robber, she may be updating her memoir while imprisoned and may harbor grandiose visions of publishing it. Heather's literary talents deserve to be showcased, but that must wait. A sociopathic liar, she would deny that she ever granted permission for publication here. So what follows is a summary of her handwritten account of her life as a tomboy, thief, liar, boozier, hustler, schemer, grifter, trickster, embezzler, forger, jailbird, sexpot, pothead, sex masseuse, man manipulator, streetwalker, shoplifter, pickpocket, con artist, coke fiend, crackhead, and budding black widow spider. Everything but bank robber, because she had not yet plotted that crime.

Heather was conceived in a cemetery on Halloween night. Learning of the pregnancy, her dad raped her mom to try to induce a miscarriage. He failed. Heather was born, so he abandoned them both. Heather was raised by her high school dropout and unwed teenage mom who lived off of welfare and her many boozing boyfriends. Heather often heard them having sex behind her mom's locked bedroom door.

One day, in her mom's absence, 11-year-old Heather popped open the lock on that door and discovered all her mom's pothead paraphernalia. She threatened to call the cops on her mom if she did not stop smoking pot. Actually her mom later turned her on to pot when Heather turned 16, after which Heather, too, became a pothead. When stoned, she liked to masturbate. After her male cousin caught her masturbating, they started having sex together regularly, all while Heather was still in high school.

Fresh from graduation, Heather smoked pot and had sex, both a lot. One night, she had sex with two guys and their double dose got her pregnant. She had an abortion so she would not ruin her life by becoming like her mother. She got a job at the college bookstore. To pay for drugs and partying, she and her coworker, Tania, stole from the register and cashed forged checks. Around this same time, Tania's uncle paid Tania to arrange for sex with Heather. "She pimped me." The sex became a rape. Heather went to the police, and the uncle went to jail.

Thereafter, the police came to Heather. Her first criminal conviction was for shoplifting. She got a new job but was fired for robbing one of her coworkers. By this time she was smoking crack. To support her habit, she began sponging off older men, moving from one dirty old man to the next. Often she outright stole from them. Then she went to jail for three months, the first of her many stints. Upon release, she cashed forged checks with fake I.D. and began strip dancing with The Get Wet Girls, the same crew with whom *Katrina* danced. Stripping led to escorting, and escorting led to the massage parlor where *Renee* also had worked. Renee said that Heather often pilfered money and jewelry from the other girls' purses and coat pockets. Whereas Renee told her boyfriend that she worked in a law office, Heather told her mom that she worked in a health spa. There Heather earned a healthy wage of \$1000 a night and more on weekends. It all went up in smoke, until Heather, too, like Renee, was fired from her job. They both turned to streetwalking and made even more money. "But still I thought I wasn't a prostitute."

Counterfeit Confession

Heather never confessed to her crimes. Rather, she bragged about them. Heather took pride in her criminality. The streets are the Bizarro World of Superman comics, an opposite universe where being good is bad and where bad means good. On the streets, being a badass is a good thing. So is being hated for being a badass. According to her peers, who all hated her, Heather was the baddest badass.

While Heather's text boasted of her crimes, her subtext bespoke of a little girl wanting what everyone wants, and that is to be loved. Despite all her stealing and scheming, she never could attain what she wanted because she never learned that, in order to be loved, one first must love. Somewhere amid all her mischief and mayhem lurked a child who displayed many commonplace good qualities and who, as a young druggie fresh out of rehab, could shine. But Heather's world will remember only the bad in Heather or will not remember her at all.

HEATHER speaks:

When I first went to jail, all I learned was how to be a better criminal. I walked in with a chip on my shoulder, and walked out with two chips and a monkey on my back. My relapse started even before I picked up the drug. I went to New London one day, walked down the street, and met a girl I used to get high with, which triggered it. Same shit, different day.

When we were still working at Le Club, Renee brought me to where we would buy shitloads of crack and get the whole neighborhood high. We were all cracked out, had used the last of our money, and Renee was going to go hustle these young black Jamaican drug dealers for their drugs, and I volunteered to help. I had never tricked outside of Le Club, so I was scared, but the desire to get high was strong. We ended up fucking all of them. I did most of the fucking. That was the first time outside of Le Club.

So then I started seeing my clients from Le Club on the street. I would be just walking, and they stopped. We'd do it in their cars, wherever, or under the bridge [of Interstate 95 crossing the Thames River]. That's really how my tricking got started.

During the past year, the only thing that has changed was I did not trick. I put myself out there like I was tricking, but I really didn't. Instead I robbed people. I spit them out. I never thought I would be a good manipulator, but I learned it very quickly. Then I met someone I could manipulate and get thousands of dollars from. He would catch me and still I would do it again and again and again. I like the manipulation, the hustle.

I'm not out there sucking dick for twenties. I'm out there for hundreds of dollars. I buy lots of cocaine, hotel rooms, and every addict comes to party with me. I get high off of getting everybody high. It becomes a ritual.

One time I was clean 60 days. I felt great. I did not feel like getting high. But when I get too comfortable something brings me back to drugs because I'm an addict, never ending. I'm like a magnet. I don't have to look, the drugs come to me.

A lot of shit has happened to me. I'm amazed I made it this far. I'm always alone. I don't hang out with many other people, partially because I feel unsafe. Many hate me, especially the girls.

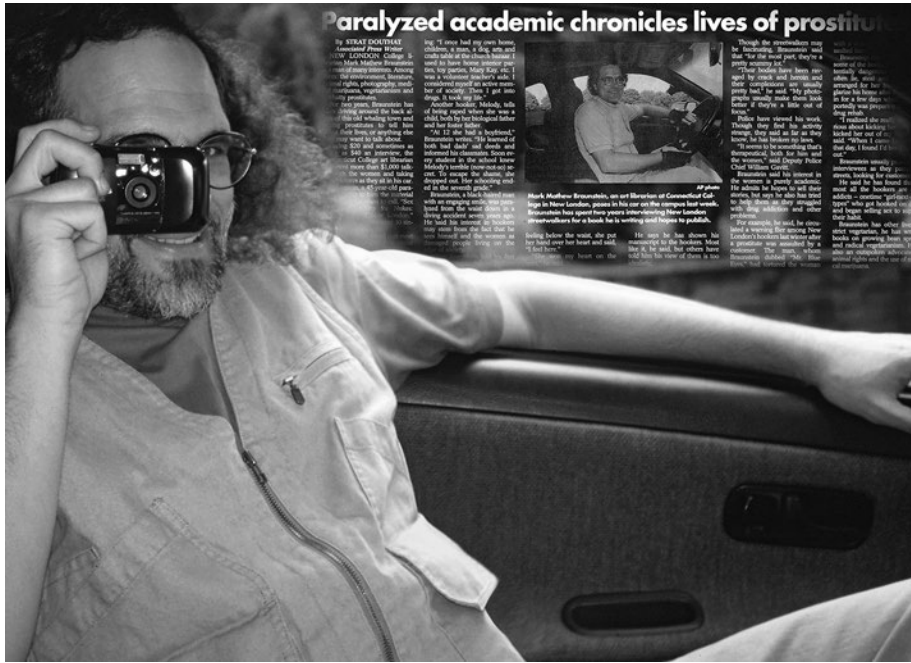
I don't have much dignity left. If I did, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing. I don't feel shame for anything I do, and I don't even think my story is so bad. Not even the crimes I committed to others.

I'm not ashamed.



Judith at age 27 and her overdose death certificate





Mark at age 48, photographed by *Katrina*

Mark Mathew Braunstein, without his being required to register as a sex offender, was released into the community after 33 years of solitary confinement as an art curator and college librarian, two professions notorious for harboring dangerous criminals.

His writer rap sheet includes four other propagandizing books, including one that the *Washington Post* denounced for being “remarkably intelligent.” His more than one-hundred ephemeral articles in glossy consumerist magazines include *Backpacker*, *Vegetarian Times*, *New Mobility*, and *Natural Health*; and in pedantic academic journals include *Between the Species*, *Iris: Notes in the History of Art*, and *The Trumpeter: Journal of Eco-Philosophy*; and in statewide newspapers include two front page editorials in the *Hartford Courant*; all of which cover an array of topics such as art history, literary criticism, holistic health, wildlife conservation, animal rights, vegetable lefts, vegan vegetarianism, indoor gardening, mobility disability, medical marijuana, cannabis culture, and drug law reform.

Paraplegic since 1990 from a diving accident, he is a bad boy on a good drug who tramps around the streets on crutches. Having completed this book about streetwalking, Braunstein is now writing a book about walking.



Lacie at age 24

Never an End

Now that you have read the book, see the movie. On YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/gTie2oKFfC4>



other nonfiction books by the author

Radical Vegetarianism A Dialectic of Diet and Ethic
(1981, Revised Edition 2010)

Sprout Garden Indoor Grower's Guide to Gourmet Sprouts
(1993, Revised Edition 1999, Spanish translation 2012)

Microgreen Garden Indoor Grower's Guide to Gourmet Greens
(2013, Spanish translation 2019)

Final Thoughts Beginner's Guide to Death
(2019)

GOOD GIRLS on BAD DRUGS

Addiction Nonfiction
in a Revised Edition

Mark Mathew Braunstein