

Speaker 1: Many people told me that I was the last person on Earth they thought would ever do that. My dad was a serial cheater, and I promised myself I would never follow in his footsteps. But I did.

Speaker 2: Couple 2: A Small Town Affair.

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Speaker 3: You know, I feel in love with someone. That's what happened. I fell in love, and I was in a sexless, dead marriage. And I fell in love and I was happier than I had been in my entire life, yet, I'm being shunned. I felt like the Scarlet Letter. I should put a big A on my chest. And everyone's like, "He's a cheater." And, "She's toxic."

Speaker 1: I think an affair in a small town, if it gets out, it gives people something to talk about.

[00:01:00]

Speaker 4: What this couple wrote to me in advance to the session was that they lived in a small town, that they both had been married, both had a child from their first marriage, that they had had an affair.

Speaker 3: And we kissed, and it was just like, that was it. And for the next nine months we were just, you know, having sex everywhere ... outside, and skinny dipping. That summer, we felt like we were in high school.

[00:01:30]

Speaker 1: It was all kind of a blur but there was so much passion and so much fire and so much hope and promise of what could come of this.

Speaker 4: They then broke up. They then had different partners, on whom they then cheated in an affair with each other again. And in effect, they had cheated on each other and with each other.

[00:02:00]

Speaker 1: That was a red flag that I thought, "I'm different. This is so different." I mean, he left his marriage for this. This is big.

Speaker 3: No one's ever called me out on my lies and deception. Like, I could do anything, and I did.

Speaker 4: And despite the brut reality of all those lies, her dominant question was, "Can I trust this man? And do we have a chance to start all over?"

[00:02:30]

Speaker 1:

I want to feel like we are both on the same page and equally committed to doing whatever it's gonna take to rebuild our mutual trust, and our sort of foundation-

Speaker 4: Where did it go for you?

Speaker 1: Out the window.

[00:03:00]

Speaker 4: But why?

Speaker 1: He broke it.

Speaker 4: How?

Speaker 1: He lies.

Speaker 4: How? And about what?

Speaker 1: Everything. Dishonesty, I think he hides things from me and from others, and that was very painful when we were together the first go round. I'm afraid of that ... of a lot of hidden things, and that leading to more hidden things and more lies.

[00:03:30]

Speaker 4: And do you have any sense as to where he learned this fantastic trait?

Speaker 1: No.

Speaker 4: Do you?

Speaker 3: I've some ideas, yeah.

Speaker 4: Tell me.

Speaker 3: My grandfather.

Speaker 4: That ... three generations we're going.

Speaker 3: Yeah, well I spent a lot of time with my grandparents as a kid. My parents were completely honest. If they told a lie in their life, it was a long time ago. My grandfather was a drunk, alcoholic, philanderer, had many women on the side. Traumatized my mother. And you know, he was charming. I mean, he was charming Robert Mitchum looking kind of guy. He didn't tell the truth a lot of the time but-

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Speaker 4: Got away with it.

[00:04:30]

Speaker 3: Got away with it.

Speaker 4: And you thought, "That's a great man." That's a model?

Speaker 3: As a little kid, yeah. I saw him as this big, strong ... he was in World War II, and he was rugged and ran a sawmill. And he was handsome and charming. I never saw like these other sides of him being this philanderer or alcoholic.

[00:05:00]

Speaker 4: So, when you watched your grandfather, you registered it as-

Speaker 3: I saw it-

Speaker 4: Charming liar who can seduce anybody, and gets away with it. And the real man is not the good guy, the sweet guy?

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: You can either be a good man or a real man.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: And you picked a real man.

Speaker 3: I guess so, yeah. My dad's a good man.

[00:05:30]

Speaker 4: But you don't admire your dad nearly as much as your grandfather?

Speaker 3: I didn't. I do now.

Speaker 4: You do now?

[00:06:00] I imagined him living with that tension inside of him. On the one hand, a deep desire to be known and to be seen, and to have somebody really enter all the way to the basement. And at the same time, a deep fear that anybody that will ever really go look there, will never wanna go live in that house. And it's really both ends. And I track both experiences of him. I track his defense, which is the liar. And I track his fear, which is the little boy that thinks that if he doesn't invent a big story, he will remain so small and he will be completely ignored and overlooked.

[00:06:30] It comes automatically to you? To lie?

Speaker 3: Absolutely.

Speaker 4: On anything? Even when you don't have to?

Speaker 3: Absolutely. I'll be like ... an example will be like, somebody be like, "Oh, do you know this band?" I'm like, "Oh yes. I've heard them many times." And have no idea what the hell it is.

Speaker 4: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 3: I think in a way it's to make people happy. To please people. I don't like letting people down-

Speaker 4: Or to make yourself more important?

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: Which one?

Speaker 3: The latter-

Speaker 4: To impress?

[00:07:00]

Speaker 3: Yeah. To impress. To make myself seem more educated and worldly and interesting. Whereas, I have an issue with self esteem. I have my entire life, and low level depression and I think in some ways I'm trying to mask that, or was. I feel like as I've gotten older, now after these things happened, I'm consciously really, really trying to halt that. Trying to stop lying. Now I'm putting more thought into my words and how those words affect other people. My family, my daughter, person sitting next to me. I try to be conscious of it.

[00:07:30]

Speaker 4: Can I ask you something?

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: If you spend your life trying to be more or other than what you are because you don't think that what you are is enough, and so you constantly inflate yourself and impress yourself, as much as others, and fabricate and invent things, what would happen the day you would actually see yourself within a more realistic framework? Have you ever had the chance to look at yourself in reality? Or it's always an idealization?

[00:08:00]

Speaker 3: There's moments, whether via therapy or in conversations or arguments or fights where she will bring up, frankly, really horrible things I've done and said, and I'm like, "Damn, I would not want to ..."

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Speaker 3: There's moments, whether via therapy or in conversations or arguments or fights where she will bring up, frankly, really horrible things I've done and said, and I'm like, "Damn, I would not want to ..."

Speaker 4: To be with me?

Speaker 3: Yeah. Or, "I wouldn't wanna be that person. I don't wanna be that person."

Speaker 4: Do you look down on her for being so kind? That's a strange question.

Speaker 3: I have.

Speaker 4: You have. You think if she was really more confident-

Speaker 3: Yeah.

[00:09:00]

Speaker 4: Powerful, she would have already long have sent you to the wolves?

Speaker 3: Yeah. Absolutely.

Speaker 4: You know that?

Speaker 1: I did send him to the wolves for about five minutes-

Speaker 4: Thank you for being so understanding.

Speaker 3: Absolutely. That was hard-

Speaker 1: That's hard. It's sad-

Speaker 4: You understand. It's like, you like the fact that she's kind but in fact you look down upon the fact that she's kind because you think if she was really strong, powerful, and confident, she would have already have said, "Get the fuck out of here."

Speaker 3: Yeah.

[00:09:30]

Speaker 4: If you live with a sense of self-loathing, and that you don't feel worthy, the people who like you must be fools or dumb or blind because if they really were smart and insightful and strong and confident, they would see what you see. And what you see is not particularly liked. That is the distortion that comes with the self-loathing.

[00:10:00] And so, when I say, "Would you respect her more if she had said enough is enough and she put a limit to this?" I know that it's a mixed statement for him. Part of him probably appreciates deeply her kindness, and part of him looks down upon her kindness.

And you have your answer to your question?

Speaker 1: I do.

[00:10:30]

Speaker 4: I mean, you won't at the end of today leave here in a state of faith and trust. It would be delusional.

Speaker 1: I know. I know. I didn't have hopes that that would all be in place.

Speaker 4: I would rather him tell you, "I lie compulsively because it gives me access to the person I wanna be and that I never felt I could be. But of course, as a result, I've never been able to become." That is probably the best you can have him tell you is that he's ... he knows what he does and that he would like not to do it, but this is not gonna disappear just overnight or with a promise.

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Speaker 1: I know that. I know that. I care about him so much though, I wanna believe-

[00:11:30]

Speaker 4: No, but if you want to believe, then you come like him because he also goes around continuously wanting to believe.

Speaker 1: You're right.

Speaker 4: That's part of why he fabulates the whole time.

Speaker 3: No other woman's ever held me accountable. Ex-wife. Relationships in the past. My mother.

Speaker 4: Say more.

Speaker 3: No one's ever called me out on my lies and deception. My marriage, like, I could do anything. And I did. And past relationships, yeah, you just, you know, using silver tongue to kind of get out of stuff. Or telling a lie so intricately woven that I would begin to believe it. Even with her I've made up elaborate tales that most people wouldn't do to cover up a lie, and then tell another lie to cover that up just becomes a Sisyphean ball of lies that's coming back, and you having to keep pushing it up. And, I don't wanna do that anymore. It's exhausting.

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[00:12:30]

But, no one's ever held me accountable. You know, I used to flirt with other women and do things like that. In front of everyone ... in front of all my friends, and just no one ever held me accountable for it. I mean, only a few people in my life have ever called me a cheater. Her being one, therapist being another. That's it. So, I've never been held accountable. I've always been able to get away with it.

[00:13:00]

Speaker 4: Do you know it's interesting because I'm listening to you, and I'm thinking of it from a different angle. I can hear very well when you say, "Nobody has held me accountable." But another way of looking at it is maybe nobody even bothers telling you because they don't even expect anything.

Speaker 3: Yeah. I can see that.

Speaker 1: Why is this different?

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Speaker 3: Well, initial reaction is it pisses me off that someone has caught on. I mean, she can see like deep inside my psyche. Like more so than any ... like she knows me better than I know myself.

Speaker 4: Well she grew up with one like you.

Speaker 3: Yeah, that's true. That is true.

Speaker 4: Takes one to know one.

[00:14:00] There's so many things happening in a very short amount of time here. You know, part of me says to him, "You know, when people don't hold you accountable, you may think that it's because you got away with it. But sometimes it's because they don't even respect you enough to even expect more from you." He has asked, "Why do people let me cheat in front of them while I'm married? Why does nobody say anything?" And it's not because you're so amazing. It's sometimes because you're so low anyway, that why should we even bother asking from you?

[00:14:30] And then she says, "Why is this different?" And the question is also a way of asking, "What is so special about me? How am I different than all these other people?" And he begins by saying, "It's because you call me out on this. Because you recognize me." And I say, "Yes, she does recognize a cheater. She grew up with one. She actually has known you before she ever met you. You are a part of her history too. You're not just a part of your own history."

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Speaker 3: No one has ever seen me for who I am, per se. No one's been able to dig through those onion skins to get down to my core being of shitty guy. And, I realize that more and more and more these days that I have not been a good person. The other day I was thinking, "There are more people on this Earth who dislike me than like me because of things I've done." And that made me feel horrible. I mean, stopped me in my tracks.

[00:15:30] I didn't feel guilt about what I did in the past. But that's creeping in more and more and more in my life these days.

Speaker 4: Guilt or shame?

Speaker 3: Both. Both. I'm ashamed of what I've done. I wouldn't wish that upon anyone what I've done to her and others.

Speaker 4: And what would exist instead? If you don't lie, you have to deal with reality.

[00:16:00]

Speaker 3: Yeah. What would exist? I don't know. A reality that I feel that I have to accept who I am, and accept my limitations and accept my flaws.

Speaker 4: What? What would you need to accept?

Speaker 3: That I've been a liar, a cheater. I have incredibly low self esteem.

Speaker 4: What does that mean?

Speaker 3: It means I don't really like myself.

Speaker 4: Because what? What does that mean?

Speaker 3: When I was younger, it was more for physical reasons. Like I'm not tall, and I was never the best athlete. I would, you know, get poked fun of for things like that and now-

[00:16:30]

Speaker 4: Were you bullied?

Speaker 3: I'm sorry?

Speaker 4: Were you bullied?

Speaker 3: Yeah. Yeah.

Speaker 4: A little or a lot?

Speaker 3: A little. Even through college, I was bullied.

Speaker 4: And how did you square it? I'll show you? I'll be back? You think you have one up on me? How do you know?

[00:17:00]

Speaker 3: I didn't bully. I didn't fight back. I just let them say it and then let it seep in and keep me up at night.

Speaker 4: It's easy to see the bad guy. It's more difficult to see the wounded boy. And when he says he was bullied a little, but then he tells me in the next sentence that it went all the way through college, I know that that little is not nearly as little as he would like it to think. And I can just see how he condensed years and years of suffering into this little sentence that is meant to go unnoticed. But that holds within it decades of pain and humiliation.

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Speaker 3: So, I guess in a sense then I was like, "All right, if I can't be a big guy physically, I'm gonna try to be a big guy other ways."

Speaker 4: Right.

Speaker 3: And then inflate.

Speaker 4: Yes, yes, yes, yes. If I can't be big in size, I'll be big in lies and stories. And I'll inflate myself. It makes a lot of sense.

Speaker 3: Yeah, and I never put those together until just now, honestly. I hurt with words but-

[00:18:30]

Speaker 4: But it's my ... this is an interesting competition between us and the what you call this? In English?

Speaker 3: Jackhammer?

Speaker 4: Yeah, the jackhammer. But, what happens when you hear things like that from people who don't care about hurting you is that sometimes you stop caring about hurting others. And that's what allows you to say the kind of stuff that you said.

[00:19:00]

Speaker 3: Being tough and I'm able to hurt people with words in ways that I would never do physically. Yeah. I use those words as weapons, for sure. You know, and I told her

[00:19:30]

when she was pregnant the second time to have some other guy raise the kid, not me. I can see now how that would just stab her. But at the time, I was fired up. I was fueled. I was drunk and I was like angry, and I-

Speaker 2: You angry or not?

Speaker 3: Yeah-

Speaker 1: You were scared that day.

Speaker 3: And I was scared.

Speaker 4: Of what?

Speaker 3: Losing my kid.

Speaker 4: [00:20:00] The reason he's scared is that he was afraid to lose his daughter from his first marriage, and that there would be a change in the custody arrangement if he was to have another child with this woman. He basically demanded that she have an abortion. And she got pregnant again. And so, as a result, not one but two abortions. It becomes clear that there are two primary people in his life, this woman and his daughter from his previous marriage.

[00:20:30] I mean I listen to you and all I'm thinking is how lonely you must be?

Speaker 3: I'm pretty lonely. And, you know, I have her and I have my kid. Yeah. Pretty lonely.

Speaker 4: What's it like for you to listen to all this?

Speaker 1: Wow. He'll-

Speaker 4: Can you convert all of this or is this-

[00:21:00] Speaker 1: Most of it, but it's nice to hear him be really super open and vulnerable. I feel a lot of compassion for him. I'm terrified still.

Speaker 4: That?

Speaker 1: That ... is it always gonna be like this? Like is this something that can be repaired, this behavior? What does that say about me that I've allowed it to happen? I will say I feel compassion because this can't be easy. I know you're lonely. You're a good friend to me.

[00:21:30] Speaker 3: Yeah. You know you're my best friend.

Speaker 4: But you see, I hear you say, "I've struggled my whole life to make myself bigger. And since I couldn't do it physically, I did it in many other ways." But I have a feeling that you've struggled your whole life in wanting to feel special, and in wanting to feel that somebody really noticed you. And so when he speaks this way, it awakens in you like he's through with me. I get to see the side of him that nobody else does. With me, he will change. I'm gonna be the one that's gonna give him the redemptive experience.

[00:22:00] Speaker 1: I'm not fully convinced of that.

Speaker 4: No?

[00:22:30]

Speaker 1: No.

Speaker 4: Okay.

Speaker 1: I'd like to be the person ... I'd like to help in some way. I feel like I do hold a mirror. Is it delusional to think that we do have something special and could be a catalyst for change in both of us?

Speaker 4: That's the big question, right?

Speaker 1: Yeah. Aren't I helping him to see things for what they really are?

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Speaker 4: While it may appear at first that she's weak and unsure, there is also a real defiance in her that basically says, "I know better than all of you what I'm doing because I am on a mission that none of you know about." And that mission had something deep to do with her own father, the story that she grew up in, and a promise that she had made to herself a long time ago that was now being played out with this man, of which he may not even know.

[00:23:30]

You both told me, "I have a propensity for chronic lying." And then you tell me, "I wanna trust." Something doesn't click. The first thing has to probably be, "I would like to know that he's not lying, and then maybe over time I learn to trust." But what you're wanting with what he's doing, it's a strange thing.

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Speaker 1: Meaning it's not-

Speaker 4: Meaning it's realistic that you don't trust him. On what basis would you trust him?

Speaker 1: Right. I agree.

Speaker 4: It makes sense what you're doing. Why would you trust him? And why would you tell him, the person who is maybe more honest than ever, maybe telling you how much he's not to be trusted? Don't do it. You may have to take the risk. And as you take the risk, over time, he may prove to you that it was a risk worth taking. But, you want the end at the beginning.

[00:24:30]

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 4: You want to start with the trust, whereas you may end up with the trust. With him, you can't start with the trust, and not with anything that has happened between the two of you. That's the piece that's kind of fantasy thinking. And you know it.

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Speaker 1: I do know it.

Speaker 4: You know it. You are smart. You're both smart people. You know, that's your version of telling yourself stories. He tells himself stories, but you have a version of that.

Speaker 3: We're intimate and we travel, and we do all of this stuff in secret. So, I was a secret as well. We're still a secret. Her friends and family don't know about us right now.

[00:25:30]

Speaker 1: No one knows we're here and no one knows we hang out.

Speaker 3: I think you're ashamed.

Speaker 1: So, they were ... I lost so many friends over the course of our initial relationship when we were public about it. And they were ... I confided in a lot of my close friends over the painful parts of that. And after a while, some of them were so tired of me sticking it out and not leaving that they left my life. I have since been able to rebuild friendships with most of those people.

[00:26:00]

Speaker 4: Because they think you came back to your senses?

Speaker 1: Yeah. But here I am.

Speaker 4: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 1: I can just hear my mom. I can see her. She'd be so worried.

[00:26:30]

Speaker 4: And she says what?

Speaker 1: I think it's-

Speaker 4: "Took me so many years to finally leave your philandering father. I see what you don't see."

Speaker 1: She blamed herself.

Speaker 4: Uh-huh. She blamed herself. That what, that she rendered you blind?

Speaker 1: Yeah. Sometimes I feel like she's a little bit ashamed of me, but also proud of me. Similar to my marriage, she held everything together for us. She was the one that was at every dance recital and at every concert. And my dad kinda came in and out more. His job was pretty demanding. Or he was off doing other things.

[00:27:00]

Speaker 4: Such as?

Speaker 1: Who knows? Well, having affairs.

Speaker 4: You know that?

Speaker 1: I do.

Speaker 4: Plural?

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Speaker 1: Yes. My first memory of that was when I was in kindergarten. And that played out in front of me and my brother ... my mom took us to spy on him and his lady friend ... running at the track together. And then, I know he had an affair with one of his students at the school where he worked, and it ended up ... I didn't know this until years later but we had to move very suddenly across the state right before I started high school. And it was because of that. He lost his job. Or was asked to leave. And I know he had others when I was in high school and beyond. And something was the catalyst for my mom finally having enough when I was about 20. I was in college.

[00:28:00]

Speaker 4: All of this remains a secret?

Speaker 1: I'd say he knows that we know but we've never had a very frank conversation about it. When I told my dad that I was ... I told him in two parts. I was leaving a marriage. I left that alone for a little while. And they seemed understanding about that. He seemed understanding. And then I told him that I had met someone else. And that was a big part of it. And he didn't speak to me for months. He was so mad. So mad at me. He was so mad and so ashamed. He told my entire family before I got a chance to tell anyone. Most of them don't talk to me now.

[00:28:30]

Speaker 3: Which is ironic.

Speaker 1: Wow.

[00:29:00]

Speaker 4: But what did you do with him?

Speaker 1: With my dad?

Speaker 4: Just ... you just collapsed and got upset? Or did you-

Speaker 1: I just told him that it was a shame that I didn't get to tell them. I don't think I got nearly mad enough. I think I was ... I still am like riddled with shame and guilt for hurting my husband and my son.

Speaker 4: So, when your father shamed you-

Speaker 1: My friends-

[00:29:30]

Speaker 4: You told, "He's right. I deserve it."

Speaker 1: I think I do.

Speaker 4: Okay, now I understand. Mm-hmm (affirmative). And how do you deal with the discrepancy between how you saw yourself and how you acted? Because this is not just about a type of person. That has to do with circumstances of life too. So many people, the majority of people, never thought this would happen to them.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 4: But what's the story that you tell yourself?

[00:30:00]

Speaker 1: That I was kind of just wandering aimlessly through my marriage. I was really missing intimacy. We didn't have any in my marriage.

Speaker 3: It was dead in my marriage too. And then we met, and it was just like ...

Speaker 1: Well, not right away.

Speaker 3: To me, and inside, in terms of attraction.

[00:30:30]

Speaker 1: We opened up though about our-

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Similar longings-

Speaker 3: Yeah, we spoke about that-

Speaker 1: In our marriages.

Speaker 3: How unfulfilled we were intimately, emotionally. I don't know if I'd ever ... I think I'd been in love maybe once in my life before. And I was deeply in love, and I still am in love with her. I was willing to leave everything behind. My wife, my life, time with my kid. But then I realized how important that was to me. And it really wore me down. You know, living with her and her son, and not having my child? Really messed me up more than I realized at the time.

[00:31:00]

Speaker 1: He threatened to go back home-

Speaker 3: I threatened-

Speaker 1: Many times.

Speaker 3: To go back home many times.

Speaker 4: To whom? Why did you have to threaten her for that?

Speaker 3: Because I missed my child so much.

Speaker 4: And why did that have to come with a threat?

[00:31:30]

Speaker 3: Because I couldn't have my kid.

Speaker 4: Why did you need to threaten her?

Speaker 3: I don't know. It's ... I don't know. I was misdirected, and I just think a lot of the way I treated her in the past was because of that. Because of my inner sadness and rage of not having my child, for leaving a dead marriage, which would have been even more horrible for my kid to witness.

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Speaker 4: I understand your reasons but it's a very, you know ... it's one thing to tell her, "I miss my daughter." It's another thing to threaten her because of it.

Speaker 3: I know.

Speaker 4: Why do you kick the one and only person who's actually right there with you and really does not know how to put limits?

Speaker 3: Yeah. Maybe that's why. Because I know I could push it. Because I know I could get away with whatever and she's there.

[00:32:30]

Speaker 4: See, to me, this is what you need to work on.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 3: Yeah. It is.

Speaker 4: This is the essence of what goes on here. Not, "Oh the stories are wrong." That's the décor. But this, this dynamics-

Speaker 1: Limits-

Speaker 4: [00:33:00] It's limits for you, yes. It's like every time he kicks you, you come back with the question, "How can I trust you?" And I'm like, "You're missing a few steps in between."

Speaker 1: Why do I do that?

Speaker 4: Why do you do that? Let's meet. I just met you. I don't know.

Speaker 1: I know. Rhetorical question.

Speaker 4: But you seem to be a rather introspective person who does a fair amount of thinking. You tell me. I am experiencing the anger that you're not experiencing. Something is off.

[00:33:30]

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 4: I am vicariously experiencing the feelings that you are denying. And I put the words to put limits or it's not just to be angry. It's also ... there's a lot of things in this but it does have something to do with no collapsing. It's like your father does a dirty trick on you, and you collapse. And you hunch over, rather than actually sit and know. Of all people? You certainly do not have moral authority here. And don't confuse me with you, and put your shame on me because you think that the apple didn't fall far from the tree.

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[00:34:30] What I'm trying to understand is, is it that you have an independent spirit? And you say, "I don't just go with the herd, and I don't just blame and shame people because that's the convention. And I can distinguish between having a philandering father and a good father at the same time, which doesn't have to be contradictory." He may have been a shitty husband, but he may have been a good father. Is it that you think, "I'm smarter than all the other women? They will all come and go, and I'll be the one to stay. I'm the one constant. And I'm the one that he can't fool. And I'm the one who sees through him. And in some way, I'm the special one, in that sense."

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Speaker 1: With my dad, you mean?

Speaker 4: Yeah.

Speaker 1: Same here.

Speaker 4: Say more.

Speaker 1: I feel similar with you.

Speaker 3: God.

Speaker 1: It doesn't feel ... my relationship with my dad in that sense feels similar to my relationship with you.  
[00:35:30]

Speaker 4: Say more.

Speaker 1: I feel like I see right through you, but I have so much compassion for you.

Speaker 3: Yeah. I mean, you know when I'm lying. You're like a human polygraph. To me, you-

Speaker 1: Your eyes change-

Speaker 3: Exactly when ... like no one has ever called me out on that. No one has ever known I was lying before.

Speaker 4: No, listen. She's had very good training.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: She came well prepared.

[00:36:00]

Speaker 3: Yeah. So, you know, just a shift in my eyes or if I tilt my head a certain way or get my hands a little fidgety, like she'll know.

Speaker 4: So, what's it like to live with a human polygraph?

Speaker 3: When I-

Speaker 4: Has he called you like that before?

Speaker 1: No, but that's what it feels like.

Speaker 3: I felt like I had to be cautious. But now, I actually really appreciate it.

Speaker 1: Do you?

[00:36:30]

Speaker 3: I do. Okay so-

Speaker 4: Okay, so you think you have extra powers through the lying. And you think you have extra powers through being an astute polygraph.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 1: I do feel like-

Speaker 4: You're meant to be.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: You see, you are actually in a competition with him. But in a competition as in, "We'll see who does it best." But you pretend to come and ask me if you can trust me rather ... that's kind of almost a fake question. Because you know the answer is no.

[00:37:00]

Speaker 1: I know the answer-

Speaker 4: Not now, for sure. But that's not why you're with him. You're with him because you're going to show him, your dad, and many men that there are polygraphs who will outdo all of them.

Speaker 1: I don't want that.

Speaker 4: I didn't say you want it. I'm saying that that's the script you're in.

Speaker 1: I know.

Speaker 4: Is it?

Speaker 1: That makes sense.

[00:37:30]

Speaker 3: Yeah, you know, the way I see it ... when she had caught me in something, she gets satisfaction out of it.

Speaker 4: Yes. You have the eyes of the caught puppy, and she has the glee.

Speaker 3: Yeah, yeah. Aha.

Speaker 1: I don't know if glee's the right word.

Speaker 3: What? You definitely seem satisfied.

Speaker 4: No, I didn't mean enjoy. I meant you feel vindicated.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 1: But it's painful.

[00:38:00]

Speaker 4: Of course it's painful. And you can ask yourself, " Why do I wanna put myself into that kind of situation?" I would ask myself that. I would bring that question to your therapist too. But, I am watching because your demeanor doesn't tell the full story. And I'm looking for, "What is she after? What is she doing? What's the hook for her? Besides that he's a charming, smart, fun to be with ..." I get that too.

Speaker 1: And we have so much together.

[00:38:30]

Speaker 4: Yeah, but because of your entire community, which you stand to lose so much, none of this has moved you because there's a part inside of you that says, "I know better than all of you." And that has very little to do with him. That all pre-exists.

[00:39:00]

My office is in the middle of New York City. And that means that, I have to contend with sirens of the firetrucks, with jackhammers, and today is particularly bad.

Speaker 3: Well, you did know these things about me when we got together. I told you the total truth about my past.

Speaker 1: Not the total truth.

Speaker 3: Well, a lot of the truth.

Speaker 1: But, until I experienced the lies and the limbo of our relationship, I thought that, at least after marriages for each other, I thought this was so different.

[00:39:30]

Speaker 4: Yes.

Speaker 3: It is different in many ways.

Speaker 1: I thought that I was immune to those things. That was dumb. I mean, you told me after a handful of months being together, we had a big fight about something, and you said you've never been able to feel empathy. You've always lied ... and all my red flags went up but I did nothing about them.

[00:40:00]

Speaker 3: Here we are ...

Speaker 4: The grand illusion of love is that when you say that to someone then they think, "This is all changing because of me."

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 4: That's what I mean by special.

Speaker 1: I know.

Speaker 3: She thinks ... her goal is to change me to being this empathetic, honest, devoted, [00:40:30] compassionate man. And those things are in me, they are. But the pressure to change on a dime, it just makes me ... not have resentment per se ... but makes me be a little bit like, "Hey, hold on I can do this on my own speed."

Speaker 4: No. I'm gonna add a piece to this, okay?

Speaker 3: Yeah, please.

Speaker 4: You didn't ... because what you're saying is that you didn't become a chronic liar or [00:41:00] you didn't become even sociopathic for no reason. When she pushes you to change like that, there is a part of you that feels that she doesn't really have a compassion or an empathy for you.

Speaker 3: Yeah. It makes me think that she's doing it for her own reasons.

Speaker 4: And that you didn't become like that out of no reason. That there was plenty of [00:41:30] your own pain and your own suffering and your own boyhood led to you become this way. And this was the best protection and adaptive shield you could have.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: You wanna fuck with me? I'll fuck you.

Speaker 3: Yeah.

Speaker 4: And I won't even have any remorse about it. And when you pressure him, it makes him feel that you don't understand the pain that lies underneath. I don't think you mean that, but that's what I think she reacts to.

[00:42:00]

Speaker 1: The entire time I was with the other man here for last almost year, he was a bug in my year ... "Leave him. I'm gonna change. I'm gonna do all the work. You're gonna see. It's gonna be different. Leave him. Be with me. I'm different. I'm going to change." I left. We broke up. And now, you're like, "When I'm ready. Don't pressure me." That's a big change of two-

[00:42:30]

Speaker 4: Well, different circumstances when you were with the other man, he was taller.

Speaker 3: Yeah. He was a musician in a band. Tons of friends.

Speaker 4: Yeah. So, he had a mission.

[00:43:00] As we were winding down to the end of the session, and it became clear to me that I would have to punctuate the possibility for a future together and if so, under what terms? I began to think that the noises of the city was speaking to us, and conspiring to tell this couple that there was an interference that they couldn't overcome.

You people should be friends. You would be tremendous friends for each other. I'm not sure you're meant for couple. Sorry.

Speaker 1: It's okay.

Speaker 4: Not that I have the truth on any of this-

Speaker 3: Yeah, yeah.

[00:43:30]

Speaker 4: But now, what you can offer each other, you have a much better chance to make good use of it as friends than if you try to become a family ... blended family with ... I'm not so sure. Meaning you want each other in your lives, you feel that ... what you call that other thing. Have each other in your life. You have a better chance to experience the beauty of all of that if you stay good friends with a real deep connection with each other, than if you try to become a couple.

[00:44:00] If they wanna preserve the good stuff they have between them, they'd better be friends. That doesn't mean I'm right. But, since they came asking me, "Do we have a chance? Can we be a couple? Do we have a future?" And so forth, I felt that I needed to share my impression with them at the end, which is, you have some wonderful things with each other. Cultivate it as friends. Better chance to stay in

[00:44:30] each other's lives if you are friends then if you go for the next divorce.