4th of July

 Do you ever have one of those moments, forever ingrained in your mind, where you realize you have to change? Alter the course you’re on because it’s not the end you want. For some people it’s the major their going to school for, or who they want to spend the rest of their life with. For others it’s their lifestyle or behavior, in every case though that moment is a big one. You see, I have this curse of being incredibly self-destructive, so I was pretty bad off when I finally had this moment.

 The scene I will never forget is laying my bathtub. So fucked up, the room is blurry and spinning, shaking like a cold Chihuahua, puke in my hair, I didn’t care if I died. Sounds like an average Friday night for the rest of my generation, no big deal right? It was 1:30 in the afternoon on a Monday.

“But it’s the Fourth of July” I justify to myself.

 The truth is, I was lying in the bathtub because I couldn’t really perform basic functions and I thought was the safest spot in case I needed to puke again. This momentary paralysis gave my mind lots of time to wander though. How did I get here? Everything hurts.

 Like every new adult, I moved out and set out to explore who I am. I was confident I was prepared to deal with anything that came my way. About six months into my independency, I jumped into adulthood with both feet when I met David. I wasn’t ready for David. This was a gentleman who had permanently messed up his life so bad that he adjusted by becoming the best manipulator known to man. So charismatic and enigmatic that people could know his entire background and still be willing to give him a chance. But like any good at his job parasite, he was hard to get rid of.

 It wasn’t long into our association that I realized how trapped I was. Unfortunately I reached the trigger point, which had been building throughout my entire childhood, which caused me to say “fuck it” about this time too. My childhood was nightmarish and strict so I never had the opportunity to properly process it all until now. Due to that whole self-destructive thing, that process involved a lot of drugs.

 Everybody has a drug of choice. I knew before I ever tried it that mine is cocaine. It isn’t something I laid awake at night thinking about but I did know it about myself. Lucky for me, shortly after David weaseled himself into a decently stable position in my life, it comes out he likes to smoke a little crack. I had had some experience with this drug before and I was stubborn with the whole “I can handle anything that comes my way” attitude, that I didn’t protest much when he called the dealer occasionally. That occasionally turned into weekly, then to nightly. I had completely stopped caring about what was happening to me or how it was affecting my relationship with the people who were close to me.

 Smoking crack and pot is one thing, but that lifestyle and David’s encouragement led me to try almost anything, heroin was where I drew the line. Some things I learned:

1. I am not impervious to addiction.
2. I cannot hold my own when it comes to hallucinogens.
3. My body has the tendency to physically reject things that are bad for me.
4. How to spot the signs of any toxic person.

I think I knew these things early on but it wasn’t until that low point in the bath tub that I decided to stop ignoring them.

 The truth is there was still a very small part of me that refused to not see the good in life. I actually had to choose between spending a cute afternoon with a nice, clean living guy who wanted to go out and see the fireworks with me, and a knock out day of drugs. I do regret not going on that date, I even had to lie to him and say I was working because he didn’t really know this side of me. By this time I had been living this way for at least 9 months. I’m underweight, my hygiene is barely acceptable, my attitude is shit, and I’m struggling with an addiction that makes me want to kill myself. So when David called wanting to celebrate the day with margaritas I was ready in about 10 minutes.

Waking up that morning I did not have the plan to get as messed up as I did. But it seems like spending the day on drugs was David’s hobby. So we go to our margarita spot, I’m not old enough to drink but I had obtained an ID that got me into most places. We had been here more than a few times, and always tipped about 50%, so when we walked in we were greeted with open arms. The same guy always helped us out, it wasn’t a big establishment so he also made our drinks. In bars it’s a pretty common practice by bartenders to “hook up” the regular customers that tip well, the drunker they are the more money you’re likely to make. This wasn’t lost on the waiter and he made ours with at least twice as much as normal. Being a small person, three drinks in with 6 shots of tequila total, I had lost my filter and couldn’t walk straight. For me this would’ve been enough for the day, I would have went home and relaxed but David looked at the clock and being just noon, was confident the day was just getting started.

Our main drug was crack but that is one of the most expensive experiences out there. Not so drunk David is driving us and doesn’t want to go home yet, “Hey lets go downtown and get a couple sticks, then we can relax on the porch until it’s time for fireworks.”

“Alright sweet we’ll just party today!”, a pretty drunk, apathetic me responds.

Sticks is referencing the drug spice. You can usually buy them already rolled into a joint, hence the name “stick”. We had only done this drug once before and while it wasn’t the best experience ever it didn’t fuck with me too bad. So we drive downtown, enjoying our buzz we’re loud and obnoxious. It’s July and 105 degrees outside, sun beating down on my lap, my visions making it hard to focus on the road so I feel just a little car sick. Overall I don’t feel too bad, enjoy my buzz, David runs into the homeless shelter and finds us some spice. His buzz must have been wearing off or his tolerance is so high he didn’t get much of one but he wants to pull over in this Wienerschnitzel parking lot and take a few hits before we get back. It doesn’t matter much to me so we pull in and the sun is beating directly on me through the window.

 Now before I continue, I want to go back and reference the things I had learned about myself but ignored.

2. I cannot hold my own when it comes to hallucinogens.

3. My body has the tendency to physically reject things that are bad for me.

 At this point the alcohol had been sitting in my stomach for at least 30 mins. This was around the time my body started to refuse to process alcohol. It would sit in my stomach, I’d get a pretty nice buzz, but it wouldn’t move out of my stomach, sitting there until it got upset enough to throw it all up. I hadn’t caught on to this whole process until later down the road but I can now recognize it had started around this day. So the alcohol is sitting in my stomach slowly making me nauseous, sun is giving me heat stroke, ac didn’t work in car, and my equilibrium is off from being inebriated. He gets the stick lit and going and passes it to me, I’m used to smoking pot so I take one large rip and hold it in. Time slowed down in that moment.

 Everything around me became painfully clear. The cute family walking out of the Wienerschnitzel, the toddler in the woman’s arms squirming, dropped his shoe. A big SUV had pulled up on our left, five people are piling out, and everybody’s smiling. There’s a small white dog playing fetch with its owner in a park next to the parking lot. David is turning up the music, head banging to the music. My favorite purse is on the floor next to my feet. And I know I’m about to puke before I could say the words to warn anyone.

 True enough as soon as I exhale my stomach starts to empty its contents. That one moment of clarity turned into a blur and I couldn’t even open the door. My stomach had started its revolt and it was too late to fight back. For a solid 10 mins I sat in the heat of the passenger seat, heaving until there was nothing left and then some until my body figured out I couldn’t puke up my stomach itself. Everything around me became hazy, I can hear David “What the hell happened!”, “There’s so many people around, keep it together, they’re going to call the police!”, “Shit, let’s get out of here”.

 I’m shaking at this point, my thin malnourished body doesn’t have any more resources to process everything going through my blood. But I’m higher than I’ve ever been, really a mind altering perception on everything around me. I smile at David.

“What the hell are you smiling at? There’s puke in your hair!” He says in disgust.

“Why won’t you get out of my life?” I ask him still grinning like a fool.

“If you really wanted me to stop calling, you wouldn’t have gone out with me today” he responds.

 That’s fair, I reflect as we pull up to my apartment. He hasn’t been allowed at my place for some time but I can’t operate properly so I have no choice but to let him in. He takes full advantage of the opportunity and helps me undress and get into the bathtub.

“Damn, still fine as ever” he says as he leaves me to sober up in the tub.

 This actually makes me feel good about myself and I start grinning again. I can’t help but feel guilty though. He’s right, if I didn’t want him around I wouldn’t have agreed to go out. I can justify to myself all I want to that I did it for the holiday, or I just needed to take a break and have some fun but I know I just wanted to get messed up. So I take this moment and I sit. I feel. I take note of everything I’m experiencing. I can’t quite see straight, my body is numb and cold, and I’m shaking. My mouth is dry and I need water, I can feel the puke that dried in my hair. I smell like margaritas. I look at the ceiling and embrace it. I want to feel bad, I soak it up until I finally start to feel determined. This isn’t a good place for me, I’ll be dead before long, I have to change. When I can stand I’ll tell David to get the hell out of my place and I’ll stand up for what’s good for me I decide.

That’s when David walked back into the bathroom. “You’ve got about 15 minutes to clean up, I just called Rico.” The crack dealer.