

art of the con

art of the con is a captivating subject that explores the intricate world of deception, scams, and confidence tricks. This article delves into the origins, psychology, and techniques behind cons, revealing how con artists manipulate trust, emotions, and social dynamics to achieve their goals. Readers will gain valuable insights into famous historical cons, common modern schemes, and the subtle art of persuasion that makes these tricks so effective. We'll also discuss the warning signs of cons, the devastating impacts on victims, and practical strategies for protecting oneself against fraud. By understanding the art of the con, individuals can become more vigilant, informed, and resilient in a world where deception lurks in many forms. This comprehensive guide is designed to educate, inform, and empower readers with knowledge about the techniques and psychology behind scams and con artistry.

- Understanding the Art of the Con
- History and Evolution of Confidence Tricks
- Psychology Behind Con Artists
- Common Techniques Used in Cons
- Famous Cons and Scams Throughout History
- Modern Cons: Digital Age Deception
- Recognizing and Preventing Cons
- Impact of Cons on Victims and Society

Understanding the Art of the Con

The art of the con refers to the skillful execution of deception for personal gain. Con artists, also known as confidence tricksters, exploit human vulnerabilities—such as greed, trust, and fear—to manipulate their targets. The essence of a con lies in gaining the victim's confidence before exploiting it. This sophisticated form of trickery is not merely about lying; it often involves elaborate planning, psychological manipulation, and a deep understanding of social dynamics. The art of the con thrives in environments where trust can be established quickly, and where individuals are susceptible to persuasion. Whether in financial scams, romance frauds, or elaborate Ponzi schemes, the techniques vary but the underlying principles remain consistent: misdirection, manipulation, and exploitation of human nature.

History and Evolution of Confidence Tricks

Origins of Confidence Schemes

The history of confidence tricks dates back centuries, with documented cases as early as the 18th century. Early cons often involved street hustles, gambling scams, and simple frauds. The term “confidence man” emerged in the mid-1800s, epitomized by tricksters who would gain a victim’s trust before swindling them. These schemes thrived in bustling cities where anonymity and opportunity converged.

Evolution Over Time

As society evolved, so did the sophistication of cons. The 20th century saw a rise in large-scale financial frauds, including stock market manipulations and pyramid schemes. Con artists adapted to new technologies and social trends, always seeking innovative ways to exploit unsuspecting victims. The digital age has further transformed the art of the con, with cybercriminals using phishing, identity theft, and online scams to reach global audiences.

Psychology Behind Con Artists

Traits and Motivations

Successful con artists possess specific psychological traits, including charisma, persuasive abilities, and a lack of empathy. Their motivation is often financial gain, but some are driven by a desire for power or thrill. These individuals excel at reading people, identifying weaknesses, and tailoring their approach to each victim.

Manipulation Techniques

The psychology of the con is rooted in manipulation. Con artists use flattery, emotional appeals, and social proof to create a façade of trustworthiness. They often exploit cognitive biases, such as authority bias, scarcity, and reciprocity, to influence decision-making. By establishing rapport and presenting themselves as credible, they lower the victim’s defenses and increase their susceptibility to deception.

- Charisma and charm to gain trust
- Use of urgency and pressure tactics
- Appealing to emotions and desires
- Creating a sense of exclusivity

- Impersonating authority figures

Common Techniques Used in Cons

Social Engineering

Social engineering is a cornerstone of the art of the con. It involves manipulating individuals into divulging confidential information or performing actions against their interests. Techniques include pretexting, baiting, and impersonation, all designed to exploit human psychology rather than technical vulnerabilities.

Persuasion and Misdirection

Con artists are masters of persuasion, using storytelling, distractions, and misdirection to keep victims focused on false narratives. They often create complex scenarios that appear legitimate, diverting attention from inconsistencies and red flags. Misdirection allows the perpetrator to control the flow of information and guide the victim's responses.

False Promises and Guarantees

Many cons hinge on the promise of guaranteed returns, exclusive opportunities, or miraculous solutions. By offering something seemingly too good to be true, con artists entice victims to ignore skepticism and take risks. These promises are often backed by fabricated documents, testimonials, or staged demonstrations.

Famous Cons and Scams Throughout History

The Ponzi Scheme

One of the most notorious cons in history is the Ponzi scheme, named after Charles Ponzi in the early 20th century. This fraudulent investment scheme pays returns to earlier investors using funds from new participants, rather than legitimate profits. The illusion of high returns lures new victims until the scheme collapses.

The Great Impostor

Ferdinand Waldo Demara, known as "The Great Impostor," assumed multiple identities—including surgeon, monk, and prison warden—using forged credentials and confidence to deceive institutions and individuals. His exploits highlight the power of social engineering and the ease with which trust can be manipulated.

Art Forgery Scams

Art forgery has plagued collectors and museums for centuries. Talented forgers create convincing replicas of famous artworks, passing them off as originals to unsuspecting buyers. These scams often involve collusion with dealers, fabricated provenance, and elaborate backstories to legitimize the pieces.

Modern Cons: Digital Age Deception

Phishing and Online Scams

With the advent of the internet, the art of the con has migrated online. Phishing scams use fraudulent emails and websites to steal sensitive information, such as passwords and credit card numbers. These cons exploit trust in digital communications and often mimic reputable organizations to enhance credibility.

Social Media Manipulation

Social media platforms provide fertile ground for con artists to impersonate others, promote fake investment opportunities, and lure victims into romance scams. By leveraging the reach and anonymity of digital networks, perpetrators can target thousands of individuals with minimal effort.

Cryptocurrency and Investment Scams

The rise of cryptocurrencies has spawned numerous investment scams, including fake ICOs, pump-and-dump schemes, and fraudulent exchanges. These cons prey on the lack of regulation and the promise of quick financial gains, making it difficult for victims to recover lost assets.

Recognizing and Preventing Cons

Warning Signs of a Con

Awareness is the first line of defense against the art of the con. Common warning signs include requests for urgent action, secrecy, unsolicited offers, and demands for personal information. Victims are often pressured to act quickly, bypassing due diligence and rational decision-making.

Prevention Strategies

Protecting oneself from cons requires vigilance and skepticism. Individuals should verify

credentials, research opportunities, and refuse to share confidential information with unknown parties. Seeking independent advice and reporting suspicious behavior can help prevent victimization and disrupt ongoing scams.

1. Always verify the identity of individuals and organizations.
2. Be cautious of unsolicited offers and high-pressure tactics.
3. Research and seek independent opinions before making decisions.
4. Never share sensitive personal or financial information casually.
5. Report suspected scams to relevant authorities.

Impact of Cons on Victims and Society

Emotional and Financial Damage

The aftermath of a successful con can be devastating for victims. Many suffer significant financial losses, emotional trauma, and a loss of trust in others. The psychological impact often includes feelings of shame, guilt, and anxiety, making recovery challenging.

Broader Societal Effects

Cons and scams undermine trust in institutions, businesses, and social networks. They contribute to economic instability, increased regulatory scrutiny, and a culture of suspicion. The proliferation of sophisticated cons in the digital era demands greater awareness and collective action to safeguard communities and uphold integrity.

Legal and Regulatory Responses

Governments and regulatory bodies have implemented laws and enforcement strategies to combat cons and fraud. These include consumer protection regulations, financial oversight, and penalties for perpetrators. Education campaigns and public awareness initiatives are crucial for empowering individuals to recognize and resist deception.

Q&A: Trending and Relevant Questions About Art of the Con

Q: What is the art of the con?

A: The art of the con refers to the skillful practice of deception, manipulation, and persuasion to gain the trust of victims and exploit them for personal gain. It encompasses a variety of schemes, techniques, and psychological strategies used by con artists throughout history.

Q: How can someone identify a con artist?

A: Con artists often display excessive charm, pressure for quick decisions, requests for secrecy, and promises of guaranteed returns. Recognizing these behaviors and verifying credentials are key to identifying potential fraudsters.

Q: What are the most common types of cons in the digital age?

A: Phishing scams, online investment frauds, romance scams, and social media impersonations are among the most prevalent digital cons. These scams exploit technology and social networks to reach a wide audience.

Q: Why do people fall for confidence tricks?

A: People fall for cons due to psychological manipulation, emotional appeals, and cognitive biases. Con artists exploit trust, greed, fear, and the desire for quick gains to persuade victims to ignore warning signs.

Q: Can victims recover losses from cons?

A: Recovery depends on the nature of the scam and the jurisdiction. Some victims may recover losses through legal actions or insurance, but many cons result in irreversible financial and emotional damage.

Q: What are the warning signs of a classic con?

A: Warning signs include unsolicited offers, requests for personal information, urgency, secrecy, and offers that seem too good to be true. Vigilance and skepticism are vital in identifying these red flags.

Q: How have cons evolved with technology?

A: Technology has enabled con artists to operate anonymously, reach larger audiences, and create sophisticated scams. The digital age has introduced new methods, such as phishing, online identity theft, and cryptocurrency fraud.

Q: Who are some famous con artists in history?

A: Notable con artists include Charles Ponzi, Ferdinand Waldo Demara, Frank Abagnale Jr., and Victor Lustig. Their exploits have inspired books, movies, and ongoing fascination with the art of the con.

Q: What steps can individuals take to prevent being conned?

A: Individuals should verify identities, research offers, avoid sharing sensitive information, consult independent experts, and report suspicious activity to authorities to reduce their risk of falling victim to cons.

Q: How do cons impact society as a whole?

A: Cons erode trust in institutions, cause financial losses, disrupt markets, and increase regulatory burdens. They also contribute to a culture of suspicion and highlight the need for greater public awareness and education.

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The Art of the Con: Understanding Deception and its Psychological Mechanisms

The whispers of intrigue, the thrill of the chase, the shocking revelation – the "art of the con" captivates us. From elaborate financial schemes to seemingly harmless everyday tricks, deception holds a strange fascination. This post delves into the psychology behind successful cons, exploring the techniques used, the vulnerabilities they exploit, and the ethical implications of this fascinating, albeit often morally reprehensible, practice. We'll dissect the mechanics of deception, providing you with a deeper understanding of how cons work, not to encourage their use, but to equip you with the knowledge to protect yourself and others from falling victim.

H2: The Psychology of Persuasion: The Foundation of Every Con

At its core, the art of the con relies heavily on the principles of persuasion and psychological manipulation. Con artists are masters of human interaction, expertly exploiting our inherent biases and cognitive shortcuts. They build rapport, create a sense of urgency, and leverage our emotions to manipulate our decisions.

H3: Building Trust: The Crucial First Step

Before any significant manipulation can occur, the con artist must establish trust. This is often achieved through charm, flattery, shared experiences (real or fabricated), and mirroring - subtly mimicking the victim's body language and speech patterns to create a sense of connection. This rapport-building phase is crucial; once trust is established, the victim is far more likely to lower their defenses.

H3: Exploiting Cognitive Biases: The Shortcuts to Deception

Our brains utilize cognitive biases - mental shortcuts that simplify decision-making - which con artists expertly exploit. For example, the confirmation bias (seeking out information confirming pre-existing beliefs) and the anchoring bias (over-relying on the first piece of information received) are frequently leveraged. Con artists might present a seemingly credible piece of information early on, anchoring the victim's expectations and making subsequent, less believable claims seem more plausible.

H2: Techniques of the Con: From Classic Schemes to Modern Scams

The methods employed by con artists are diverse and constantly evolving, adapting to technological advancements and societal shifts. However, several core techniques remain prevalent.

H3: The "Big Con": Elaborate and Complex Schemes

The "big con" involves intricate planning and often multiple perpetrators, aiming for significant financial gain. These cons often involve carefully crafted narratives, fabricated identities, and a significant investment of time and resources. The sheer complexity and scale can overwhelm victims, making them less likely to question inconsistencies.

H3: Confidence Tricks: Playing on Human Psychology

Confidence tricks rely on the con artist's charisma and ability to project an air of authority and trustworthiness. These schemes often involve creating a sense of urgency or scarcity, pressuring victims into making quick decisions without proper consideration.

H3: Online Scams: The Digital Age of Deception

The internet has opened up new avenues for con artists. Phishing scams, romance scams, and investment fraud are just a few examples of the online cons that prey on unsuspecting individuals. The anonymity of the internet makes it easier for con artists to operate and difficult to trace.

H2: Protecting Yourself from Cons: Awareness and Prevention

While the art of the con is undeniably sophisticated, there are steps you can take to protect yourself and your loved ones.

H3: Develop Critical Thinking Skills: Question Everything

Cultivating a healthy skepticism and questioning information critically is crucial. Don't be afraid to ask questions, verify claims independently, and seek advice from trusted sources before making significant decisions, especially those involving money or personal information.

H3: Recognize Warning Signs: Red Flags of Deception

Learn to recognize common warning signs, such as unrealistic promises, high-pressure tactics, requests for immediate action, and inconsistencies in the story being presented. Trust your gut feeling; if something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

H3: Stay Informed: Educate Yourself on Current Scams

Staying informed about the latest scams and fraud techniques is essential. Follow reputable news sources and cybersecurity websites to stay abreast of emerging threats and learn how to protect yourself.

Conclusion

The "art of the con" reveals a fascinating interplay between human psychology, social engineering, and criminal activity. Understanding the techniques and vulnerabilities exploited by con artists empowers us to protect ourselves and others from becoming victims. By cultivating critical thinking, recognizing warning signs, and staying informed, we can significantly reduce our susceptibility to these elaborate deceptions. The key lies in awareness and a proactive approach to safeguarding ourselves against the persuasive allure of the con.

FAQs

1. Are all con artists inherently malicious? Not necessarily. Some might view their actions as a game

or a challenge, lacking a true sense of malice. However, the impact on victims is invariably harmful, regardless of the perpetrator's intentions.

2. Can I learn the art of the con for ethical purposes (e.g., security training)? While understanding the mechanics of deception can be valuable for security professionals, using these techniques unethically is illegal and morally wrong.
3. How can I report a con? Contact your local law enforcement agency or the appropriate regulatory body depending on the nature of the scam. Document all evidence, including communication records and financial transactions.
4. What's the difference between a con and a scam? The terms are often used interchangeably, but a "con" usually implies a more elaborate and carefully planned scheme, while a "scam" can be simpler and less intricate.
5. Are there legal protections against becoming a victim of a con? Depending on the nature of the con, various legal avenues may be available to recover losses or pursue legal action against the perpetrator. Consulting with a legal professional is advisable.

art of the con: The Art of the Con Anthony M. Amore, 2015-07-14 "Must reading for any true-crime fan . . . [a] diverse, colorful crew of art-gallery grifters and scammers . . . Highly recommended!" —Howie Carr, New York Times—bestselling author Art scams are today so numerous that the specter of a lawsuit arising from a mistaken attribution has scared a number of experts away from the business of authentication and forgery, and with good reason. Art scams are increasingly convincing and involve incredible sums of money. The cons perpetrated by unscrupulous art dealers and their accomplices are proportionately elaborate. Anthony M. Amore's *The Art of the Con* tells the stories of some of history's most notorious yet untold cons. They involve stolen art hidden for decades; elaborate ruses that involve the Nazis and allegedly plundered art; the theft of a conceptual prototype from a well-known artist by his assistant to be used later to create copies; the use of online and television auction sites to scam buyers out of millions; and other confidence scams incredible not only for their boldness but more so because they actually worked. Using interviews and newly released court documents, *The Art of the Con* will also take the reader into the investigations that led to the capture of the con men, who oftentimes return back to the world of crime. For some, it's an irresistible urge because their innocent dupes all share something in common: they want to believe. "An engrossing read about brazen, artful scams." —Kirkus Reviews "A riveting, fast-moving account of shameless fraudsters who wreak havoc on the art world. A must read!" —Brian T. Kelly, former Assistant United States Attorney

art of the con: The Art of the Con R. Paul Wilson, 2014-11-04 A sucker is still born every minute. In this modern and interconnected world, con-men are lurking everywhere – it's never been easier for them to dupe us, take from us, and infiltrate our lives. One of the world's leading and celebrated experts on con-games takes the reader through the history of cons, how they've been updated to the modern age, how they work, how to spot them, and how to protect yourself from being the victim of one. R. Paul Wilson is a con-man who works for the other side – our side. He has spent a lifetime learning, performing, studying, and teaching about the ins and outs of the con world in order to open up our eyes to the dangers lurking about us – and to show us how not to get taken. Paul has never made a living as a con-man, profiting off of marks – he has used his expertise throughout his life to help people avoid cons. In this fascinating book, Paul takes the reader through the history and developments of the con game, what elements from the past are based on basic human psychology and have stood the test of time, what has been updated for the modern era and how it's getting used in the computer age, the structure of how these cons work, and – most

importantly - how to recognize one, protect yourself and your loved ones, and avoid becoming just another sucker.

art of the con: Noah the Con Artist Elizabeth Gordon, 2021-02-01 Noah is an artist. Ever since he learned to draw, people have been impressed by his remarkable skills. When there's an art contest at The Club, Noah is certain that he'll win the big prize, until he sees Milo's painting. Noah is scared. Everyone expects Noah to win the contest. If he loses, he believes he'll lose the one skill he's most proud of. Noah is determined to beat Milo, but at what cost? Is winning worth compromising his values?

art of the con: Provenance Laney Salisbury, Aly Sujo, 2009-07-09 A tautly paced investigation of one the 20th century's most audacious art frauds, which generated hundreds of forgeries-many of them still hanging in prominent museums and private collections today Provenance is the extraordinary narrative of one of the most far-reaching and elaborate deceptions in art history. Investigative reporters Laney Salisbury and Aly Sujo brilliantly recount the tale of a great con man and unforgettable villain, John Drewe, and his sometimes unwitting accomplices. Chief among those was the struggling artist John Myatt, a vulnerable single father who was manipulated by Drewe into becoming a prolific art forger. Once Myatt had painted the pieces, the real fraud began. Drewe managed to infiltrate the archives of the upper echelons of the British art world in order to fake the provenance of Myatt's forged pieces, hoping to irrevocably legitimize the fakes while effectively rewriting art history. The story stretches from London to Paris to New York, from tony Manhattan art galleries to the esteemed Giacometti and Dubuffet associations, to the archives at the Tate Gallery. This enormous swindle resulted in the introduction of at least two hundred forged paintings, some of them breathtakingly good and most of them selling for hundreds of thousands of dollars. Many of these fakes are still out in the world, considered genuine and hung prominently in private houses, large galleries, and prestigious museums. And the sacred archives, undermined by John Drewe, remain tainted to this day. Provenance reads like a well-plotted thriller, filled with unforgettable characters and told at a breakneck pace. But this is most certainly not fiction; Provenance is the meticulously researched and captivating account of one of the greatest cons in the history of art forgery.

art of the con: *The Confidence Game* Maria Konnikova, 2016 A compelling investigation into the minds, motives, and methods of con artists and the people who fall for their cons over and over again.

art of the con: **Summary of R. Paul Wilson's The Art of the Con** Everest Media,, 2022-06-04T22:59:00Z Please note: This is a companion version & not the original book. Sample Book Insights: #1 The world is full of people looking for their next mark. To spot a potential victim, look in the mirror. You are just another mark waiting to be scammed. #2 I have always been interested in con artists. I have spent my life perfecting sleight of hand, performing magic, and studying the art of deception. I was greatly influenced by The Professor, Dai Vernon, one of the most important magicians of the twentieth century. #3 I have never felt the desire to make a living stealing from people. I have crossed the line from time to time, but I have resisted the temptation to go further. Con artists come in all shapes and sizes, and from every walk of life. It takes much stronger character to resist the urge to make easy money and to recognize the cost of a life lived in the shadows. #4 The Real Hustle is a BBC show that exposes the elements of a confidence trick, from crooked carnival games to big cons that steal billions from innocent people each year. I will share my insights into the mechanics of cons and scams.

art of the con: *Mr. Splitfoot* Samantha Hunt, 2016-01-05 The strange odysseys of two young women animate this "hypnotic and glowing" American gothic novel that blurs the line between the real and the supernatural (Gregory Maguire, The New York Times Book Review). A New York Times Editors' Choice A Paris Review Staff Pick Ruth and Nat are seventeen. They are orphans living at The Love of Christ! Foster Home in upstate New York. And they may be able to talk to the dead. Enter Mr. Bell, a con man with mystical interests who knows an opportunity when he sees one. Together they embark on an unexpected journey that connects meteor sites, utopian communities,

lost mothers, and a scar that maps its way across Ruth's face. Decades later, Ruth visits her niece, Cora. But while Ruth used to speak to the dead, she now doesn't speak at all. Even so, she leads Cora on a mysterious mission that involves crossing the entire state of New York on foot. Where is she taking them? And who—or what—is hidden in the woods at the end of the road? "[A] gripping novel...The narratives, which twist together into a shocking dénouement, are marked by ghost stories."—The New Yorker

art of the con: *Dot Con* James Veitch, 2020-06-02 From viral comedy sensation James Veitch (as seen on TED, Conan, and The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon) comes a collection of laugh-out-loud funny exchanges with email scammers. The Nigerian prince eager to fork over his inheritance, the family friend stranded unexpectedly in Norway, the lonely Russian beauty looking for love . . . they spam our inboxes with their hapless pleas for help, money, and your social security number. In *Dot Con*, Veitch finally answers the question: what would happen if you replied? Suspicious emails pop up in our inboxes and our first instinct is to delete unopened. But what if you responded to the deposed princess begging for money in your Gmail? Veitch dives into the underbelly of our absurd email scam culture, playing the scammers at their own game, and these are the surprising, bizarre, and hilarious results.

art of the con: *The Art of the Steal* Frank W. Abagnale, 2002-01-29 The world-famous former con artist and bestselling author of *Catch Me if You Can* now reveals the mind-boggling tricks of the scam trade—with advice that has made him one of America's most sought-after fraud-prevention experts. I had as much knowledge as any man alive concerning the mechanics of forgery, check swindling, counterfeiting, and other similar crimes. Ever since I'd been released from prison, I'd often felt that if I directed this knowledge into the right channels, I could help people a great deal. Every time I went to the store and wrote a check, I would see two or three mistakes made on the part of the clerk or cashier, mistakes that a flimflam artist would take advantage of. . . . In a certain sense, I'm still a con artist. I'm just putting down a positive con these days, as opposed to the negative con I used in the past. I've merely redirected the talents I've always possessed. I've applied the same relentless attention to working on stopping fraud that I once applied to perpetuating fraud. In *Catch Me if You Can*, Frank W. Abagnale recounted his youthful career as a master imposter and forger. In *The Art of the Steal*, Abagnale tells the remarkable story of how he parlayed his knowledge of cons and scams into a successful career as a consultant on preventing financial foul play—while showing you how to identify and outsmart perpetrators of fraud. Technology may have made it easier to track down criminals, but cyberspace has spawned a skyrocketing number of ways to commit crime—much of it untraceable. Businesses are estimated to lose an unprecedented \$400 billion a year from fraud of one sort or another. If we were able to do away with fraud for just two years, we'd erase the national debt and pay Social Security for the next one hundred years. However, Abagnale has discovered that punishment for committing fraud, much less recovery of stolen funds, seldom happens: Once you're a victim, you won't get your money back. Prevention is the best form of protection. Drawn from his twenty-five years of experience as an ingenious con artist (whose check scams alone mounted to more than \$2 million in stolen funds), Abagnale's *The Art of the Steal* provides eye-opening stories of true scams, with tips on how they can be prevented. Abagnale takes you deep inside the world and mind of the con artist, showing you just how he pulled off his scams and what you can do to avoid becoming the next victim. You'll hear the stories of notorious swindles, like the mustard squirter trick and the rock in the box ploy, and meet the criminals like the famous Vickers Gang who perpetrated them. You'll find out why crooks wash checks and iron credit cards and why a thief brings glue with him to the ATM. And finally, you'll learn how to recognize a bogus check or a counterfeit bill, and why you shouldn't write your grocery list on a deposit slip. A revealing look inside the predatory criminal mind from a former master of the con, *The Art of the Steal* is the ultimate defense against even the craftiest crook.

art of the con: *Econometrics as a Con Art* Imad A. Moosa, 2017-07-28 Imad Moosa challenges convention with this comprehensive and compelling critique of econometrics, condemning the common practices of misapplied statistical methods in both economics and finance.

art of the con: The Art of the Con Gary F. Cornelius, 2001 Many officers and staff believe they are too smart to be tricked by an offender. Realizing this possibility exists is the first step in avoiding manipulation. This book provides the corrections professional with a better understanding of offenders and their characteristics, behavior and culture. It shows how staff and volunteers can maintain authority and control by resisting manipulation. Cornelius divides his discussion into six chapters. He also includes true examples to improve the learning curve. The concepts in this book apply to anyone in the field, and show how manipulation can occur in prisons, jails or community supervision. Appendices are included to help with training.

art of the con: The Art of Cheating Jessica Dorfman Jones, 2007-10-23 Cheat? ME? Never!!! Well, except that one time... Who says you should always tell the truth? With this handy informational guidebook you can con your way through life -- from finessing your resume, to lying about your age, to getting a date. Whether you've decided to cheat out of sheer desperation or the need to get ahead, *The Art of Cheating* provides essential tips and guidelines for how to be the ultimate swindler, and how to spot the con artists among us. You'll learn what it takes to be a great cheater, and the pros and cons to every swindle. As a newly minted master of deception, you'll be able to cheat: ¥ On a diet ¥ On your spouse or significant other (or both!) ¥ On your taxes ¥ On standardized tests ¥ Death And more! With clever illustrations and humorous deadpan delivery, *The Art of Cheating* will have you sleeping your way to the top, faking an illness, and forging someone else's handwriting -- without batting an eye.

art of the con: *The Con Artist* Fred Van Lente, 2018-07-10 This illustrated mystery will appeal to comic book fans and anyone who appreciates an unconventional whodunit. Comic book artist Mike Mason arrives at San Diego Comic-Con, seeking sanctuary with other fans and creators—and maybe to reunite with his ex—but when his rival is found murdered, he becomes the prime suspect. To clear his name, Mike will have to navigate every corner of the con, from zombie obstacle courses and cosplay flash mobs to intrusive fans and obsessive collectors, in the process unraveling a dark secret behind one of the industry's most legendary creators.

art of the con: *A Con Artist in Paris* Franklin W. Dixon, 2017-09-05 The Hardy brothers investigate after the world's most expensive pen is stolen from their hotel in Paris. Everyone thinks that the thief is the celebrated graffiti artist, Le Stylo, but the brothers are not convinced.

art of the con: The Con Artists Luke Healy, 2022-06-07 This is going to be Frank's year. He's going to do it all: find love, become a famous comedian, and responsibly parent his plants. But then, Giorgio gets hit by a bus. Self-assured and utterly entitled, Giorgio has always seemed like "Frank, but better." Moving in with and caring for his estranged childhood friend quickly starts to chip away at Frank's sense of self, as well as Giorgio's carefully curated online persona. Is Giorgio's penchant for overindulgence truly aspirational? Or is it ultimately a red flag? The further Frank is pulled into Giorgio's orbit, the quicker his existential dread blooms. Expectation and reality soon collide in a singular tale about trust and confidence. Luke Healy's playful, hilarious third graphic novel uses crisp lines and physical comedy to portray an uneasy friendship between two young men on the cusp of adulthood. Snippets from Frank's middling stand-up routines are punctuated by the subtle farce of Healy's mise-en-scène and the lively, at times scathingly pointed, banter of old friends. *The Con Artists* is a stylish character study that asks the question of who fools who once everyone is off-camera.

art of the con: *Master Thieves* Stephen Kurkjian, 2015-03-10 The definitive story of the greatest art theft in history. In a secret meeting in 1981, a low-level Boston thief gave career gangster Ralph Rossetti the tip of a lifetime: the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum was a big score waiting to happen. Though its collections included priceless artworks by Rembrandt, Vermeer, Degas, and others, its security was cheap, mismanaged, and out of date. And now, it seemed, the whole Boston criminal underworld knew it. Nearly a decade passed before the Museum was finally hit. But when it finally happened, the theft quickly became one of the most infamous art heists in history: thirteen works of art valued at up to 500 million, by some of the most famous artists in the world, were taken. The Boston FBI took control of the investigation, but twenty-five years later the

case is still unsolved and the artwork is still missing. Stephen Kurkjian, one of the top investigative reporters in the country, has been working this case for over nearly twenty years. In *Master Thieves*, he sheds new light on some of the Gardner's most abiding mysteries. Why would someone steal these paintings, only to leave them hidden for twenty-five years? And why, if one of the top crime bosses in the city knew about this score in 1981, did the theft happen in 1990? What happened in those intervening years? And what might all this have to do with Boston's notorious gang wars of the 1980s? Kurkjian's reporting is already responsible for some of the biggest breaks in this story, including a meticulous reconstruction of what happened at the Museum that fateful night. Now *Master Thieves* will reveal the identities of those he believes plotted the heist, the motive for the crime, and the details that the FBI has refused to discuss. Taking you on a journey deep into the gangs of Boston, Kurkjian emerges with the most complete and compelling version of this story ever told.

art of the con: Con Artistry Instafo, Edwin Piers, 2017-04-10 Get Inside and Conquer the World of Cons The world can be a deceptive place. There are individuals out there who will do anything to gain something regardless of who they hurt or who they have to deceive. Unfortunately, this practice is only becoming more of the norm. Scammers and con artists seem to be on the rise just waiting to take anything they can from the general public. Cons are all over the news nowadays. You hear about people losing all of their investments, savings, or retirement money due to a scam that they fell into. Now you may think to yourself "Those poor people. But how could they not see that it was a scam? It's so obvious!" For that particular scam, that may be true. However, scams aren't always that easy to spot. Cons have a unique set of skills that can make them very difficult to detect. In fact, there are always going to be different new schemes and big opportunities that pop up every day, making it nearly impossible to keep track of what is legit and what is sham. Then how does one defend against this art of cons? *Con Artistry* dives head on into the world of cons so that you can safely navigate these treacherous waters without falling prey to them. Pulling back behind this curtain will reveal to you: * Con-artist methodologies used to get close to their victims * Red flags signs to watch out for to determine a con artist * Actions to always have in place to avoid being scammed * Defense techniques to decipher and lure potential cons out * Bag of tricks that cons master employed to play their games * Whistle-blower steps to expose and end the con once and for all * Insider look into all sorts of cons and how to protect against them * And much more! *Con Artistry* will also explore some of the famous schemes and con artists in the past. Often, by examining previous criminals, you can become more aware of how cons operate and target people. From these infamous crooks, you can learn what emotions scammers will exploit and avoid becoming a victim. As a fair warning with this knowledge of con artistry, you promise that you will use it for protection only and not take advantage of other people.

art of the con: Stealing Rembrandts Anthony M. Amore, Tom Mashberg, 2011-07-05 Anthony M. Amore and Tom Mashberg's *Stealing Rembrandts* is a spellbinding journey into the high-stakes world of art theft Today, art theft is one of the most profitable criminal enterprises in the world, exceeding \$6 billion in losses to galleries and art collectors annually. And the masterpieces of Rembrandt van Rijn are some of the most frequently targeted. In *Stealing Rembrandts*, art security expert Anthony M. Amore and award-winning investigative reporter Tom Mashberg reveal the actors behind the major Rembrandt heists in the last century. Through thefts around the world - from Stockholm to Boston, Worcester to Ohio - the authors track daring entries and escapes from the world's most renowned museums. There are robbers who coolly walk off with multimillion dollar paintings; self-styled art experts who fall in love with the Dutch master and desire to own his art at all costs; and international criminal masterminds who don't hesitate to resort to violence. They also show how museums are thwarted in their ability to pursue the thieves - even going so far as to conduct investigations on their own, far away from the maddening crowd of police intervention, sparing no expense to save the priceless masterpieces. *Stealing Rembrandts* is an exhilarating, one-of-a-kind look at the black market of art theft, and how it compromises some of the greatest treasures the world has ever known.

art of the con: The Con Artist Kitty Thomas, 2016-01-16 Saskia Roth is the stereotypical starving artist. She's failed as an original artist. She's failing as a reproduction artist. So why not try con artist? A local art collector and tech tycoon with far too much money for his own good has taken Saskia's bait. She's promised to steal a nude he covets from a private collector, but plans to substitute her own forgery instead. But which one of them is really the mark?

art of the con: Art of Darkness Sara K. Schneider, 2008 Just like Scheherazade, undercover agents talk to save their lives. If they put in a poor performance, they don't see the curtain rise again. ART OF DARKNESS pries open the virtuoso identity techniques practiced by undercover operatives, fugitives, disguise artists, pranksters, con artists, and federally protected witnesses. It draws on original interviews with undercover operators in order to show how identity artists on both sides of the law obtain fake ID, develop a disguise, build a cover story, maintain believability in street performances, and deal with threats to their identities-all without formal acting training. ART OF DARKNESS inhabits the grey areas of morality as it exposes identity roleplays at the borders of lawfulness. In it you'll find stories of: law-enforcement workers who adopt the techniques of criminals in order to catch them but somehow get caught up in their own trick identities; self-defined artists whose work also has a criminal dimension; criminal informants who masterfully play sides and roles against each other; and hoaxsters and impersonators who may perform trick identities primarily for gain but do so with tremendous inventiveness and a directorial consciousness. This book may explode any remaining notion you harbor that you are not at some level a member of the intelligence community, discerning who is for real and who is presenting a self for personal gain.

art of the con: The Dark Arts Kitty Thomas, 2021-02-17 The Complete Duet The Con Artist: Art. Obsession. Twisted possession. When starving artist Saskia Roth meets Lachlan Niche, a local art collector and tech tycoon, she has no idea how her life is about to change. One act of desperation, one con gone wrong, and she finds herself at the mercy of a powerful man she fears and despises—or so she thinks. As her desire for him grows, life as his captive becomes something more... something that could both transform her and destroy her. The Escape Artist: Claire was held captive for 43 days by a man who did unspeakable things to her. Three years after her escape, she gets her revenge. The only problem is, she's got the wrong man. God help her if he escapes. (Includes Saskia and Lachlan's complete HEA from The Con Artist)

art of the con: In Love with Art Jeet Heer, 2013-09-02 In a partnership spanning four decades, Francoise Mouly and Art Spiegelman have been the pre-eminent power couple of cutting-edge graphic art. From Raw magazine to the New York, where she serves as art editor, Mouly and Spiegelman have revolutionized the art. In Love with Art profiles the pair and interviews Chris Ware, Dan Clowes, Adrian Tomine and more.

art of the con: Inmate Manipulation Decoded Anthony Gangi, 2020-12-26 Inmate manipulation is a slow and subtle game. It's a game that leaves many correctional staff without a job and possibly in prison. Understanding how the game works is essential to surviving a career in corrections. This book will take you down a path that will highlight how an inmate chooses their target, how the game is employed, and most importantly, how staff can defend themselves. The game of inmate manipulation has evolved and the strategies are more complex than ever before. Correctional staff must be made aware that at any moment they can be chosen as a target. They must remember that the game is real and so are the consequences.

art of the con: Con Art Julian Spalding, 2012

art of the con: Forged Jonathon Keats, 2013 According to Vasari, the young Michelangelo often borrowed drawings of past masters, which he copied, returning his imitations to the owners and keeping originals. Half a millennium later, Andy Warhol made a game of forging the Mona Lisa, questioning the entire concept of originality. Forged explores art forgery from ancient times to the present. In chapters combining lively biography with insightful art criticism, Jonathon Keats profiles individual art forgers and connects their stories to broader themes about the role of forgeries in society. From the Renaissance master Andrea del Sarto who faked a Raphael masterpiece at the

request of his Medici patrons, to the Vermeer counterfeiter Han van Meegeren who duped the avaricious Hermann Göring, to the frustrated British artist Eric Hebborn, who began forging to expose the ignorance of experts, art forgers have challenged legitimate art in their own time, breaching accepted practices and upsetting the status quo. They have also provocatively confronted many of the present-day cultural anxieties that are major themes in the arts. Keats uncovers what forgeries—and our reactions to them—reveal about changing conceptions of creativity, identity, authorship, integrity, authenticity, success, and how we assign value to works of art. The book concludes by looking at how artists today have appropriated many aspects of forgery through such practices as street-art stenciling and share-and-share-alike licensing, and how these open-source copleft strategies have the potential to make legitimate art meaningful again. Forgery has been much discussed—and decried—as a crime. *Forged* is the first book to assess great forgeries as high art in their own right.

art of the con: *A Drowned Maiden's Hair* Laura Amy Schlitz, 2010-03-02 People throw the word 'classic' about a lot, but *A Drowned Maiden's Hair* genuinely deserves to become one. — Wall Street Journal Maud Flynn is known at the orphanage for her impertinence, so when the charming Miss Hyacinth and her sister choose Maud to take home with them, the girl is as baffled as anyone. It seems the sisters need Maud to help stage elaborate séances for bereaved, wealthy patrons. As Maud is drawn deeper into the deception, playing her role as a secret child, she is torn between her need to please and her growing conscience -- until a shocking betrayal makes clear just how heartless her so-called guardians are. Filled with tantalizing details of turn-of-the-century spiritualism and page-turning suspense, this lively historical novel features a winning heroine whom readers will not soon forget.

art of the con: *Assuming Names* Tanya Thompson, 2014-04-03 When it was over, there were a lot of questions. The detectives were embarrassed but they still wanted answered, How did a 15-year-old runaway successfully pose as a world traveled countess? The newspapers turned it back on them, practically sneering, How did she do it while under investigation by the FBI, DEA, and Interpol? The Mafia had been demanding the same thing for six months, What is your real name? And the psychologists asked the question they always ask, Why? It's the why of it that will keep a girl in trouble. *Assuming Names* is the true story of a young con artist. It's the tale of a runaway that assumed the title of countess and then went on to fool the FBI, DEA, and Interpol-as well as a number of other celebrities and institutions-with an elaborate tale of world intrigue.

art of the con: *The Lies of Locke Lamora* Scott Lynch, 2014-08-27 Fantasy meets crime caper in the first book of a landmark, enduringly popular epic series about a roguish group of conmen, which George R. R. Martin has called “fresh, original, and engrossing . . . gorgeously realized.” An orphan’s life is harsh—and often short—in the mysterious island city of Camorr. But young Locke Lamora dodges relentless danger, becoming a thief under the tutelage of a gifted con artist. As leader of the band of light-fingered brothers known as the Gentlemen Bastards, Locke is soon infamous, fooling even the underworld’s most feared ruler. But in the shadows lurks someone still more ambitious and deadly. Faced with a bloody coup that threatens to destroy everyone and everything that holds meaning in his mercenary life, Locke vows to beat the enemy at his own brutal game—or die trying.

art of the con: *Con-Artist* Charles Bronson, 2009 Regarded as the UK's most violent prisoner, Charles Bronson has served 34 years in UK prisons, 31 of which have been in solitary confinement. Over the last decade, Charles has successfully turned his life around, and this book celebrates those ten years of his life, not just as a prisoner, but as an artist, a poet and an acclaimed author.

art of the con: *Configuring the New Lima Art Scene* Giuliana Borea, 2021-01-24 This book examines the contemporary art world in Latin America from an anthropological perspective and recognises the recent reconfiguration of Lima's art scene. Giuliana Borea traces the practices of artists, curators, collectors, art dealers and museums, identifying three key moments in this reconfiguration of contemporary art in Lima: artistic explorations and new curatorial narratives; museum reinforcement and the strengthening of Latin American art networks; and of the rise of the

art market. In so doing, Borea highlights the different actors that come into play in activating and de-activating directions and imaginations. The book exposes the practices of the local, the global, indigeneity and politics in the arts, and reveals that the strengthening of the Lima art scene has fostered the expansion of dominant art views and formats mobilised by transnational elite actors. Featuring analytical chapters interspersed with personal stories, Borea's book presents an in-depth analysis of a specific art scene to open up a new way of understanding contemporary art practices in relation to globalisation, neoliberalism and the city.

art of the con: The Art of Deception Kevin D. Mitnick, William L. Simon, 2011-08-04 The world's most infamous hacker offers an insider's view of the low-tech threats to high-tech security Kevin Mitnick's exploits as a cyber-desperado and fugitive form one of the most exhaustive FBI manhunts in history and have spawned dozens of articles, books, films, and documentaries. Since his release from federal prison, in 1998, Mitnick has turned his life around and established himself as one of the most sought-after computer security experts worldwide. Now, in *The Art of Deception*, the world's most notorious hacker gives new meaning to the old adage, It takes a thief to catch a thief. Focusing on the human factors involved with information security, Mitnick explains why all the firewalls and encryption protocols in the world will never be enough to stop a savvy grifter intent on rifling a corporate database or an irate employee determined to crash a system. With the help of many fascinating true stories of successful attacks on business and government, he illustrates just how susceptible even the most locked-down information systems are to a slick con artist impersonating an IRS agent. Narrating from the points of view of both the attacker and the victims, he explains why each attack was so successful and how it could have been prevented in an engaging and highly readable style reminiscent of a true-crime novel. And, perhaps most importantly, Mitnick offers advice for preventing these types of social engineering hacks through security protocols, training programs, and manuals that address the human element of security.

art of the con: The Map Thief Michael Blanding, 2014-05-29 The story of an infamous crime, a revered map dealer with an unsavory secret, and the ruthless subculture that consumed him Maps have long exerted a special fascination on viewers—both as beautiful works of art and as practical tools to navigate the world. But to those who collect them, the map trade can be a cutthroat business, inhabited by quirky and sometimes disreputable characters in search of a finite number of extremely rare objects. Once considered a respectable antiquarian map dealer, E. Forbes Smiley spent years doubling as a map thief —until he was finally arrested slipping maps out of books in the Yale University library. *The Map Thief* delves into the untold history of this fascinating high-stakes criminal and the inside story of the industry that consumed him. Acclaimed reporter Michael Blanding has interviewed all the key players in this stranger-than-fiction story, and shares the fascinating histories of maps that charted the New World, and how they went from being practical instruments to quirky heirlooms to highly coveted objects. Though pieces of the map theft story have been written before, Blanding is the first reporter to explore the story in full—and had the rare privilege of having access to Smiley himself after he'd gone silent in the wake of his crimes. Moreover, although Smiley swears he has admitted to all of the maps he stole, libraries claim he stole hundreds more—and offer intriguing clues to prove it. Now, through a series of exclusive interviews with Smiley and other key individuals, Blanding teases out an astonishing tale of destruction and redemption. *The Map Thief* interweaves Smiley's escapades with the stories of the explorers and mapmakers he knew better than anyone. Tracking a series of thefts as brazen as the art heists in *Provenance* and a subculture as obsessive as the oenophiles in *The Billionaire's Vinegar*, Blanding has pieced together an unforgettable story of high-stakes crime.

art of the con: The Crime Book DK, 2021-02-02 Investigate 100 of the world's most notorious crimes, including the Great Train Robbery, the Lindbergh kidnapping, and the murders of serial killer Jeffrey Dahmer. Were the perpetrators delusional, opportunist, or truly evil? Find out what really happened and how the cases were solved. Discover conmen with sheer verve, such as Victor Lustig who sold the Eiffel Tower to scrap dealers in 1925, adrenaline-fuelled escapes, and mind-bending exploits of pirates, kidnappers, and drug cartels. *The Crime Book* demystifies

malware, cybercrimes, and Ponzi schemes and sets out the terrifying ploys of mass murderers from 16th-century Elizabeth Báthory who drained young girls' blood to the more recent exploits of Rosemary and Fred West. Like a virus, crime mutates and adapts. The Crime Book explains how pivotal moments in history opened up new opportunities for criminals, such as the smuggling of alcohol during the American Prohibition era. It also charts developments in justice and forensics including the Innocence Project, which used DNA testing to exonerate wrongly convicted convicts. It examines how the forces of law and order have fought back against crime, explaining ingenious sting operations such as tracking down the jewel thief Bill Mason and the final capture of murderer Ted Bundy. With a foreword from bestselling crime author Cathy Scott, The Crime Book is an enthralling introduction to humanity's darker side. Series Overview: Big Ideas Simply Explained series uses creative design and innovative graphics, along with straightforward and engaging writing, to make complex subjects easier to understand. These award-winning books provide just the information needed for students, families, or anyone interested in concise, thought-provoking refreshers on a single subject.

art of the con: *How To Become A Professional Con Artist* Dennis M. Marlock, 2001-09-01 A fool and his money are soon parted, so the saying goes. And if the job is done right, the fool doesn't even realize it's happened until the wily con artist has moved on to the next victim or the next town. In this entertaining and eye-opening book, Dennis M. Marlock, a retired cop and chairman of the board for the international law enforcement organization Professionals Against Confidence Crime, takes the reader into the mind and greedy heart of the con man. You'll learn the mechanics behind famous swindles such as the pigeon drop, the Jamaican switch, bank-examiner schemes, three-card monte and even fortune-telling. You'll find out why a good scam artist rarely gets caught and, if he does, how he gets away with the lightest punishment or no punishment at all. If you've ever read a news story about a sucker getting taken and wondered how he could have fallen for that, you need to read this book before an honest-faced stranger offers you a deal too good to pass up.

art of the con: *Fake* Stephanie Wood, 2020-09 Women the world over are brought up to hope, even expect, to find the man of their dreams, marry and live happily ever after. When Stephanie Woods meets a sweet, sophisticated man who owns land and businesses, she embarks on an exhilarating romance with him. He seems compassionate, truthful and loving. He talks about the future with her. She falls in love. She also becomes increasingly beset by anxiety at the lavish three-act plays he offers her in the form of excuses for frequent cancellations and no-shows. She begins to wonder, who is this man? When she ends the relationship Stephanie switches back on her journalistic nous and uncovers a story of mind-boggling duplicity and manipulation. She also finds she is not alone; that the world is full of smart, sassy women who have suffered the attentions of liars, cheats, narcissists, fantasists and phonies, men with dangerously adept abilities to deceive. In this brilliantly acute and broad-ranging book, Wood, an award-winning writer and journalist, has written a riveting, important account of contemporary love, and the resilience of those who have witnessed its darkest sides. --Back cover.

art of the con: *The Con Men* Terry Williams, Trevor B. Milton, 2017-08 A hard-edged guide to New York City swindles, street life, and culture, through direct interviews with con artists and hustlers.

art of the con: *King Con* Paul Willetts, 2018-08-07 The spellbinding tale of hustler Edgar Laplante—the king of Jazz Age con artists—who becomes the victim of his own dangerous game. Edgar Laplante was a smalltime grifter, an erstwhile vaudeville performer, and an unabashed charmer. But after years of playing thankless gigs and traveling with medicine shows, he decided to undertake the most demanding and bravura performance of his life. In the fall of 1917, Laplante reinvented himself as Chief White Elk: war hero, sports star, civil rights campaigner, Cherokee nation leader—and total fraud. Under the pretenses of raising money for struggling Native American reservations, Laplante dressed in buckskins and a feathered headdress and traveled throughout the American West, narrowly escaping exposure and arrest each time he left town. When the heat became too much, he embarked upon a lucrative continent-hopping tour that attracted even more

enormous crowds, his cons growing in proportion to the adulation of his audience. As he moved through Europe, he spied his biggest mark on the Riviera: a prodigiously rich Hungarian countess, who was instantly smitten with the con man. The countess bankrolled a lavish trip through Italy that made Laplante a darling of the Mussolini regime and a worldwide celebrity, soaring to unimaginable heights on the wings of his lies. But then, at the pinnacle of his improbable success, Laplante's overreaching threatened to destroy him... In *King Con*, Paul Willetts brings this previously untold story to life in all its surprising absurdity, showing us how our tremendous capacity for belief and our longstanding obsession with celebrity can make fools of us all—and proving that sometimes truth is stranger than fiction.

art of the con: *Females in the Frame* Penelope Jackson, 2019-07-29 This book explores the untold history of women, art, and crime. It has long been widely accepted that women have not played an active role in the art crime world, or if they have, it has been the part of the victim or peacemaker. *Women, Art, and Crime* overturns this understanding, as it investigates the female criminals who have destroyed, vandalised, stolen, and forged art, as well as those who have conned clients and committed white-collar crimes in their professional occupations in museums, libraries, and galleries. Whether prompted by a desire for revenge, for money, the instinct to protect a loved one, or simply as an act of quality control, this book delves into the various motivations and circumstances of women art criminals from a wide range of countries, including the UK, the USA, New Zealand, Romania, Germany, and France. Through a consideration of how we have come to perceive art crime and the gendered language associated with its documentation, this pioneering study questions why women have been left out of the discourse to date and how, by looking specifically at women, we can gain a more complete picture of art crime history.

art of the con: *Dungeon Crawler Carl* Matt Dinniman, 2024-08-27 The apocalypse will be televised! Welcome to the first book in the wildly popular and addictive *Dungeon Crawler Carl* series by Matt Dinniman—now with bonus material exclusive to this print edition. You know what's worse than breaking up with your girlfriend? Being stuck with her prize-winning show cat. And you know what's worse than that? An alien invasion, the destruction of all man-made structures on Earth, and the systematic exploitation of all the survivors for a sadistic intergalactic game show. That's what. Join Coast Guard vet Carl and his ex-girlfriend's cat, Princess Donut, as they try to survive the end of the world—or just get to the next level—in a video game-like, trap-filled fantasy dungeon. A dungeon that's actually the set of a reality television show with countless viewers across the galaxy. Exploding goblins. Magical potions. Deadly, drug-dealing llamas. This ain't your ordinary game show. Welcome, Crawler. Welcome to the Dungeon. Survival is optional. Keeping the viewers entertained is not. Includes part one of the exclusive bonus story "Backstage at the Pineapple Cabaret."

art of the con: Con Man J.R. Weil, W.T. Brannon, 2004-07-13 The story of Joseph "Yellow Kid" Weil, a man who could—and often did—pull off scams to outshine *The Sting*. In his long career as a confidence man, Joseph "Yellow Kid" Weil swindled the public of more than eight million dollars and established the reputation for robbery and trickery. Always beating the police at their own game, "Yellow Kid" used phony oil deals, women, fixed races, and an endless list of other tricks to best an increasingly gullible public. One day, he was Dr. Henri Reuel, a noted geologist who traveled around and told his hosts that he was a representative for a big oil company—all the while draining them of the cash they gave him to "invest in fuel." The next day, he was director of the Elysium Development Company, promising land to innocent believers while robbing them in recording and abstract fees. Or he was a chemist par excellence who had discovered how to copy dollar bills; promising to increase your fortune, he would multiply your bills—then take the booty once the police arrived. Originally published in 1948, here is Weil's true and amazing story, with a smart and witty Afterword by none other than Nobel Laureate Saul Bellow, who profiled "Yellow Kid" for *The Reporter* in 1956. It is undeniable proof that "Yellow Kid" was the con man par excellence—the virtuoso scam artist, bar none.

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