

The Everything's a scam scam
 The You don't give a damn about me scam
 The You're the most selfish person I've ever met scam
 The I've been so busy scam
 The Tough guy scam
 The Sensitive guy scam
 The Tough yet sensitive guy scam
 The Sensitive yet tough guy scam
 The Madonna-whore scam
 The Liberated woman scam
 The Madonna-whore inside the liberated woman scam
 The List of the permutations of things to get a laugh
 and seem inclusive scam
 The I'm an Artist scam
 The Poetry scam
 The I was just trying to help scam
 The I need a quarter for the bus scam
 The I don't know how I'll make my rent scam
 The It's your problem scam
 The It's everyone's problem scam
 The I'm sick of scams scam
 The I'm sick of scams scam scam scam
 The I'm sick of scams scam scam scam scam scam scam scam scam
 scam scam
 The Climatic ending scam
 The Anticlimatic ending scam
 The Ending in the middle of a sentenc

AN HONEST MAN

He believed in fair play, and "All men are created equal," but at his draft physical, when a black guy with a withered leg got booked for Vietnam and he wormed out with hay fever and three pounds of medical reports he took his 4F, and went home without a word.

When Jan, his girlfriend, cheated on him, he dropped her like a shoe with a scorpion inside. "I won't have a woman I can't trust!" he said, dated nine new ones in six months, but when none of them worked out, went back to Jan.

He loathed lawyers, their Porches and Bel Air homes, their leather chairs and books and paper clips, their carp-lips pursed to suck the slimy green. "They're the cancer that's killing America," he said. But when a drunk rear-ended him, he sighed, and hired the slickest shyster he could find.

After an editor held his short story a year, coaxed two re-writes, then rejected it with a form letter, he raved "I oughta buy a .45, fly to Manhattan, walk in her office, and decorate it with what passes for her brain." But when, years later, she called to offer him a big advance for his next book, he told his friends, "Aw, screw the bitch," and signed.

"Faced with a test of principle," he said, "I sink to the occasion every time."

— Charles Webb

Los Angeles CA

UNTITLED

"You're right my dear," Carmen said, "I was once a model." She patted her gray curls with the tips of her mottled but still slender fingers. "The reason you think so is because of the way I carry myself. You probably noticed how I hold my knees together and turn my ankles out ever so slightly. And the way I gesture with my hands gracefully like this."

"You act like a model on television," said Betty.

"You see, the reason I carry myself this way so...naturally...is because I'm from Royalty." Carmen said. "Portuguese Royalty."

"Gee," said Betty. She'd been a nurse's aide for six months at Hilldale Nursing Home, but she'd never before met anyone Royal.

"It's my father's family. He's the one from Royalty. His family is one of THE Portuguese families." Carmen surveyed her violet nail polish. "Everyone said I resembled my father's family. I don't delude myself; I know I'm not beautiful. But there was always something about me, something...aristocratic, maybe. Even today they're still after me to model."

"Oh, you are beautiful. Especially for your age," Betty said, as she helped Carmen from her wheelchair onto her bed.

"Beauty is more — much more — than looks," Carmen said sternly. "It's the way you arch your back. And the way you hold your neck, pulled up like this. That's very important. Never forget your neck."