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A Reply to Brian Maclean's "Master Status, Stigma, Termination and Beyond"

-John Morris III

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I read your article entitled "Master Status, Stigma, Termination and Beyond" in the Autumn 1990/Spring 1991 *Journal of Prisoners in Prisons* and wanted to write and put my two cents worth in. I greatly respect and admire what you have done with your life, and I got angry and upset at what those idiots did to you. I had to write, even if just to let off my own steam.

This is nothing new to me. I have been doing time for over twenty years and have nearly fourteen in right now, straight. I am almost thirty-seven and I expect to be inside for quite a few more years.

What I do is the exact antithesis of what you do. I wear my ex-con/ con 'stigma/master status' as a badge of honor. Whether this is just protection on my part or ... , I wear it proudly. If someone will not or cannot accept me as me, separate from my past/present, then I simply do not have that person in my life.

I am an anarchist and a rebel, but I have found through long trial and error that a lot of *very* uptight people will accept me by the simple fact that I appear not to care about their acceptance. The key word is *appear*. I *do* care, sometimes too much, but appearing not to works, at least for me, or at least I think it does. I have never given it much deep thought, maybe out of desire not to know.

Anyhow, I thought I would write and express my views, for what they may be worth. I do not think my attitude would work for everyone but it has for me. I get to play the 'heavy' on a permanent basis. Sometimes it is fun and empowering to put it all right back into their faces.