

# John Mirath

- ▶ Species: Human
- ▶ Sex: ♂
- ▶ Age: 38
- ▶ Birthday: 14th June 1981
- ▶ Height: 6ft 0in
- ▶ Weight: 197lbs
- ▶ Siblings: Donnie (2 years younger) and Charles (8 years younger)
- ▶ Profession: Thief, specialising in extortion, and is the head of the group he comprises with his brothers

John is a human character from an original setting. He is the oldest of three brothers, and forms a loosely cohesive group of thieves with the pair of them, with John himself specialising in extortion. He is dedicated to being in control which he is good at, but this leads to him isolating himself so that he doesn't have to keep too many people under control at any one time, which is ultimately how social life feels to him.

## Trust & Confidence

### *Baby*

John was the first-born of three siblings.

He was born into a lower-class family, and for the time being his father remained part of the family unit. Despite being part of a complete, technically traditional family unit like this, all was not entirely well for John.

His mother was in a tenuous position, given her social class and possibly the relationship she shared with John's father. This intruded upon their parent-child bond to a mild yet pervasive extent, and John sensed that he was not in an entirely safe situation. He was not harmed, but his misgivings about his circumstances prompted him to watch out for cues from his mother so that he could play his part in convincing her to keep looking after him for the sake of his own well-being. When she seemed upset he appealed to her by cooing; when she seemed withdrawn he withdrew too until she appeared to be ready for him again.

For some infants this translates in later life to a deeply-held feeling that they must mould to others' needs and preferences. For John however, all of this translated into a sense of gaining (or recovering) control over the situation.

It should also be stated that all of this happened on a low level of intensity. Babies are frightened easily and John does not appear to have been traumatised by his infancy experiences, only tested to the point that he developed a rudimentary skill-set of getting what he needed from 'the other'.

## Freedom & Self-Determination

### *Toddler*

With John being the first-born, his parents were inexperienced at raising children, and John both lost out and profited from this in various ways. There may well have been a sense of division between his parents as later in his life, John's father abandoned the family.

John discovered that he could get what he wanted if he bent the truth or even outright lied to his parents. This would be easier if his parents were not communicating with one another, as very small children have few people in their worlds except for their parents. Being able to claim that one parent has given permission for something when the other refuses can be an effective way for a small child to get what they want. John explored, developed, and mastered this skill.

Further than this, his budding skills gave him a feeling that he was in control. To John, being in control meant being safe.

John had quite the surprise as a 2 year old when his mother's belly started to swell. Although she explained to him what it meant he didn't really understand that there would be a new baby in the house (and therefore that he would no longer be his parents' one and only) until Donnie arrived.

John's mother had done a good job of making a new brother sound like a boon and not a threat, so John became very protective of Donnie (and later, Charles), and turned his sense of being in control to being his new brother's protector.

Being a protector was hard for John, given that he was so small, so he needed other skills to help with this. His father was still around so he watched, and learned, and developed a talent for arrogance. This, he found, helped him to convince people who otherwise wouldn't be convinced, that he had power over them.

Many children take a sense of self-doubt and shame from their toddlerhood years. Not so for John. With his father still around he didn't feel an overwhelming need to be the family's protector, and given the shaky foundations of his family he found himself under just enough pressure to project confidence in order to ensure his sense of security. He sensed that self-doubt would be detrimental to his need for personal safety. Similarly, shame was too much of a chink in the armour of confidence, so he simply treated shame as a luxury he couldn't afford until it no longer seemed a serious threat. Growing up in an impoverished family may also have inoculated him against shame.

## Ambition

### *Young childhood*

As John's little brother Donnie grew from a helpless infant to a curious toddler, John's interactions with him became more, well, interactive. This was where John's desire to protect Donnie (and to an extent, keep him under control) got interesting.

While Donnie was busy making his first discoveries about being able to move under his own power, to defy his parents if he chose, and other such ground-breaking novelties, John was starting to consider his ambitions for life. He didn't really have ambitions per se as really, he was only interested in getting what he wanted from people. Doing so became an end in itself. Ultimately, all he wanted was to know that he was top dog; it didn't matter what the prize for dominance was.

He refined his skills in getting what he wanted, adding intimidation to his growing armoury of skills. Given that he was still quite small, this worked best with other children of his approximate age, although as he got better at it he became better at intimidating older children too. This didn't exactly manifest as cruelty, as John had little need to victimise people who he felt he could outclass. However, he wasn't above mocking weakness in others.

John wasn't really a playful child most of the time. He enjoyed playing with concepts of confidence and intimidation and testing their limits, although he was more playful about this with Donnie.

As such, John didn't become good at co-operating. His brand of co-operation included intimidating others into doing what he wanted, and that worked a good enough proxy as far as he was concerned.

### Productivity

#### *Older childhood*

John was pulled out of school for months at a time to help out with the family, as his father was becoming more and more absent. John's father had been flitting in and out of the family's life for a while, but at around the time John turned 9, he disappeared entirely.

Shortly before his father disappeared his mother gave birth to a third child: Charles.

With his father out of the picture and with an extra mouth to feed (not to mention John and Donnie being growing boys themselves), John, with his reserves of confidence, found himself taking on the role of 'the man of the house'. He felt very confident about going out into the world and being the best there was – it served as an ego boost but also as reassurance that he was up to the job of protecting and providing for his family. Whenever his ego was genuinely threatened however, he would explode at the threat.

This marked the time when John had to start using his skills to support his family. In other words, to use his skills to become productive rather than playful (even though most people would hesitate to call his enjoyment of intimidating his class-mates or lying to teachers 'playful'). This felt like a relatively small step to make so he made it quite smoothly.

### Child to Adult Transition

#### *Adolescence*

Unlike many teenagers, John saw his family as his in-crowd, at least in the sense that they were the nucleus of important people in his life whom he needed to protect. For him, family (at least, his mum and brothers) signified continuity, which in his sometimes rather hectic world, he valued more than he would have admitted. As he grew to the point where other people considered him a man instead of a boy, he became more prone to distancing himself from them. However, he continued to watch over his family regardless, often directing his brothers from a distance. Although his family continued to be his stable base, he enjoyed that sense of stability from a distance, without actively participating in it any more than he had to.

As he got physically big enough to do serious damage to others, he adjusted his skill-set and began to employ his already well-honed manipulation skills instead. This allowed him to get what he wanted without threatening others, as there were times when physical threats could be counter-productive.

Another skill John employed was power. Most of the time this was interpersonal power: he developed skill at getting the upper hand in almost any relationship. For those who he could establish this with, or who he believed were too underhand to trust, he would abruptly cut them off – especially if they presented a threat to his family.

His mother noticed all of this, of course. For her part, she felt a mixture of fear and pride. She didn't want any of her children to be in danger, and by this time John was so used to being intimidating that she wondered if one day he might try to intimidate the wrong person. However, she was also proud that he had fought his way to success (of a sort, at least) from such humble beginnings.

### Closeness in Relationships

#### *Young adulthood*

John is an experienced enough criminal to have a preference for the kind of work he prefers to do. Some jobs he considers beneath him, and he usually hands these off to his brothers or other contacts. However, he likes to be the first to hear of potential jobs so that he can pick which extra ones on top of his regular work he will do.

He never really learned to affiliate with others so much as dominate and manage the relationship – whether romantic or business – from his perch at the top of the hierarchy. Because of this, he doesn't have many platonic friends and instead only fosters connections with others that are profitable to him in some way.

Sexual relationships tend to be with men and women, and last a relatively short span of time: months, weeks or even only days, with him taking the dominant role in all of them.

### Passing on Responsibility

#### *Middle age*

When John reaches middle age he will be very well versed in keeping quiet about how he earns his bread, but will still enjoy dropping the occasional, smug hint. Ultimately, John will never be likely to truly let on how successful he has been, but he does like to treat himself with the occasional, temporary treat. He shares an interest in fast cars with his brother Charles, so sometimes he will take one out for a spin.

He cares more about the legacy of his family than he lets on. As far as he is aware he doesn't have any children and doesn't have any specific plans to have a family, partly because he would feel a need to control and/or protect them. A family would not represent an opportunity at intimacy for him, just another element to keep tabs on.

### End of Life

#### *Old age*

John is as (apparently) fearless as ever when it comes to the subject of the end of his own life. As a seasoned manipulator he has joked that he will come back to haunt people who he feels deserve it, although this comes more from an awareness of his emotional impact on other people (to the point that they would fear him even after his own death) than any belief in an after-life.

### Credits

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### *Based on theory by:*

Erikson, E., (1951) 'Childhood and Society', W.W. Norton & Company, Inc. chapter 7.

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~Hayley, The Character Consultancy