



Big ego ... but he can change

Jail can turn this liar's life around



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I HAVE been where Tommy Sheridan now is—staring into a self-inflicted black hole of defeat, disgrace, career catastrophe and jail.

High-profile libel-case liars are intoxicated by their big egos and pride. These faults give them a mega-capacity for staying high on the adrenalin of delusion and denial. But, as I discovered myself, when the jury has spoken and you are facing reality the consequences are painful.

The big question for Sheridan, as it was for me, is: will he stay in denial? Or will he take the tougher road of admitting his mistakes, struggling with regret and then rebuilding his life at a humbler but perhaps happier level?

The next step in his journey will inevitably be prison. Surprisingly, jail is not a bad place for brutal self-reassessment. During my own 18-month sentence for perjury, I gradually found peace and a change of direction. But this is not an easy process.

Prison is a culture shock, particularly for a high-profile arrival. On your first day, when you have been strip-searched, fingerprinted, shouted at by officers and jeered at by fellow cons, you quickly realise there is no such thing as an important prisoner.

But, if you go with the flow, avoiding confrontations or complaints and finding some way of blending into the system by being quietly helpful, then life settles down and becomes bearable.

Tommy Sheridan the prisoner will find his greatest battles are inside his own heart and soul. He will feel the pain of being cut off from his loved ones. He will chafe under the loss of freedom. He will, or should have, many agonies of remorse. Yet these struggles can lead to change, rehabilitation and redemption.

At 46, Tommy Sheridan has many years of life ahead of him after his release. It will be a different life. But rehabilitation in prison can lead to contentment. I wish him well for his journey.