The challenges followed me to the local pool hall, a place where I sought refuge and entertainment. However, the owner of the pool hall harbored a clear disdain for me. He, much like others, weaponized my past hospitalization against me, distorting the reality of what being in a psychiatric hospital entails. To many in our mountain community, the hospital was seen through a lens of extreme misconception—imagined more as a prison than a place of healing, where patients were thought to be chained to the walls rather than residing in rooms, playing ping pong, or watching TV.

He didn't stop at exploiting the stigma surrounding mental health; he also focused on my difficulties with driving. Learning to drive and not having a car until my mid-twenties was another point of criticism that he used to shape people's perceptions of me negatively. This aspect of my life, seemingly unrelated to my mental health, was nonetheless used as ammunition to further isolate and demean me within the community.

The owner of the pool hall was not just a passive adversary; his actions were driven by a deep-seated narcissism. Part of this narcissistic behavior was his feeling threatened by my presence. Despite the challenges I faced, I was dedicated to my personal and professional growth, always striving to improve and succeed. My hard work and talent, it seems, posed a threat to him, leading him to consistently undermine my achievements and qualities in front of anyone who visited the pool hall.

His need to diminish me was twofold. Firstly, it was an attempt to safeguard his own standing within the community. By discrediting me, he aimed to prevent others from recognizing my potential and seeing through his manipulations. Secondly, he perceived me as a direct affront to his self-image. In his eyes, I had somehow tarnished his reputation, igniting an irrational and intense hatred towards me. This animosity was devoid of any reasonable basis, marked instead by an excessive and passionate disdain.

Despite his antagonistic behavior, he was adept at maintaining a facade of respectability. His skill in manipulation was sophisticated, allowing him to deceive others without coming across as overtly deceitful. To the outside world, he presented himself as a respectable businessman, a stark contrast to the underhanded tactics he employed against me. This duality made it challenging to counter his narrative, as he wielded his influence with a subtlety that belied his true intentions.  
  
  
The pool hall owner, despite his actions against me, was not without his merits in the broader context of his business and community interactions. He was recognized as a respectable businessman, known for his fair dealings. His pool hall was not just fairly priced but often underpriced, reflecting a generosity or a business strategy that endeared him to many. He was known to engage in acts that benefitted others, showcasing a side of him that was genuinely positive.

However, beneath this veneer of respectability and altruism lay a different reality. Despite his public persona, he harbored a deep-seated negativity, particularly towards me. This aspect of his character was a stark contrast to the image he projected. His trustworthiness and authenticity, while apparent to others, did not extend to his dealings with me. In discussions about me or interactions with me, his bias was profound. He was, in essence, a world away from the unbiased, fair-minded individual he appeared to be to the outside world. This discrepancy between his public image and his private actions highlighted a complex character, capable of good yet marred by personal vendettas and a lack of genuine authenticity in certain aspects of his life.