General Information
People suffering from the Antisocial Personality Disorder were formerly called "psychopaths" or, more colloquially, "sociopaths". Some scholars, such as Robert Hare, still distinguish psychopathy from mere antisocial behavior.

Psychopathy becomes evident in early adolescence and, though it is considered chronic, it often remits with age, usually by the fourth or fifth decade of life. Criminal behavior abates by that time as do substance abuse and other antisocial patterns of conduct. This - and the fact that personality disorders are common among members of the psychopath's immediate family - indicates that the Antisocial Personality Disorder may have a genetic or hereditary determinant.

Characteristics and Traits
Psychopaths regard other people as mere objects to be manipulated - as instruments, tools, or sources of benefits and utility. They have no problem grasping ideas - but find it difficult to perceive other people's ability to conceive of ideas, to have their own needs, emotions, and preferences.

The psychopath rejects other people's rights and his commensurate obligations. The "social contract" and conventional morality do not apply to him. His immediate gratification takes precedence over the needs, preferences, and emotions of even his nearest and dearest.

Psychopaths rationalize their behavior and intellectualize it, showing an utter dysfunction of conscience and the absence of remorse for hurting or defrauding others.

Their (primitive) defence mechanisms are overpowering. They intellectualize their criminal behaviour, view the world - and people in it - as "all good" or "all evil", project their own shortcomings unto others and force others to behave the way they expect them to ("projective identification"). To them, people are mere instruments, or functions. They lack empathy and are very exploitative. In this, they closely resemble narcissists.

The psychopath - especially if s/he also has narcissistic traits - is unable to adapt to society and its norms. Hence the criminal acts, the deceitfulness and identity theft, the use of aliases, the constant lying, and the conning of even his nearest and dearest for gain or pleasure. Psychopaths are unreliable and do not honor their undertakings, obligations, and responsibilities. They rarely hold a job for long or repay their debts.

Psychopaths are irresponsible and never fulfil "contracts" they have signed or agreements, verbal and written, they have made. Psychopaths have no "honour", let alone a "word of honour". They never regret or forget a thing. They are vindictive, remorseless, ruthless, driven, and dangerous.
Always in conflict with authority and frequently on the run, psychopaths possess a limited time horizon and seldom make medium or long term plans. They are impulsive and reckless, aggressive, violent, irritable, and, sometimes, the captives of magical thinking, believing themselves to be immune to the consequences of their own actions.

Thus, psychopaths often end up in jail, having repeatedly flouted social norms and codified laws. Partly to avoid this fate and evade the law and partly to extract material benefits from unsuspecting victims, psychopaths habitually lie, steal others' identities, deceive, use aliases, and con for "personal profit or pleasure" as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual puts it.

Cultural and Social Considerations
Formerly known as "psychopathy", this is one of the most controversial mental health diagnoses. Does non-conformity, however antisocial and calamitous its consequences, amount to mental illness? Are the lack of conscience or empathy the markers of a pathology? Some scholars decry this diagnosis as a tool of social control which allows the establishment to label and confine troublemakers and society to stash away eccentrics, criminals, and deviants.

Based on: