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The surface image of West is of an easygoing, happy-go-lucky guy who loves life, enjoys his career and doesn't have a care in the world beyond basketball. Cavs fans would be fine if the story ended there. Unfortunately, it doesn't. Last week's arrest on weapons charges proves that beyond a shadow of a doubt.

Underneath the joke-cracking, easygoing exterior is a young man of many faces, some more troubled than others.

A year ago, West had to leave Cavs training camp to deal with depression issues stemming from a blow-up he had at a referee during a pickup game. He left the team for a week, reportedly received counseling, came back and played a key role on the best regular season Cavs team in franchise history. West was frank and public about his battle with depression, winning him even more support from a Cleveland fan base that was already growing fond of him.

On the court, he continued to play hard-nosed defense and opportunistic offense, battling back from a broken non-shooting wrist in time for the stretch run. Off the court, he kept the soundbites coming. His self-constructed public persona continued to gain stature, and as the wins piled up, West became the second most popular player on the team behind LeBron James.

But when the cameras weren't rolling, a different Delonte emerged. A Delonte who has, in some cases, been a challenge to handle for his teammates and Cavs management.

Brian Windhorst penned an [eye-opening article](#) for Sunday's edition of The Plain Dealer, summarizing the ups and downs of West last season. West was charged with marijuana possession in Maryland last August, when he was a restricted free agent. The charge was eventually dropped, but it caused the Cavs to think long and hard before offering West the three-year deal he signed.

After West's training camp depression incident, things quieted, but some odd behavior still bubbled up, Windhorst writes. West could become quiet and sullen as easily as he could become outgoing and jovial. He could spend up to an hour after games silent and staring into his locker, still in full uniform. He frequently showed up late for games last year. He didn't show up for a home playoff game until an hour before tipoff. During a game in Los Angeles, West wasn't on the bench for the starting lineup introductions, and no one knew where he was for at least several minutes.

They're the type of infractions for which players with reputations for being selfish -- like Allen Iverson -- often get fined. But because the Cavs were winning and West was so integral to the team's success on the court and chemistry off the court, the Cavs

' big thinkers gave West a wide berth and did their best to look the other way. As long as he kept playing at a high level, no harm, no foul.

Winning cures a lot of ills, and for West, it put his bout with depression and mood disorders on the back burner. Unfortunately, that's probably the worst place to keep them. The sufferer and everyone around the person can convince themselves that everything is stable and the problem is a thing of the past.

No one on the outside looking in knows if West continued to seek counseling or any type of professional help over the summer. What we do know is that last week, he reached a new summit in disturbing behavior.

Last Thursday, he was pulled over by police in Prince George's County, Md. for speeding and cutting off the police car that pulled him over. West, riding a three-wheeled motorcycle, was reportedly found to be in possession of two handguns on his person and a shotgun in a case slung over his back. All guns were loaded.

West was charged with two misdemeanor counts of possessing a concealed handgun. He has a court date set for Nov. 20 in Maryland. He likely faces a suspension of some kind from the NBA, but that punishment might not be handed out until the legal proceedings have run their course.

It's easy to draw a line from West's emotional issues to the weapons charges, but right now, that can't be assumed. It would seem that West's actions are not those of an individual in a clear frame of mind. However, the Washington Post [reached West's father](#), who indicated that West might have feared for his safety.

"All I can say is Delonte was looking behind his back and protecting himself," Dmitri West told the Washington Post. "Bottom line is there's a lot of not-too-nice people out there."

That, of course, opens up a whole new line of questions. Is West simply a rich, famous professional athlete in world of potential stalkers? Did he get mixed up with a bad crowd? And if he's that worried about his safety, why was he buzzing around the area on an incredibly-expensive three-wheeled motorcycle that would stick out like a sore thumb on any stretch of road?

Was West walking a hyper-paranoid knife edge, was he in a delusional state, or was he trying to stock firepower as a show of strength to any would-be attacker? None of it adds up right now, and the picture probably won't become much clearer until the Cavs begin training camp next week.

West was reportedly in Cleveland as of Monday, meeting with Cavs officials about the incident and arrest. Dan Gilbert, Danny Ferry and Mike Brown are in a difficult position. West is still an integral part of the

Cavs

roster. He is still the team's best perimeter defender and a versatile guard who can start at either

backcourt

position. His teammates still like him and he's viewed as a glue guy in the locker room. In a nutshell, West still brings a ton of value to the team.

The Cavs would probably look to part ways with a lesser player after such a startling incident, especially given that Ferry and Brown highly value character in their players. But West brings so many positives to the table, it makes the team's decision-makers far more willing to deal with his complexities.

This latest, most severe incident probably won't ruin the Cavs' relationship with West. But it will strain it, perhaps like never before. Once the legal system and the NBA perform their rounds of disciplinary action, the

Cavs

will likely find themselves under pressure to perform their own corrective steps.

If it could be swept under the rug beforehand, it certainly can't now: Delonte West is a high-maintenance person. Employing him means dealing with his problems and idiosyncrasies, and unfortunately, it appears it also means dealing with his wrongdoings.

Shocking as West's arrest might be, it's hard to envision it causing the Cavs to reach their breaking point with him. But if the sideshows and run-ins with the law keep occurring, it's entirely possible that

Cavs

management will reach that breaking point someday.

It would be a shame if the skeletons in West's closet destroy what has been, overall, a very positive and mutually beneficial relationship for player and team.