

THE ADVENTURES OF UNFILTERED MAN

By

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“Did you know that the Bogeyman is afraid of his shadow?”

--- From a credible source hiding under a bed

Episode Three...Destiny

His eyes nervously dart around the room. Different place, same cramped space. Hyperventilating, he tries to control his breathing. *It won't be long now*, he says to himself. Feeling clammy, the first beads of sweat appear on his forehead as he wordlessly tells himself to relax. Taking deep, slow breaths, his breathing gradually returns to normal. Then, looking at his watch, he knows he can't just sit there and wait, so he stands up and, by mistake, looks in the mirror; the terror in his eyes is real as he realizes that there is no escape from the unavoidable. The word *trapped* immediately comes to mind as his heart races before his lower right eyelid starts twitching.

Restless, he starts pacing the floor and wringing his hands.

Forty minutes ago, he had arrived amid much fanfare. Alone, he had asked colleagues, friends, security, and a random priest and rabbi to give him his privacy since none of them could allay his fears or stop the inevitable.

Reading his notes, his vision becomes blurred, forcing him to rub his eyes for clarity. The interminable unknown manifests itself in a feeling of nausea. From previous encounters, he knows that his two old nemeses, fear and anxiety, are dancing on his imagined grave.

An unbidden quote from Steve Martin, *“A day without sunshine is like, you know, night,”* suddenly comes to mind. He knows he should be thinking about other, more relevant things, but like the song that gets stuck in your head, and you can't get rid of it, it completely dominates his thinking. “Shit,” he yells out loud, then again and again, “Shit, Shit, Shit,”...repeating the mantra until the Martin earworm fades away.

A tremulous hand shakes out a cigarette, rasps a match against an object, and watches the flame extinguish before lighting the death stick. No artificial prop can calm his nerves as his legs start shaking uncontrollably.

The time for prayer has passed. Nervously, he listens to the shuffling feet outside his self imposed cell. Instinctively knowing even before they enter the room and escort him down the hall that his time has come. The door opens, and with a nod of his head, he accepts his fate, steps into the hallway, and with trepidation begins his walk toward destiny.

And there he stands, shifting his weight from one foot to the other while waiting for his cue. His white knuckled hands unknowingly clenched into fists as he prepared to meet his fate, alone. He had escaped death so many times before. Would he be able to do it again? Could he kill...one more time?

The room he's about to enter is as cold and black as an unlit mineshaft. Then, without ceremony, the pit of judgement goes silent as the spotlight shines. Suddenly the transformation takes place; a shit eating grin appears on his face, fear is tamped down by bravado as he walks on stage with a swagger.

"Welcome...I'm David Allen...You looked confused...You're asking yourself, did I plunk down my hard earned cash for *this* guy? Of course not. David Allen is my given name, but my friends call me...Unfiltered Man," as his voice rises and the room explodes with cheers and laughter.

"Before we start, though, I'm going to have to rearrange the seating...I just can't stand looking at unattractive people. Don't take it personally. It's just who I am. I'm sure you're beautiful in your parents' eyes, just not in mine."

Pacing the stage, "You two over there, please move toward the back of the room. Same with that couple on my left. Yes you. You can get a refund if you like, no questions asked. Wait a minute, that male couple in the second row, you're way too easy to see, I'm going to have to ask both of you to trade seats with someone in the back.

Waiting for the commotion and laughter he created to die down, Unfiltered Man begins his set. "Well, that's better...any of you ever walk into a coffee shop and encounter a Java Jumper...well, I have...."