

"The Unexplainable" by James M. Valdez #0096879

It was Mother's Day - May 12th, 2019 on a Sunday. I would be off of working as a Baker in the Culinary. I had lived in Unit 12A at Southern Desert Correctional Center in Indian Springs. Unit 12A is a Dorm environment dwelling here at the prison. There are about 110 bunks for 110 convicts in this Unit. I had woke up about 4am. I got up and had gone to the community restroom to "release the demons" (take a shit). I took my MP3 player with me and was listening to the 2 songs I had just currently got downloaded to my device. I had got "Fat Race" and "Get up Stand up" by Bob Marley. I have all types of music on my MP3 - Pop, Hip Hop, Rock, EDM, Reggae. But I wanted to get a couple of songs I could work out to, so I picked those 2 songs. Oldies-but goodies. I had those 2 songs on a blank play list so only those 2 songs would keep on playing.

I was done "releasing the demons" and I washed my hands and went back to my bunk with my roll of toilet paper and my watered down bottle of Ajax dishwashing liquid - which I use to wipe down the metal toilet seat and to wash my hands with. The lights were off in the dorm, but there were about 40 people up getting ready to walk to the Chow Hall for Breakfast. I folded my blanket and took off my blue sweat pants and put a pair of weathered Levi's on. I took off my blue T-shirt off and put on my thermal long sleeve and put my short sleeved light blue collard shirt over the thermal. I put on my Timex Iron Man Digital watch on and put on my velcro belt on. I could've turned my T.V. on, but I decided I'd just listen to my 2 Bob Marley songs since mostly all the guys in my aisle were still sleeping. I was just staring at the ceiling in the dark with my headphones on for 2 hours. I was playing a guessing game of when the guard would flash on the lights to let us know when we (the people in my unit) were leaving our unit to walk to the Chow Hall. Breakfast could be any time from 5am to 7am. It was the prison's Control Room who would dictate which units had clearance to walk to the Chow Hall in the morning, so I woke up

too early and just waiting around like a Jack Ass.

The guard who was in charge of the Day shift of my unit flashed the lights a few times to let us all know to "Stage (get ready) For Chow." People were in chaos. People getting up startled and jumping out of their bunks with crust in their eyes and cotton mouth breaths. Guys were getting ready-like "Fireman Ready". Getting their sleep wear off and putting on their blue pants and shirts on and putting on their socks and shoes as well. I went into the community restroom which were used all for pissing only and it was full of men standing up in each stall and men brushing their teeth and washing their faces and hands over the 7 compartment sink. I waited for a stall to open and once one of my friends were done, I took his place and peed over a metal toilet seat covered in wet and dry piss. A lot of people missed and never dared wipe the seat up. It would get hosed down with a water hose twice a day, but other ~~than~~ than that, you'd be in a stall with the stench of pee on the seat and the floor. So I zipped up and went to an empty sink and washed my hands really quick and tucked in my shirt and pulled and stuck the velcro ends of my belt to stick together. I walked back to my bunk and turned off my MP3 player and stuck it in my fire retardant cardboard box under my bunk. People were huddled up at the front door of the unit and a bunch of people were sitting down on the 6@four seated stainless steel metal tables waiting for the guard to open the door so we could start walking to the Chow Hall.

It would be 6:45 am and the guard would walk down a short flight of stairs from his post (the Bubble) and open the front door. Once he opens the door, he puts his back against it to hold it open for all of us hungry convicts to storm out of the unit. The guard looks at most of the inmates in the face. He acknowledges most of the men walking past him. A lot of the men don't care about telling the man "What's up?!" or "Good Morning." The men going to the Chow Hall definitely need the extra assistance

to eat Breakfast and to grab their sack lunches for later to eat during the day. They're only the mind set to eat, get their sack lunch, and come back to the unit.

It's a crazy scene. The Control Room has let the other unit 12B have clearance as well to walk up to the Chow Hall as well with us. So that's anywhere from 150 to 220 hungry convicts walking on a $\frac{1}{2}$ mile of gravel road to the Chow hall. It's so easy to get our shoes dirty because our shoes are all mostly white. A lot of the inmates do not have different colored shoes but white. The Laundry hardly ever has Black colored sneakers and if you want a pair of Black Under Armour shoes, they're nearly 90 bucks. They're not even that comfortable as far as the ones that we can order here and a lot of people don't have outside help, so mostly everybody gets their shoes really dirty walking in the gravel. So as we stampede to the Chow Hall, I don't wait for any particular people to walk with. I just try to walk there at a quick pace and say "what's up?!" or "Hi!" to whoever I know. Guys from every race have known me thru the years that I've been doing time, so I've gained a lot of respect by just trying my hardest to try and not offend people and always trying to be a happy go lucky guy even though my circumstances are not great because of my lengthy sentence structure.

There are tall guys, short guys, skinny guys, buff guys, old men, young men, middle aged men. Hispanics, Blacks, Whites, Natives, Asian/Pacific Islanders, and Middle Eastern men all walking their own pace to get thru up to the Chow Hall. Once I get past the door in the Chow Hall, I wait in line as each man picks their tray and sack lunch up in a small window that the kitchen crew is dishing out to us. Once I get my State issue, I grab some cold water from a water cooler with my State issued Brown cup. I walk with my things as I double check to where I sit. My table is 5 tables from the metal gate divider which sections off the line and the dining seats. Every race has a designated set of tables where they sit. The Hispanics and the Whites sit up front; The Natives, the Asian/Pacific Islanders, and the

Middle Eastern people sit in the middle - kinda like a divider. And at the back end of the Chow Hall, the Blacks all sit. I'm in the middle, for I am an Asian/Pacific Islander. I eat with an older man who is in his 60's. His name is "Mr. Kung". I also eat with a guy in his late 40's who everybody calls "Chow". And then I eat with a guy that's 400 pounds and in his early 20's who everyone calls "Fat Frank". As everyone pours in the door, a lot of the men smile and nod at me to say they acknowledge me and to say a silent "what's up?". I give everyone who does - a "peace sign". The old man switches some food items with me. He wants the celery stick and carrot stick from my sack lunch and he'll give me his cereal off of his special diet tray. I'm supposed to eat my breakfast items at the Chow Hall, but I take the cereal back with me stashed in my sack lunch. Usually the guards don't trip out, but there are times when a sack lunch looks too loaded with food and they think the inmate is stealing food from the Kitchen. My sack lunch don't look too big, so I get away with it.

The Chow Hall can't hold 200 people sitting down, so the guards open the Chow Hall door exit. They let maybe ~~1/3~~^{1/3} of the people who are finished and ready to go and they close the door on the rest of the people who are still in there. I walk past a bunch of Search and Escort ^(S&E) ~~guards~~ guards that hang out the Chow Halls (there are 4) and walk down a steep gravel hill that takes me past the Big Yard and down back to the Dorm Units. I don't walk with my people, but I just walk as fast as I can back to my unit. I pass a bunch of people I know and open the door to Unit 12A. I walk past the tables and I'm at my bunk in a few steps. I put my sack lunch in a 1.6 quart bowl with a lid on top (kinda like tupperware) and start undressing and ~~start~~ switching out my clothes for my work out clothes. I lay down for like 30 minutes and take a quick power napp. I fold my clothes, my wool blanket and grab my roll of toilet paper, watered down bottle of Ajax dishwashing liquid,

my MP3 player. I walk to my unit's touch screen Kiosk to check my inmate account. Just checking if anybody I know had put funds to my account. My funds were still the same. My funds couldn't do anything for me last week. But my family had put some the day after they ran the last Commissary order. I would have to wait to get something this coming up Friday. (The Canteen would run the orders on Wednesday morning - like deduct the order from our accounts and we'd be able to pick up the orders at the Canteen at 5am - 7:30am on Friday morning for our unit) After I do that, I walk to the Community restroom where there are the shitter toilets. I handle my business and by the time I'm done, a lot of the men have gone to the gym to go and work out. They play basketball, lift weights, play ping pong, play horseshoes, run on the Big Yard, do pull-ups, or play hand ball. For me, I'll put my things away and I'll grab my MP3 player and work out inside my unit. I find a place in my unit where I'll hardly be bothered. I do like 10 sets of 100 push-ups with stretching in between and then do some ab work on the floor. I get a little sweaty and it's a nice little work out.

Some people are sleeping and a few people are at the 2 microwaves heating up food at 9:20am. As I go back to my bunk, I turn on my plastic fan and cool off. All the people that have gone to the gym are all coming back because the gym time for my unit is done. They storm thru the door and are all grabbing food to heat up, trying to use the telephones, or trying to run in and get into the shower. The whole unit gets loud and chaotic. I'm sitting at my bunk and I decide to try and write a Science Fiction book that I had been meaning to accomplish since 2015. It had only 2 Chapters and an illustration to go with it. It is about made up angels and demons, God, and angels battling different beings from other worlds. There's a made up fight organization, a made up girl band, cock fighting, gambling like Texas Hold 'em and a craps game in Vegas, graphic sexual content, violence, tragedy, romance, and just trying to get it on paper and stop messing around playing poker with my friends any

time I get on the tier. The Chapter in writing was called "Demon # 1 - The Temptress." I had 2 pages completed and someone said, "Eh, James! - you wanna play?!" I was just disgusted with all the poker players' play and my own play because I was making a lot of mistakes because at the time, I was working during the week. I would be turning out the wrong cards when I had the winner or folding my hand and not seeing that I had the winner. It was time consuming waiting for the right hand to play and it was costing me money because of my mistakes. So I told my friends, "No, I'm good." I was just cross-legged and hunched over my bunk with pen and paper and trying to think of the right combination of words that would try and seem interesting.

The guard had locked us down at 11:15 am for "Count Time" and I just kept on writing. At 12 pm, the Count had cleared and it was tier time again. I was asked by one of my Black friends named Marcus to play with his money on the Mexican and White poker table. He knew I was off and he wanted me to try and double his money. He said he'd split the winnings with me if I won, so I bought in with a 7 dollar Old Spice deodorant that he gave me. By the time 1:30 pm comes, I had 21 dollars in chips. I cashed my chips in to whoever ran the paper to keep track of whoever turned in chips. I would get Marcus' deodorant back and whatever the losers lost at ~~3 o'clock~~ 3 o'clock because people on this table were all going outside for "small yard" time outside of our unit.

I would try and use the telephone while most of the guys were outside. There were only 4 phones to accomodate 110-120 people and they were always busy with people using them. I would have to miss yard time, gym time, or dinner at the Chow Hall if I really wanted to use the phone. Once I got on, I punched in my I.D. number and pass code and tried to dial up my Mother's phone number. No one had answered. I tried again and the same thing. I tried to call my best friend on his cell phone, but I would get a message saying: "The phone number you are trying to call is not answering, probably indicating an answering machine - ~~good~~ Good bye!" I felt defeated be-

cause I finally got a chance to use the phone and no one was home to accept my call. They were doing things out there without me. All I wanted to hear was what they were doing in their lives and joke around to cheer me up a little. Times like these - you might wanna cry. Yeah - of course, but not in my environment where there are only men always watching other men's actions. I can only walk kinda sad to my bunk area where I grab my MP3, headphone extension cord, headphones, and work out gloves. I do about 100 triple pump burpees incorporating a rocking chair motion and ~~just~~ jogging in place in between each set. Then did 5 sets of 100 jumping jacks. Then did 20 countdown squats. I started at 20 then take a 10 second break, then 19 and a 10 second break, and work my way all the way to 1. It would take about 45 minutes and I would go back to my area to drop off my things and grab my shower gear. I would beat the crowd before they came in from yard time and just relax on my bunk. I turn my T.V. on TNT or TBS and there's a movie on. The guys outside all get let into our unit and there's brief chaos of them trying to get into a shower stall, use the phone, or trying to heat food up in one of the 2 microwaves we have in the unit. I get paid with Marcus' deodorant and like 2 @ 3.50 Speed Stick deodorants, and 7 dollars in stamps. I give Marcus his deodorant, a Speed Stick, and 3.50 worth of stamps. I took the other half of the winnings.

The guard lets us lock down at 3:30 pm. He does a head count and I watch a travel show with a guy named Josh Garcia on NBC. The guy goes all around the world and visits all these cool places and then usually brings back something to his chef on the boat he travelled in and they cook a dish or dishes. I've only travelled to a few places on this Earth. I lived in Hawaii from 1975-1998. Visited L.A., San Francisco, Washington State, Oregon, British Columbia and Vancouver in Canada, and Las Vegas within that time frame. Then lived in the Bronx, New York from 1998 till a couple of days before the year 2000. I lived in Las Vegas from 2000-2004 and I got locked up in November of 2004. I've

never seen the outs ever since. So far that brief half hour that this guy Josh Garcia tours me on, it's like a little escape for me in my thoughts to where I would've like to travel and enjoy also. Once the show is done, it's 4pm. The C.O. (Corrections Officer) starts flashing the lights for our unit to go to chow. I get dressed in my Blues and put on my beat up Reebok's on to walk in the dusty gravel and Sun. I grab my brown plastic cup and orange spork and a bunch of napkins. I put a salt shaker in my jeans' pocket and the guard opens the unit's door to let us out for Chow.

I had walked to the Chow Hall and ate at my table. For the Asian/Pacific Islanders, we had another table for the guys in Unit 12B that ~~saw~~^{ran} with us also. By the time I was done with eating my chicken on the bone dinner, I turned in my tray to the dish washer's window. After that, my buddies on the other table walked with me back to the dorms. We all were laughing and joking around on our $\frac{1}{2}$ mile walk back to our units. Once we hit my unit, they all fist bumped me with a Shaka sign and said we'd see each other again at Breakfast tomorrow. I would go to my area and drop off my things and go to the community rest room to wash my hands to get the chicken grease off. I was so full, I would change into my dark blue sweat pants and blue T-shirt and sit on my bunk to write a little more. People on the Mexican and White poker table asked me if I wanted to play some more. And the Black poker table also asked me to play with them. I declined with a "No, I'm cool right now." I began to write some more about my demon in my Sci-Fi book and it was only a few lines. Even though it was early and still had a full belly, I decided to make a full bowl of 2 Chili Lime Shrimp Flavored Top Ramen noodles, a half bag of instant white rice, $\frac{1}{3}$ of a bag of Spicy Refried Beans, and a handful of hot cheetos. I was tired and depressed in a sense since I never got to talk to anyone on the phone. I didn't care about anything at that point. I would stuff my face and fall asleep under my blanket.

It would be hours until I ~~wake~~ woke up though. I had woken up, but

I could feel 2 hands pushing down on my chest. I was covered from head to toe under my gray wool blanket. I could see through the blanket and from what I could see, there was a hooded figure with no face pushing down on my chest. It was in the dark, so it looked like it was dressed in all black. I really thought it was just somebody fucking with me. I knew everyone in my aisle was sleeping because there were no T.V.'s on. What I really wanted to do was ~~to~~ kick both my feet back past my head or somehow counter this weird attack, but I decided to be cool. I didn't yell or speak. I took off my blanket really quick and there was nobody around. I even stood up to look around if there was anybody hiding in the dark who was trying to pull a prank on me. Nobody! There were only 2 T.V.'s on in the whole unit and there were near close to 60. Everybody else were knocked out. Hardly ever—that was the case. I had got back under the blanket and right away immediately, the same occurrence happened. Two hands were pushing down on my chest and a hooded person with no face was doing this to me in the dark. This was definitely tripping me out.

By this time, my faith in God had totally diminished because of my sentence structure in 2014. On paper, I have 20-Life for a Murder Charge and 20-Life for the weapon enhancement charge and then 8-20 years for Attempted Murder and 8-20 years for the weapon enhancement charge. I do have the possibility of parole and the 2 sentences of 8-20 years run concurrent (together) with the 2 20-Life sentences, but it is a lot of time to do. It'll be 15 years come November of this year in 2019. I've never said the Lord's prayer (The Our Father) in years.

I had decided to start saying the "Our Father" prayer and by the time I was done, the thing was gone. I looked at my watch and it was only 11:20 pm. "Why is this prayer so powerful?", I asked myself. This thing was solid and it wasn't going anywhere it seemed. But when it was finally gone, I went to the restroom and was kinda freaked out. I went back to my bunk and just went back to sleep. It was about 3:45 am and one of the Paizas was

yelling "Fuck you!-Burro!" a bunch of times in his sleep, but he was in my aisle. He was having a nightmare of some sorts. I stayed up until we had to go to Breakfast.

After Breakfast, I came back to my unit at about 5:40 am. I went back to bed till about 8 am. My Black friends Marcus and Marcus were sitting at one of the tables in my unit. They were talking to each other and they called me over to talk with them. They wanted me to play poker with them, but I told them I was good - that I didn't want to play. I started to tell them my incident the night before and then one of the Marcus' said, "That's the Devil! - that's real! A lot of people experience the same shit!" I had told them I might play poker with them later, but I just went back to my bunk. My neighbor that was across from me was up and I told him my story and he said when he was locked up in one of the prisons in Washington State doing time, he experienced the same thing with a hooded being with no face pushing down on his chest and he couldn't speak or yell, but he decided to pray the "Our Father" prayer and it went away.

It would be 9:40 am Monday morning and it was "small yard" time for Units 12A and 12B. Me and my buddies on my side and B side who were Asian/Pacific Islanders worked out together. We did 100 burpies and 20 countdown squats together. Then we split up. 4 of us got on the pull up bar and did a few sets of ten. We sat on a bench in front of my unit and I told them the story. One of them said who's race is Mong, told me, "James, that's a demon! That stuff is for real. Plenty people in my family experienced that shit too."

I would go back into my unit and another Paiza started talking to me and said I wasn't the only one who experienced that incident. He told me that about 2 am in the morning ~~and~~ that something was pushing down on his chest like me. He never told me if he prayed or not, but he said he'd do something so the thing wouldn't come back to our unit. Every so many

days, he'd ask me, "You see the thing again?" I told him, "No, what you do?" He told me not to worry what he did, but I think he did some kind of sacrificial ritual that Mexicans believed to do when shit like this happened.

So for my conclusion, I can only say that this thing is probably a demon because of what other people had experienced or heard stories of, but what is unexplained to me why these things appear to people in the first place. I was 100% awake when my incident happened because I could feel the hands pushing down on my chest. It was just a coincidence that I was listening to a dead Jamaican guy singing reggae music the past few days and writing about a fictional demon on paper - that something un-natural appears in my life in a Medium Security Prison. Lucky me again, I guess. ☹

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