

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

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Douglas Thaddeus JEFFERY

Unfinished Business

As I look up from my latte, I lock eyes with a very striking, gray-haired gentleman. Upon initial impression, he is well dressed, impeccably groomed with cheekbones that you can slice bread with.



He is the quintessential tall, dark and handsome man, as if straight out of a Marlboro ad. This is my first impression of entrepreneur, businessman, and actor Douglas Thaddeus Jeffery. A broad, easy smile puts me at ease and we sit down for what I know will be an interesting conversation.

He looks like he has led a life of relative ease and comfort. I realize quickly, however, that this is not the case. He candidly told me, "Childhood was not easy for me; everything was a challenge. I

didn't excel in school. I was the overweight, fat kid that everyone made fun of, and I ended up both bulimic and anorexic. Plus, I grew up on the 'wrong side of town' and my family went through financial hardships. But in my heart, I always knew there was something more out there and I wanted to find out what it was."

Many, many years later, Doug was working as a croupier in Atlantic City, when Chippendale's in New York discovered him. He soon began traveling throughout

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the world as their new MC. Before long, he became a male model in New York and began booking regular catalogue work, commercials, and even appearing on the covers of Harlequin romance novels. In fact, Fabio was a cohort whom he'd pass in the halls!

Eventually, it seemed everyone he knew was moving westward. His lifelong dream was to become an actor,





so why not go with the flow? He moved to Los Angeles and started his life all over.

I asked him what it was like moving to the West Coast. Doug laughed, "It was very challenging. I had huge clients in New York as a model. In Los Angeles, I had to grab whatever I could take, while pursuing my acting career. I was a bartender, personal trainer, and picked up side jobs to make ends meet. The money I had saved up in NYC ran out quickly.

I started building furniture on the side to supplement my income. One day, I was asked by a friend to help on a movie set. This led me to create 41 Sets, and the rest is history." Doug ended up creating this

successful set design company. Within a few short years, it became a multi-million dollar business, and has been the industry go-to for the past 15 years."

But there is always a price for success. Doug gave up his acting career to focus on his company. He said, "Looking back, I believe my journey was pre-determined. And dealing emotionally with the death of my mother made me realize what is really important in life. There are no short cuts. You have to run the

course set before you. Now, so many years later, I've decided once again to pursue my passion of acting. I believe that no matter what, you will always come back to your true desires in life.

I mean, come on, can you imagine starting over at 54? But as much as I wanted to be an actor 15 years ago, maybe the time wasn't right. I'm brand new and starting over again. I'm a deer in headlights. If it weren't for my partner, Candace, whom I love to death, I would have no idea what to do," he said smiling.

Listening to Doug made me realize that no matter what age you are, we can all identify with someone transitioning from one stage of life to another. After all, life

is nothing but a series of chapters. And these chapters are filled with challenges, failures, and successes. Here is a successful businessman who was once a working actor, and is now going back to the past to fulfill his future.

Out of curiosity, I pushed him about his goals. After a few moments, Doug told me, "My goals today are to chase my dream. I have unfinished business. I have come so close in the past and had opportunities that would have changed my life. I owe it to myself not to give up. The beauty is that all of my successes and failures have made me who I am today. Now, when I go to an audition, all of this comes through my eyes. I hope they appreciate who I am and what I have become. After all, that is all that you really have in life."

My afternoon with Doug ended on a note of positivity and hope. And judging by what I heard, his were words spoken of a life lived to the fullest...with many more chapters to come!

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