



Unruly

Jimmy Callahan

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Shitkickings drag races barfights and arguments buckets of blood gallons of high-octane tits ass vulgar language and bad morale.

Finally a novelist with the guts to vigorously attack North America's most devastating cultural issue—poor manners in Canada. *Unruly* is set in Calgary with a highly eventful side trip to Vancouver. It features one-man crime wave Ben McCool a Miss Manners with brass knuckles. He's sick of incivility. He's sure that television perpetuates a false social contract by taunting the working poor with images of the unattainable good life. Ben's primary interests are kicking ass and taking names. He does so with such explosiveness and regularity that Mike Brown a wannabe indie filmmaker follows him around capturing the gore in a digital format. Cut off in traffic? Time to wreck a car. A grocery clerk doesn't smile? Time for a beating. No one hates women more than this novel's anti-hero. It is so over the top that author Jimmy Callahan probably doesn't even remember seeing the top go by. [Tony:] "You didn't really throw that blonde cutie into a woodchipper did you?" [Ben:] "No Tony. I was just messing around with you. I'm more of a chainsaw kinda guy."

The story changes sharply when Ben gets to know his neighbor Elise and Mike lands a temp job trimming marijuana buds. From that point on the prevailing bitterness yields occasionally to other emotions and the violence becomes less random. Elise attempts to rein in Ben's mass-murdering hobby. He does actually appreciate Elise somewhat certainly more than ex-girlfriend Charlotte. Perhaps it's because Elise dislikes women almost as much as he does. "Charlotte is a bitch that Elise pales in comparison to bitchwise. ...I think Charlotte needs a gunshot wound to the head"

In a three month period Ben is responsible for forty-two killings or one quarter of all Canadian homicides compared to 2005's real data. Again and again Ben's closest associates claim that he is misunderstood and unfairly persecuted. Sadly though any social commentary is buried under an onslaught of blood and resentment. The author's note indicates that educated speech was removed in favor of action movie and comic book clichés. The editors seem to be afraid of the author letting slide a wandering point of view failing to cut or condense where it would have helped the flow.

Jimmy Callahan's first novel *The Misfit* appeared in 2003. He is currently a short-term guest of the Canadian penal system. Even so he wants "all you assholes who *did* stand in my way" to know "I can still find you." People who can't look away from gruesome car wrecks may feel a strange attraction to this book for the same unsettling reasons. Perhaps *Unruly* is intended as deep satire but even those with highly offbeat sensibilities are likely to feel alienated. (August 21, 2009)

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