



THE CELL MONOLOGUES – DOUBT
By Paul Smith

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LEN, 45

A bare police station cell. A bench with a plastic covered thin mattress. A few magazines and newspapers. Dull lighting. LEN sits on the edge of the bench.

My Mum, bless her, had a thing for the word 'snazzy'.

It was always 'snazzy' this, 'snazzy' that.

Used to make us laugh.

When she died I asked the funeral director to put her in a 'snazzy' coffin.

I think they thought I was being disrespectful.

I wasn't.

She got a light oak one instead.

Shame.

PAUSE

I love my Mum. She loved me.

She told me every day she was alive.

"I love you whatever".

Another one of her sayings.

She never blamed me. "I understand" she said. "Try not to do it again."
I always tried, but it didn't always work.

I have never been a smoker. Not like Mum. She smoked forever.

In fact she used to offer me one of her cigarettes when I was stressed. "It'll calm you down, lovely." she'd say.

I always refused. Horrible things.

I mean, once you start, you can't stop can you? Can you?

Mum couldn't.

She tried, but no willpower.

I don't have willpower either. So, if you don't start something in the first place, you don't have to go through the agony of trying to stop do you?

Patches, gum, hypnotism – all things that Mum could have tried, but she didn't. End result. She suffered.

"You must try and get some help Leonard" she said to me when the police first questioned me. They said the same. They were quite pleasant about it all and they put me in touch with a helpline and suggested it would be a good idea if I called them.

I didn't.

Then it carried on happening and the police caught up with me again and I was cautioned and fined.