

The Man Who Hid From Cameras

Decades of dodging the camera - and what that hiding was really costing.

(The Years I Spent Running From Evidence)

There is a kind of collapse that happens long before the body fails. It happens quietly, privately, in space between who you are and who you pretend to be. Before my metabolic system broke, my identity broke. Before my geometry failed, my selfimage failed. Long before the photograph on the boat diagnosed my body, I had already spent decades hiding from the truth. I didn't hate cameras. I feared them. Cameras were mirrors with witnesses. They didn't just show me my body - they showed me the years I had spent losing control of it. They showed me the strain, the swelling, the exhaustion, the clothes that no longer fit, the man who no longer fit inside his own life.

So I avoided them.

The Daily Battle With Fabric

My war with clothing began long before I admitted anything was wrong. Shirts strained across my belly. Collars refused to close. Ties sat crooked and loose because

tightening them made me feel like I was choking. My muffin top wasn't a muffin - it was a mountain. Pants surrendered under pressure. Buttons popped. Seams tore. Metal hooks bent out of shape after a few wearing's. Every belt I owned looked like it had survived combat.

By the end of any given day, my shirt tails were untucked, my midsection was rumpled and swollen, and I looked like a man who had been fighting his own body since morning - and losing. And that's exactly what I was.

The Art of Disappearing

When you live inside a body you don't want to see, you become an expert at disappearing.

If someone lifted a phone or camera, I stepped out of frame. If a group photo was formed, I volunteered to take it. If I couldn't escape, I hid behind others. If someone insisted, I smiled through clenched teeth and died a little inside.

I didn't want evidence. Evidence meant accountability. Evidence meant truth. Evidence meant facing the collapse I was working so hard to ignore. There are almost no photos of me from the late 1980s until very recently. That wasn't coincidence. That was strategy. That was survival. That was selfprotection.

The Geometry of Shame

Every photo felt like a billboard screaming: LOOK AT THIS GUY. CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? HE'S HUGE.

But the shame wasn't just about size. It was about failure - the failure to control the machine I lived in, the failure to maintain it, the failure to admit that it was breaking down.

I wasn't avoiding cameras. I was avoiding myself.

The Moment the Truth Caught Me

That's why the boat photo hit so hard. It wasn't just the size of the man in the picture. It was the fact that I hadn't seen myself honestly in years. Not without preparation. Not without angles. Not without escape. The photo was unplanned. Unposed. Unprotected. It was the truth - raw, unfiltered, unavoidable. And once you see the truth, you can't unsee it.

Identity Collapse Precedes Physical Collapse

The collapse didn't begin with the urinal incident. It didn't begin with the Gloucester hill. It didn't begin with the swelling, the exhaustion, or the lab numbers. It began with the years I spent hiding from cameras. It began with the quiet erosion of identity - the slow drift from confidence to avoidance, from pride to shame, from visibility to

disappearance. Before the body breaks, the story you tell yourself breaks.

The Man Behind the Camera

For decades, I lived behind the camera. Behind the lens. Behind the people I loved. Behind the life I was supposed to be living. I wasn't just hiding from photos. I was hiding from the evidence of collapse. The boat photo didn't just show me my body. It showed me the years I had spent running from it. It showed me the truth I had been avoiding. And once the truth catches you, it doesn't let go.

The next collapse wouldn't be emotional. It would be mechanical.

ACTION STEP

Count the ways you hide from being seen. Each one is a data point.

PREVIEW ENDS HERE

This is a free preview from the book. The complete chapter, and the rest of the volume, is in print. To order Volume III - The Blueprint, email metabojoe@gmail.com.