

#PURITY BEFORE PRAYER

Ancient Egyptian  
Priests Shaved Every  
Hair from Their Bodies

More than three thousand years before the rise of modern public health, Egyptian temple culture had embedded regular washing, clean clothing, careful grooming



To serve in the temples of ancient Egypt demanded far more than religious devotion. It required a level of physical cleanliness so rigorous that it governed every aspect of a priest's daily life. Before entering the sacred precincts, priests were expected to present themselves in a state of complete ritual purity, a standard that included shaving every hair from their bodies.

The head, beard, eyebrows, and even body hair were removed. Ancient sources indicate that temple priests shaved themselves regularly, often every three days, ensuring that not a single hair remained. This was not a matter of appearance or fashion; it was a religious obligation. To stand before the gods, one had to be free from anything considered impure.

To the Egyptians, hair could trap sweat, dirt, and parasites such as lice. By removing it completely, priests minimized the risk of contamination before performing sacred rituals. Their concern with cleanliness extended far beyond shaving. They bathed several times each day, traditionally described as four times, twice during the day and twice at night, to maintain ritual purity. They also chewed aromatic plants or herbs to keep their breath fresh before reciting prayers and offering sacrifices.

Their clothing reflected the same philosophy. Priests wore freshly laundered white linen garments, a fabric associated with purity and cleanliness. Animal wool, by contrast, was generally prohibited within temple rituals because it was regarded as ritually impure. Every detail, from clothing to personal grooming, reinforced the belief that the divine deserved absolute cleanliness. Their dietary rules were equally strict. Many priests abstained from foods such as fish and beans during periods of temple service, although these restrictions could vary depending on the deity and the temple in which they served. Contact with animals considered ritually unclean, particularly pigs, required

purification before a priest could once again enter sacred space. To modern eyes, these practices may appear to be purely religious customs. Yet, many of them had practical consequences. Frequent bathing reduced the accumulation of dirt and parasites. Regular shaving helped control lice and other insects. Clean linen garments were cooler and more hygienic in Egypt's hot climate. Although the Egyptians explained these practices through the language of ritual rather than medicine, many of them also promoted better personal hygiene.

It would, however, be an oversimplification to claim that the Egyptians had discovered modern germ theory or that medieval Europeans simply "refused to bathe." Medieval Europe did experience devastating epidemics such as the Black Death, but the causes were far more complex, involving bacteria transmitted primarily through fleas carried by rodents, along with crowded living conditions and limited medical knowledge. Europeans did bathe, though bathing customs varied widely over time and place and generally did not match the ritual standards observed in Egyptian temples.

Nevertheless, the contrast is striking. More than three thousand years before the rise of modern public health, Egyptian temple culture had embedded regular washing, clean clothing, careful grooming, and dietary discipline into daily religious practice. What they called ritual purity often produced tangible hygienic benefits.

The priests of ancient Egypt were not merely performing ceremonies; they were living according to one of history's most exacting codes of cleanliness. Their shaved heads, spotless linen, frequent ablutions, and strict rules of conduct reflected a civilization that saw purity as the bridge between humanity and the divine. Whether understood as religion or hygiene, their practices demonstrate a remarkable awareness that cleanliness was essential, not only for worship, but for life itself.



The CIA  
Officer  
Who  
Hid 303  
Gold Bars

● Verna Mohon

Imagine discovering 303 gold bars, each weighing one kilogram, stacked inside the home of a senior intelligence officer. At current prices, each bar is worth roughly US\$130,000, making the cache worth close to US\$40 million. It sounds like the plot of a spy thriller. Instead, it is the basis of a federal criminal case involving David J. Rush, a former senior officer of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

The CIA officer was arrested for possessing several hundred gold bars stashed in his house, received additional money or valuables as part of his work for the agency, which federal investigators have not been able to locate, four people with knowledge of the investigation say.

The officer, David Rush, requested the money or other valuables to provide the resources to agency sources abroad, the sources say. It is unclear if the money or valuables were used for their intended purposes.

CIA officers typically provide money or other compensation to foreign contacts who spy for the agency. But the agency requires officers to follow an approval process and be able to fully account for all money or other valuables, former intelligence officers say.

The irony is difficult to ignore. The CIA is tasked with monitoring some of the world's most sensitive security threats, from tracking North Korea's weapons programmes and monitoring Iran's nuclear facilities to running sophisticated intel-

ligence and surveillance networks across the globe. Yet, according to federal prosecutors, the agency failed to detect the alleged diversion of tens of millions of dollars in gold entrusted to one of its own senior officials.

On 19 May 2026, FBI agents arrested David J. Rush at his residence in Ashburn, Virginia. Rush had held a Senior Executive Service (SES) position within the CIA and possessed a Top Secret/Sensitive Compartmented Information (TS//SCI) security clearance, granting him access to some of the most closely guarded intelligence in the United States. According to the indictment, however, the same individual allegedly spent decades constructing an elaborate web of deception that ultimately culminated in one of the most remarkable fraud cases to emerge from the American intelligence community.

According to prosecutors, the story began in 1997, when Rush enlisted in the U.S. Navy Reserve. To become a commissioned officer, a college degree was required. Investigators allege that Rush did not possess one and instead fabricated academic credentials, including a counterfeit degree purportedly issued by a university in South Carolina. He was commissioned as an ensign despite the alleged falsified qualifications.

The deception allegedly expanded over the following years. Although Rush worked as an Information Systems Technician, prosecutors say he falsely represented himself as a naval aviator and even claimed credentials from the prestigious U.S. Naval Test Pilot School. He reportedly applied to join the CIA three times. On his third



David J. Rush is a former CIA agent who allegedly created a fake intelligence program to siphon resources from the CIA.

#DAVID J. RUSH CASE



Former CIA Officer David Rush in court.

attempt, he succeeded, allegedly using the same fabricated educational and professional credentials. One of the most striking aspects of the case is the apparent failure of institutional verification. During the FBI investigation, officials contacted the universities and organizations whose credentials

sensitive intelligence operations. He wasn't just highly intelligent. He was also capable, calm under pressure and a physical specimen, according to interviews with a half-dozen former Ashburn volunteer firefighters.

"The David Rush, I remember, he was chiseled," said Jeff Bellmer, a retired lieutenant at the department. "Big back, skinny waist, fit." Despite his intellectual and physical gifts, Rush didn't act like a big shot, his former fire department colleagues said. He was reserved and humble. But when he did get to talking about his military career, the stories he told were just amazing, how he had graduated first in his class at Top Gun, the legendary Navy fighter pilot school, and flown F-14 Tomcat fighter jets over Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Rush told me he had ejected and bailed out of two F-14s, and the third one he landed over there at Andrews with the cockpit on fire," Bellmer said. "He was just such a neat guy for me at the time," Bellmer added. "The

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obtained additional quantities of gold and foreign currency. When agency officials later attempted to account for the assets, they reportedly discovered significant discrepancies. CIA Director John Ratcliffe referred the matter to the FBI after potential legal violations were identified.

In May 2026, FBI agents executed a search warrant at Rush's Virginia residence. According to court documents, they recovered 303 one-kilogram gold bars, valued at approximately US\$40 million, along with luxury watches and other high-value assets. Rush was arrested the following morning.

Federal prosecutors argued that the magnitude of the alleged fraud and the resources available to the defendant created a substantial flight risk. A federal judge denied bail, ordering Rush to remain in federal custody while the case proceeds. At the time of writing, Rush has not entered a guilty plea, and the allegations remain subject to judicial determination.

Investigators also uncovered another alleged layer of deception. Although Rush was reportedly honorably discharged from the U.S. Navy in 2015 with the rank of lieutenant, prosecutors allege that he continued telling the CIA he remained on active military service until September 2025. During that period, he allegedly received approximately US\$77,000 in paid military leave benefits from the agency, giving rise to additional criminal allegations.

The case raises an important question: How could someone allegedly maintain such deception for nearly three decades? Security experts often describe this phe-

first real naval aviator that I had come across."

Rush made a similar impression on Lloyd Harting, another former Ashburn volunteer firefighter. "He told me he was a former fighter pilot, and I had no reason to doubt him," Harting said. "He was completely believable. He looked the part. He talked the part."

The alleged fraud took a dramatic turn in November 2025. According to federal prosecutors, Rush requested physical gold bars and foreign currency from the CIA, claiming they were required for operational expenses associated with covert missions. Such requests were not inherently unusual. Intelligence agencies sometimes use gold and foreign currencies because they can be transported discreetly, function outside conventional banking systems, and support clandestine operations where digital transactions would be impractical or traceable.

Between November 2025 and March 2026, prosecutors allege that Rush repeatedly requested and

monon as institutional assumption transfer. In complex bureaucracies, organizations sometimes assume that another agency has already completed critical verification. When responsibility becomes fragmented, accountability can disappear into procedural gaps. Rather than repeatedly confirming credentials, each institution relies on previous checks that may never have occurred. If forged documents are convincing enough, or if verification is incomplete, the deception can persist for years.

Whether the failures resulted from inadequate background investigations, misplaced institutional trust, or exceptionally sophisticated document fabrication will likely remain central issues as the case unfolds.

Beyond the individual allegations, the Rush case raises broader questions about oversight within government institutions. Intelligence agencies are entrusted with enormous authority, extensive financial resources, and access to classified information because they operate in the interest of national security. Public confidence depends not only on their operational effectiveness abroad but also on the strength of their internal accountability.

Ultimately, the alleged loss was not merely the disappearance of gold bars. The resources involved were public assets funded by taxpayers. The case illustrates that even organizations built to monitor global threats can themselves become vulnerable when verification systems fail.

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By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



#BUYING JAMDANI?

Know Terms Like  
Cutwork, Needle, and  
Jacquard Jamdani

A finely woven traditional Jamdani saree can take several weeks to several months, depending on the complexity of the design



Jamdani is one of South Asia's most celebrated handwoven textiles, admired for its delicate motifs that seem to float on the fabric. Traditionally, a genuine Jamdani is woven by hand using the extra-weft technique, a painstaking process that requires exceptional skill and patience.

However, anyone shopping for a Jamdani today is likely to hear terms such as Cutwork Jamdani, Needle Jamdani, and Jacquard Jamdani. While all of these fabrics may resemble Jamdani, they differ significantly in how they are made, how long they take to produce, and their value.

Traditional Jamdani: The Extra-Weft Technique

Authentic Jamdani is woven on a handloom using the extra-weft technique. Unlike printed or embroidered fabrics, every motif is created during weaving itself. As the base fabric is woven, the artisan inserts an additional weft thread by hand only where a motif is required. Each flower, paisley, or geometric design is built thread by thread, without being embroidered later.

The motifs become an integral part of the fabric rather than sitting on its surface. This is why authentic Jamdani is highly valued, it combines weaving and design in a single process. A finely woven traditional Jamdani saree can take several weeks to several months, depending on the complexity of the design.



Needle Jamdani

Needle Jamdani is not woven using the traditional extra-weft technique. Instead, a plain woven fabric is first prepared, and the decorative motifs are later created using a needle and thread.

Because every motif is formed individually by hand, Needle Jamdani is labour-intensive and can require around

Cutwork Jamdani

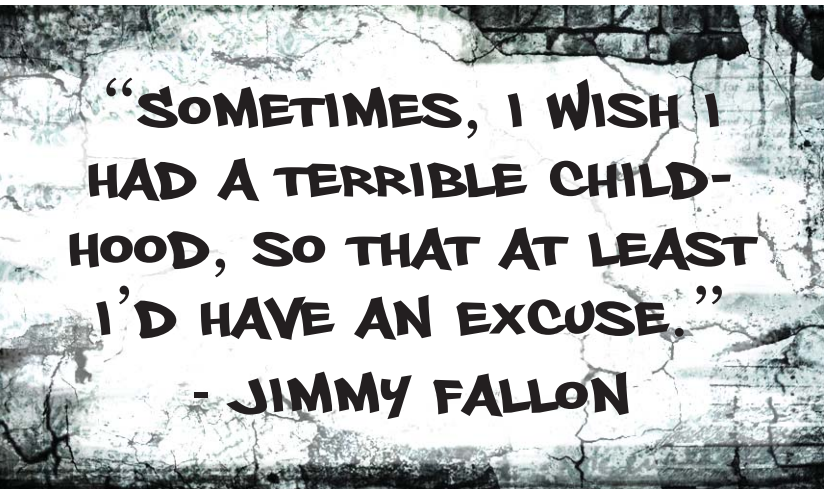
Cutwork Jamdani is generally produced using a jacquard loom with floating extra threads. During weaving, extra yarns run across the back of the fabric to create the motifs. After weaving is complete, these loose floating threads are cut and trimmed by hand, giving rise to the name Cutwork. Because the design is mechanically woven and only the excess threads need to be removed, the cutting process for a saree may take about an hour, making it much faster and less labour-intensive than traditional handwoven Jamdani.

Which One Should You Buy?

Each type serves a different purpose. If you value traditional craftsmanship and heritage, a handwoven extra-weft Jamdani remains the benchmark. If you appreciate detailed handwork, Needle Jamdani offers intricate artistry through embroidery. Jacquard and Cutwork Jamdani provide similar aesthetics at lower prices and are suitable for everyday wear or budget-conscious buyers.

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

THE WALL



BABY BLUES

